

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 13, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): On a point of order, Madam.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: On a point of order, the honourable member for Wolseley.

Mr. Altemeyer: I rise on a point of order.

My words were, quote, take a pass on it. My words were referring to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his inability to answer an important question from last week.

I would like to table an audio copy of question period from last Thursday, and it clearly indicates what I said and what I did not say.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I thank the member for Wolseley, and I would indicate that at this time I would thank the member for his comments and I will take the issue under advisement.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I also have a statement for the House. I would just like to remind all honourable members that when the Speaker takes a matter of privilege or a point of order under advisement, members are not to be commenting on the issue inside or outside of the House, including on social media, until the Speaker returns to the House with a ruling.

I would ask all honourable members to please keep this in mind. Thank you very much.

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Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Oh—

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I'm pleased to table the 2015-16 annual report of the Co-operative Loans and Loans

Guarantee Board to the members. I'm also pleased to table the 2015-16 annual report of Entrepreneurship Manitoba to the members. And I'm pleased to table the 2015-16 annual report of the Cooperative Promotion Board to the members.

Madam Speaker: Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Concordia Village

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Earlier this fall, I was pleased to attend, along with the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) and the Minister for Sustainable Development, the grand opening and dedication of the new common area at Concordia Village called the Village Centre.

I rise today to recognize the hard work that the residents, the board and the Concordia Foundation have done to create this amazing social and recreational space, one that will benefit the community for years to come.

The Village Centre expansion was completed on July 1st. It adds 300 seats to the existing garden café space, providing more opportunities for the residents and visitors of Concordia Village to spend time in fellowship. It also features a fully accessible design and gives residents an area where they can attend church services, birthdays, social events without having to travel and arrange that travel. Impact on the surrounding community was also minimized in both the exterior design and during construction.

This facility is just the latest example of the impact the Concordia Foundation and the residents of Concordia Village have had on the health and wellness in our community. They have been key partners and have a clear vision for a healthier community with projects such as the Concordia Village housing, the Hip and Knee Institute and new clinic space in the hospital.

Now I look forward to working with them going forward to see their upcoming projects, like the health and fitness centre, come to fruition.

Madam Speaker, this is a positive step towards improving the quality of life for our older citizens in our community, and I ask all members to join with

me in congratulating Concordia Village and the board on such a wonderful accomplishment.

I'm sorry, Madam Speaker, if I could just ask leave to have the list of the names of the Concordia Foundation board members and resident advisers for this project be added in the Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave?
[Agreed]

Concordia Village Board: Les Janzen, CEO; David Olfert, Chair; Hardy Rahn, Vice-Chair and Construction Committee Chair; Viola Labun, Secretary-Treasurer; Eleanor Andres, Director; Elvira Paetkau, Director; Valerie Wiebe, Director; Frank Vogt, Director; Jim Hayes, Director; Jane Luchak, President of the Resident Advisory Committee; Don King, Vice-President of the Resident Advisory Committee.

National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madam Speaker, October 15th, 2016, is National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day. Each year, thousands of families are devastated with the loss of their babies to miscarriage, stillbirth and other tragic circumstances. I rise today to do my part to break the silence of utter grief that many, including myself, have endured alone.

Lana and Dan Reimer, who are here in the gallery today, were brave enough to share the details of their loss with me so that their daughter's memory could be honoured and other families would know they are not alone.

Here are Lana's words: We lost Hannah August 21st, 2013. Our 18-week anatomy scan showed that we had twin reverse arterial profusion. Hannah's heart was pumping blood to an identical twin that had only developed from the waist down. We had an operation to cut off the blood supply to the other twin so Hannah's heart wouldn't have to work so hard. Sadly, three days after the surgery, my water broke. I laboured at home all night and prayed to God to take her quickly. My prayers were answered and she was born hours later. Hannah Rose Reimer was born at 21 weeks, three days, too soon for doctors to do anything. She lived for two hours and we cherished every moment we had with her.

St. Boniface hospital was amazing. I was sent home with a care package and a tiny teddy bear that had on the cap that Hannah wore.

Lana and Dan suffered two more losses following Hannah's death before they were blessed with a rainbow baby, Emma, in 2015.

They participate each year on October 15th in the Wave of Light. A candle is lit at 7 p.m. on this very day to remember those who grieve and to honour the memory of the babies that left this earth too soon.

I would also like to welcome the Winnipeg Walk to Remember group to the gallery today. They are a local non-profit group that organizes a walk each year in support of pregnancy and infant loss remembrance day. This year is the 10th annual walk, and it will take place at St. Vital Park beginning at 10 a.m. The group organizing the walk is collecting new, small teddy bears for the bereavement unit at the St. Boniface hospital.

Madam Speaker, I now request leave to submit these names to Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave?
[Agreed]

St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): I am honoured and proud to rise in the House to recognize St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church, located in the heart of River East, a community rich in ethnic diversity.

St. Anne's parish has served the families of North Kildonan for over 55 years. In addition to offering spiritual care, it provides solace, hope and comfort to those in need. St. Anne's is not only a church, it is a community where all are genuinely welcomed, encouraged and embraced.

When Ukrainians originally settled here in Manitoba 125 years ago, they faced many challenges. Resilient, innovative and proud, they soon realized that hard work and determination provided them limitless opportunities.

So, in 1962, when St. Anne parishioners were tasked to find a solution to address the church's financial shortfalls, they reflected back on their ancestors and decided to sell perogies. Working out of their homes they made 100 dozen perogies and sold them out of a shopping cart at the local Co-op. Their perogy sales skyrocketed and what started

out as a small fundraising effort soon became an important and steady source of revenue for the church.

Perogy-making now takes place monthly in the church's commercial kitchen, with 600-dozen perogies made in the course of two days. The highly organized process includes over 90 volunteers. Perogy-making is a labour of love and has become a major social gathering, bringing parishioners and the community together.

I would like to congratulate St. Anne church volunteers for their many years of dedication and devotion. Not only do perogy sales subsidize the church, but they also support the John Pritchard breakfast club.

Madam Speaker, I invite all members to join me in acknowledging these important volunteers, and I would also like to invite you all this Friday to St. Anne's for an authentic perogy dinner.

*(13:40)

Long Term and Continuing Care Association

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Today I stand to recognize the Long Term and Continuing Care Association of Manitoba, LTCAM.

LTCAM was incorporated in 1959 and has become known as the go-to association to collaborate on long-term and continuing-care policy and service delivery here in Manitoba.

LTCAM represents 150 members including all five regional health-care authorities, personal-care homes, supporting-supported-housing residents and assisted living. Their goal is to advance the delivery and quality long-term care and continuing-care services and resources through advocacy, education and networking for their members and those they serve. This valuable resource assists our province in achieving better health-care outcomes through policy and program innovations.

Interestingly, I learned that although hospitals are vital for acute care, prolonged stays are actually harmful for seniors. When seniors are left in bed for long periods of time, their respiratory systems and other muscles begin to weaken, sleep deprivation and stressful circumstances cause disorientation, and hospital-derived infections can lead to debilitating complications.

I completely support LTCAM's recommendation in a greater investment in alternative levels of care

such as transitional care, greater capacity for personalized home teams and enhanced supportive housing.

I am pleased that the government has recognized LTCAM's contributions, and I will continue to wait for a response from the Minister of Health to my recommendation that LTCAM be invited to join the provincial wait-times task force.

In closing, I would like to thank Jan Legeros, the executive director; Jane Hiebert, the administrative co-ordinator and Barry Hoepfner for your hard work and dedication to LTCAM and for being here in the gallery today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Any further members' statements?

Major Ken Barling

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to talk about a great Canadian, Major Ken Barling.

Madam Speaker, September 27th, 2016, marked the conclusion of the 95th annual Canadian Armed Forces Small Arms Concentration held at Connaught Ranges, which is a centre near Ottawa. More than 500 participants took part in this year's competition, comprising of 21 teams from the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada.

The Queen's Medal, a highly esteemed award, is presented at this event to the top rifle marksman in the Regular Force division. Madam Speaker, for the fourth time in his career, Major Ken Barling, from 435 Squadron stationed at 17 Wing right here in Winnipeg in St. James, captured this award. Four times: incredible.

The major has shown that Manitoba has some of the best and brightest military personnel, and he continues to demonstrate this through his achievement. The Canadian Armed Forces exemplifies excellence, and the 17 Wing is a testament to that mission.

Congratulations are in order for the major, Madam Speaker. He is an exceptional talent, and I know Manitoba's military family is very proud of him and as should we all be as Manitobans.

The sport of rifle shooting is very popular in Assiniboia. There's a number of gun clubs, and Major Ken Barling is an example of what discipline, hard work and focus can do. Thank goodness for the Canadian Armed Forces.

Introduction of Guests

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

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today members from the St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church: Gord and Elsie Gillies, Stan and Anne Holyk and Elsie Marykuca, who are guests of the honourable Minister of Sustainable Development (Mrs. Cox).

Also in the public gallery, we have with us Charlotte Craig from Kelowna, BC, who is the mother-in-law of the honourable member for the Interlake (Mr. Johnson), and we welcome you here today.

And also in the public gallery, we have from Elmwood High School 42 grade 9 students under the direction of Kevin Zuk, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), and on behalf of all of us, we welcome all of you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Economic Growth Government Plan

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, despite mounting job losses, with each passing day it is becoming more and more obvious that this government has no answers and no plan. They have no real commitment to build the east-side road, no plan to build a modern workforce and no plan for services Manitobans depend upon.

Madam Speaker, the government has fired all the staff working on the east-side road and given only a notional commitment to keep the work going.

Will the Premier tell us today: Where is the plan and the commitment to keep this project moving forward? Where will he—when will he build roads and bridges to the North?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The only thing better than today in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, is tomorrow in Manitoba.

We have an exciting plan. We have a very exciting plan, and I want to include the member in that plan, and so I would again extend—as I have yet to hear from the official opposition, I would again extend a very open and sincere invitation to them to participate in the prebudget consultation exercise.

I have had a response from the Liberal Party. I'm excited to have their members involved. I would be very, very excited to have NDP members involved as well.

I would just say, Madam Speaker, that after a decade of debt, we are engaged in fixing the finances of our province and we are very accepting of and cognizant of the challenge of that, the enormity of that, but we together, as a team, will face that challenge, and we encourage other members to join and be part of the team that will succeed in making Manitoba the most improved province in Canada in the next four years.

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

Ms. Marcelino: It is clear this is a government with no vision and no plan for building the Manitoba workforce. Manitoba needs even more training opportunities and supports for new parents, and the government released a report today that says just that. But the government has no plan. Massive job losses in the North and 10,800 lost jobs, but the government has gone on the political offence bringing forward regressive legislation to attack labour. This doesn't help us bring the workforce of the future, and it isn't a plan for creating good jobs in Manitoba.

I now ask—I have now asked the Premier three times: When will he explain his plan to create good jobs in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, a big part of growing as a person is learning from past mistakes, and let's talk about the East Side Road Authority for a minute. The nature of the previous government's symbolic attempts, at least, to grow an area and to help were best illustrated, I think, and the failure of those efforts best illustrated, by the Auditor General's report of just a few days ago which pointed out that with an expense of over half a billion—I repeat, half a billion dollars—they finished less than 80 miles of road.

Now, the member speaks about training, and the Auditor General's report is very clear that although there were claims that training was happening, training was not being monitored and follow-through was not being done to determine if the people, supposedly trained—if you can call chainsaw certificates training—were not—they were not being followed up to see if they were actually getting jobs.

The previous government was big on symbolic takeoffs, but they weren't big on landings. We're big on landings. We'll get results for Manitobans.

* (13:50)

Ms. Marcelino: Mounting job losses are evident, as are the growing concerns about the future of the province, yet the Premier thinks now is the time to make cuts to the civil service, despite the civil service having been flat for a decade. This is not a plan, and it will not address the needs of Manitoba.

Will the Premier admit that despite his protests to the contrary he is set on austerity, cutting the civil service despite a growing economy and the fastest population growth in modern Manitoba history?

Mr. Pallister: I thank the member.

And I want to, in the interests of full disclosure, make sure that we clearly communicate that it—the previous government was able to grow something. For example, they grew the debt of the province. They doubled it. They grew the tax burden on Manitoba homeowners considerably, at a record level; so they grew that. They grew the wait times for child care to record levels. They grew poverty so that more children—and also more children were taken into care than in any other jurisdiction.

These are the things they accomplished. These are the things we're inheriting from them. These are the things we'll address. I'm inviting them to come to the table and be part of finding the solutions to the problems they created over the last 15 years.

Premier's Enterprise Team Organized Labour Appointments

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, this Premier loves to tout out his trade union credentials and how he wants to be a partner with labour.

Can the Premier indicate how many members of organized labour has he appointed to the Premier's Enterprise Team?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I appreciate the congratulatory comments from the member, and I thank him for those. I do. I do. I thank him.

Fundamentally, whenever the NDP has the opportunity to listen to front-line workers, they choose instead to listen to the guys up top in the organization, the union bosses. That's what they do and they do it all the time.

Let me share with some of the members of the House who care to be interested in this issue, as I am and as our government is, what front-line union members are telling us about us restoring, here on this side of the House, the right for them to have a secret ballot: I was a union member for several decades. My workplace was certified with a secret ballot vote. We never saw anything wrong with it. But today the way I see the union's leadership acting like spoiled brats and thugs, uttering threats, I know now why this law had to be changed.

That's a front-line worker. That's a devoted, lifetime unionist right there. The member needs to listen to those front-line workers and stop taking the side of their bosses against the interests of the people who do the work.

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

Mr. Lindsey: It's unfortunate that the Premier chose not to answer yet another question.

But will this Premier commit to having labour at the table when they make changes that affect Manitobans, like freezing minimum wage or Bill 7?

Mr. Pallister: I'm sorry, Madam Speaker, I couldn't hear. Other members on the other side were yapping and I couldn't hear what the member said.

I just know he did reference minimum wage, so let me say we have one of the highest minimum wages in the country. We're working with organized labour and listening to the members to see if we can't get an indexation clause here like most other provinces have that would give certainty and protection not only to union members; it would also help protect the interests of the small-business people in our province who depend upon workers to work for their businesses and help them in partnership with one another.

So we're ready to listen, ready to work on these issues, and we are. We're making progress, and, again, I encourage the members genuinely to get involved in helping find solutions to the problems they've created.

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

Labour Relations Act Timeline for Debate

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's unfortunate the Premier couldn't hear my voice. It's kind of like he can't hear organized labour's voice.

This government refuses to show labour the respect it deserves. In almost every instance, it demonizes unions as part of its petty, partisan, political agenda.

Will we—when we debate Bill 7 today—or will this government come to its senses and repeal this pointless attack on labour?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, you know, coming from a party whose leadership is determined by three or four union boss leaders and not by the people of Manitoba, I kind of expect that diatribe from the member.

It's unfortunate he chooses not to look at an—in an open and considerate way at the interests of union members. Front-line workers are sending me and others in our caucus their views on this. I, for one—and here's John [*phonetic*—I, for one, believe that there should be a secret ballot vote for certification. I say this as one who worked in the unionized environment as a member of MGEU until I retired, not only worked in such an environment, was our local president, our area council secretary, our component chair, as well as full-time labour relations co-ordinator.

Now, that's what front-line union workers are telling us. Maybe the member needs to listen to those folks instead of just the boys and girls at the top.

Home-Based Child Care Government Intention

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The government just released a report on Manitoba's labour market consultation. It highlights concerns with the very real challenges and consequences of securing reliable, quality child care. We know Manitoba's population is growing as is the need for child care. We know a growing child-care crisis in Manitoba will only spill out into our economy and into the lives of Manitoba families.

The Minister of Families has repeatedly referred to his government's plan on child care without yet having released one single detail on said.

Can the Minister of Families advise Manitobans when we can expect to see his government's child-care plan?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I do appreciate the question. Child care is something that I used in my family and I value, and I think probably a lot of members used in the working world. It's something that drives the economy. It's something that allows people to go to and from work, is extremely important part of our economy going forward.

I can tell you as a government, we've developed a comprehensive plan, an implementation plan. It's being developed as we speak; we'll be announcing those plans soon.

Our concerns were the things that were left from the NDP. What we inherited from the NDP is close to 15,000 people on the wait-list from that previous government.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Jobs within the child-care sector are plagued with low wages, long hours, precarious employment and lack of benefits. This confirmed by a recent study released by the U of M on licensed home child care, showing home-care providers are dissatisfied with the income and overall working conditions.

Will the minister continue to focus only on home-based child care even after this study explicitly advised this government to, and I quote, to rethink its reliance on the current family home child-care model?

Mr. Fielding: What I can tell you is our program, our initiative in terms of child care, are going to be balanced. It's going to be a balance between a whole bunch of factors that are there. We think there's too much red tape that's happening.

We also are concerned in terms of the government, the former NDP government's record in terms of home-based daycare, where you see actually a 27 per cent reduction in home-care spaces with the previous government since 2003; that's over 1,000 spots.

So we will be providing a balanced approach to child care, a realistic plan for the future to create affordable and accessible daycare for all Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The U of M report affirms that even doubling the number of home-based child-care centres would only contribute to 3,000 new spaces and requiring over 400 new providers to sign up for what the report calls a shrinking and troubled sector.

Home-based child care just doesn't make sense, not for parents looking for reliable care and for Manitobans looking for a steady job.

I'm assuming that the Minister of Families has read the U of M report, so can he advise whether his pursuit of home-based child care is still a fundamental and central part of his so-called plan we have yet to see?

* (14:00)

Mr. Fielding: I can tell you that our plan is a balanced plan. It's a realistic plan that's there. You don't have to look as far as the NDP record since 2003 that looks at the home daycare spaces, a reduction of over 27 per cent in terms of spaces for home-based daycare. This is one element of our plan. We've got a comprehensive plan that's there.

And one other comment I'd like to make: I can tell you that the concept of somehow that government is the only one that can provide child care to our children, I just fundamentally disagree with. I am the product—we have three children that have gone through the home-based child-care system, and I can tell you there's great child-care providers. Whether you're a home-based daycare system, you're a parent, you're an adult, you're a grandparent, you're a faith-based organization, there's fantastic people in the systems.

Social Housing Units Construction Inquiry

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): The Minister of Families has all adjectives but no details, no answer, no plan.

So let's try on a different subject here. The media has been reporting on homelessness and poverty this week. We know that social housing is so important to our most vulnerable citizens.

On their behalf, I would like to ask the minister whether he can tell the House: How many units of social housing will be built in the province next year.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I can tell you that homelessness is something that is

something that impacts all of Canada, impacts Canada. The report that was brought forward brings some important information that's there.

I can tell you that what the stats tell you is that we've seen about a 87 per cent increase in children that are taken into protective custody, protective—from the state. What it's actually showing is that 68 per cent of these children end up in homeless daycares—or in homeless centres, whether it be shelters, everything else that's there.

We think that there's a comprehensive plan that's there. We've enhanced things like the Rent Assist program, we think makes sense. We've also enhanced the budget for home—for housing.

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

Mr. Kinew: Vague promises and rambling answers will not keep people on the streets warm this winter.

Can the minister tell us whether any new social housing units will be built next year?

Mr. Fielding: You know, Madam Speaker, there's a whole bunch of issues. In fact, I think the media chronicled there's 32 urgent issues that was left in my portfolio when we had there. One of them is in terms of the housing. If you talk about the housing, there was over \$500 million in deferred maintenance costs from this government. There was over \$1 billion.

So when the member looks at us and says that we've got no plans for housing, I think you should look in the mirror and check out what your current record is in terms of housing, in terms of your investment in housing.

We've got a strong plan going forward. We're going to work with the federal government to have housing, affordable housing, for all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: The minister seems to continue digging himself deeper as his colleagues urge him to start digging up with his answers.

There seems to be no answers and no plan, so allow me to ask again, using the points of reference which he raised in his last answer: What proportion of the housing dollars this year will be devoted to constructing new units?

Mr. Fielding: I can tell you a number of things. I can tell you that our budget towards housing has increased by over \$42 million or a 52 per cent increase.

I can tell you—I can tell the member that it was this government, when in opposition, that forced the government of the day, in the dying days of the last NDP administration, to increase Rent Assist. That's something that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) had been fighting for for a long period of time, and we also indexed the program.

We are going to work with the federal government. There's money that's on the table to provide affordable and—affordable and sustainable housing for all Manitobans.

Shoal Lake 40 First Nation Freedom Road Construction

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Our former government promised to help build Freedom Road. The City of Winnipeg's on board, the federal government's on board, and the people of Manitoba are on board.

The isolation of Shoal Lake First Nation has resulted in suicides, deaths from people falling through the ice and water shortages when the ferry has broken down.

Can the Minister for Infrastructure tell me if Freedom Road is on hold or not?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Acting Minister of Infrastructure): I appreciate the member's question.

We recognize that if we're going to have economic development in northern Manitoba, we have to make sure that we have infrastructure available for northern Manitoba. And I think that's a very important priority for us and for—certainly for our government. Well, I know we've had a decade of decay and decline and some of these fundamental issues around infrastructure have been ignored.

This government is looking forward to putting together a plan, which will be a strategic plan, and we're looking forward to future developments in infrastructure, especially in northern Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable member for The Pas, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Lathlin: To me, that sounds like it's on hold to me.

Madam Speaker, in regards to addressing equality for First Nations people, this government needs to stop blaming the past government and start acknowledging and understanding the consequences of colonization. A century ago, the Province spent \$17 million for a 135-kilometre 'aqueduc,' cutting off Shoal Lake First Nation from the mainland. That's the equivalent of almost \$365 million today.

Will the Minister for Infrastructure stop playing the blame game, stop looking for ways to cut corners, do the right thing and build Freedom Road?

Mr. Cullen: Again, I appreciate the member's question relative to the Shoal Lake road.

I know that this previous government had 17 years to get these infrastructure jobs done. Obviously, they didn't get it done. We've committed to infrastructure in Manitoba. We've committed to the Shoal Lake road. We're working with the federal government in that. We think the federal government has a responsibility in this particular road. We're working with them; they should be coming to the table to cost-share in that infrastructure.

And obviously there's lots of work to do, but it's part of our strategic investment in infrastructure here in Manitoba.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Building Freedom Road is a moral duty that will take a step towards the path to reconciliation. It means better economic development. Roads mean access to education, health and social services for the people of Shoal Lake First Nation. It's a long-term solution to helping pay back the debt to Shoal Lake First Nation for hundreds of millions of gallons of water Winnipeg has taken at their expense.

When will the Minister recognize that debt to the people of Shoal Lake First Nation, put words to work and build Freedom Road?

Mr. Cullen: I appreciate the member's inquiry on this.

Obviously, they had the opportunity to get the job done. They didn't get it done. We as a government are going to get it done. I said we're working with our federal government. We believe the federal government should be at the table this—supporting infrastructure here in Manitoba. We've made that request to the federal government. We're hoping they're going to come to the table.

Maybe the opposition members can knock on the doors of their federal counterparts as well and ask them to come to the table and let's get this job done.

Indigenous Relations Program Creation

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): We may think of the atrocities that occurred to my people as historical events. They are not. We eat, sleep and breathe them to this day.

My uncle, John Joseph, was a victim of unjust and racist policies. It took a long time for our family to share our story. There are many families that have gone through the similar situation but have passed on. Their stories are now forever untold. There are some who have come forward to me in hopes of finding their lost ones.

Minister, upon hearing our family's history, are you willing to work with me to create a venue where these stories can be told so that they can be better known and not repeated?

*(14:10)

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I do appreciate the comments from the member opposite. I know she's very passionate and conveys a large amount of stories. And I can tell you, when you do hear comments from people that have shared and understand those experiences, it really does—it does make a difference in terms of how you make your decisions.

You also make good decisions when you visit some of these places, and that's what this government is committed to doing. Our government is committed to looking, whether it be a child-welfare issue, whether it be housing, whether it be anything else, we need to be out in the community listening to folks. That's what this government is about, and we want to continue to do that. So if there's any way possible we can do that, we'd be open to ideas from members opposite.

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

Indigenous Health Care Privacy Rights Violation

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I look forward to working with the minister on this.

In the past, many policies and ways of doing things were imposed. Our privacy was not adequately respected. Even today, for an indigenous

treaty person to gain travel to get medical help from a doctor, they must disclose private medical details in order for this person to be allowed to come to urban areas for treatment.

I'd like to table the CBC News article and a copy of the letter. It is a letter to Minister Jane Philpott from Ontario physicians regarding this violation. In Ontario, doctors are uniting against this clear violation of patients' right to privacy.

Will the government of Manitoba also stand up against this violation of privacy rights on indigenous patients?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I want to thank my friend for raising this important issue, and, certainly, privacy for all Manitobans when it comes to issues of health care is important to this government and I think to other governments across Canada as well.

We will be undertaking, as required, a review of the PHIA legislation this fall. It is a five-year mark where the review has to take place. These are the sort of suggestions and concerns we would like to have raised. I'm glad she's raised it in the House, and I'd be happy to speak with her privately as part of the review that we'll be undertaking this fall on PHIA, Madam Speaker.

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

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Implementation Commitment

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Thank you for that answer. I genuinely feel so blessed at that answer.

Madam Speaker, I believe all of us want to turn a corner in the situation of indigenous people in Canada. Much progress has been made and is being made. The contributions of Senator Murray Sinclair, Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are enormous.

Will the government today reaffirm its support for the implementation and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Justice): That was an excellent question. I appreciate very much the member raising it, and I was proud in this House to be one of the members—but all members of this House and all

political parties supported legislation to support the truth and reconciliation process that was done. Previously, we agreed unanimously to support that process.

We committed at that point as an opposition; we continue to be committed as a government. And I believe that that is the commitment of all members of this House, Madam Speaker.

Legislative Agenda Progress Update

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Madam Speaker, our strong Progressive Conservative team is focused on fixing our finances, repairing our services and rebuilding our economy. It's clear, by contrast, the dysfunctional NDP are out of ideas. They have no private members' bills on the Order Paper, no opposition days identified and only one speaker prepared to debate Bill 7.

Can the Government House Leader provide an update on the progress of our ambitious legislative agenda?

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): I'd like to first say how exciting it is to serve as Government House Leader for the largest majority in this province in more than 100 years.

You know, our members are bringing fresh energy and new ideas to this House. We are bringing forward legislation to improve financial oversight, to restore basic democratic rights, to make elections fairer, to increase transparency, to eliminate waste and duplication, to increase protection for at-risk children, to combat sexual violence.

And I want to say there's a whole lot more where that came from, Madam Speaker. What a great day it is to be in this House.

Fossil Fuel Report Report Costs

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Last week and this week, I and other members of our NDP team have been trying to get a very simple answer from this government. They paid some amount of money for a report from a US consulting firm telling Manitoba should burn more fossil fuels.

I understand why they're embarrassed by that, but will they please tell us how much they paid?

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has given us a range between \$400,000 and \$8 million. I'm wondering if

anyone over there might be able to narrow that a little bit.

Thank you.

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

I'd like to point out to him that it's interesting he wants to talk about anything, just not the—Manitoba Hydro debt went from \$12 billion to \$25 billion, and, to date, we have had no concrete answers from members opposite what they did when they had this information.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, Madam Speaker, I think it's obvious a supplementary question is required because we still did not get an answer to the question.

Let me ask this a slightly different way: If our hard-working NDP team, on behalf of Manitobans, were to file a freedom of information request to the minister's office asking did he seek Hydro's input on how much that study cost, what would that number be? Did he ask for that information from Hydro?

Mr. Schuler: I appreciate the member's question because I'd like to put on the record that the entire bipole project was never put in front of the Public Utilities Board, but, instead, our government has decided we are going to have five open houses on the Bipole III line where the member can come forward, all members can come forward, and ask their questions of Manitoba Hydro directly. The board chair and a designate and the CEO will be at each and every one of these meetings.

This is truly the most open and transparent government in the history of this province.

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

Tendering Inquiry

Mr. Altemeyer: Orwell would be proud of that answer, Madam Speaker.

The other aspect to all of this that no one on the government side has agreed to stand up and be accountable for is the question of tendering. A large contract, whether it was \$400,000, as the Premier suggested, or \$8 million, as the Premier suggested, or somewhere in between there, most Manitobans would think that's a large enough contract; it should

probably have gone to tender. If it didn't, then let's hear that. If there's a reasonable explanation for it, let's hear that.

And, most important of all, could we get any answer or any plan out of any of these ministers ever?

Thank you.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to tell him that I answered his question last week. He can go to any of our open houses that Manitoba Hydro's holding, ask the same questions repetitively at each one if he wishes.

But where was he—where was he—when his government was launching into an array of untendered contracts without shopping around? So many, in fact, that the Auditor General of Manitoba commented that the government did not have a concern for getting value for money.

Where was he when they did the fancy photo op with an untendered \$100-million contract on a shiny red helicopter? Where was he when his colleague was spending millions of dollars buying Tiger Dam flood protection equipment from a pal without shopping at all over six years? Where was he when his government was covering all this up? Where was he then?

* (14:20)

He was in government, and he didn't do anything about it. Now he's in opposition and we're doing something about it.

Civil Service Positions Request to Table Review

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): One thing that's become apparent about this Premier and this government, they have no answers, no plan and no interest in governing for all the people of Manitoba.

Last week, the Finance Minister announced that he would be cutting 112 jobs from the civil service. The minister said that he received recommendations from his private-sector review in order to cut these jobs. Sadly, Madam Speaker, he hasn't released this document, so we don't really have any basis to understand upon which of—the basis upon which these recommendations have been made.

So, Madam Speaker, will the minister release the document today?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for the Civil Service): We have conveyed clearly, Madam Speaker, and Manitobans understand that the challenge that this government has inherited and, indeed, the challenge facing all Manitobans, is considerable, a challenge in respect of almost a \$1-billion deficit, quantified in the Public Accounts released just a week, two ago.

The member understands that we as a government are taking strong steps to go in the right direction. It is work that we must undertake. It is work that we undertook, leading by example, reducing the number of government ministers from 18 to 12. This is the next step along this path, recognizing that a senior management component that has risen by more than four times the rate of the overall civil service is simply not sustainable.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, cutting 112 jobs isn't a plan. It's just—simply takes bread off the table of Manitobans.

Now, Madam Speaker, the minister refused to identify exactly what these positions are and who's affected.

So, I would ask him today: Will he table that list so those families can get on with planning the futures he's taken away from them?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, first of all, the member doesn't understand the announcement that we made last week was clearly driven by data clearly showing that the increase of that senior civil service within the overall complement of the civil service was four times the rate. That's not sustainable.

We've looked outside at other jurisdictions. We've done analysis. We're relying on the recommendations of the partner that we're working with through that fiscal performance review, all of this lining up and indicating something needs to be done.

This growth happened when the NDP was government. They did not undertake to do this work on behalf of all Manitobans. It's necessary work. We will do that work.

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

Mr. Allum: Madam Speaker, the minister says I don't understand, and yet this is the minister who said he'd found \$122 million in savings, and there's \$108 million in cuts. It's a minister who said that—but

the deficit was this, and he overestimated it by \$166 million. It's a minister who has a list of 112 positions in the civil service, and he won't tell those families who's on his chopping block.

So could he at least, today, tell us that these are the only jobs he's going to cut and he's not going to ruin Christmas for other families working in the civil service?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, if the member would trouble himself to read the press release or go out and read the media that was done on this, he would understand that this is an initiative that we are embarking on. We said that the decisions that need to be made will be made department by department through analysis, measuring to see what is available to us through natural attrition, through job reductions, through other efficiency measures. It is not a fait accompli, rather it is work that proceeds now and will extend into 2017 and 2018. I reject the politics of fear. We do this on behalf of all Manitobans and in order to strengthen the front line.

Regional Health Boards Reduction of Members

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, the regional health authority boards were established to serve as a link between the health system and the people that it serves. These boards, which include health professionals, experts and community members, were unilaterally cut this summer by the Minister of Health.

Will the minister tell this House which board members, exactly, lost their positions? Was it a doctor? Was it a nurse, or was it a community member?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): We have decided to reduce the size of the boards in keeping with looking for efficiencies within government. We've also ensured that we went through a rigorous process to look for those who are the most skilled, unlike the former government who during the election, during the election campaign, during the caretaker part of government, decided to appoint more than two dozen members to the RHA during the election campaign. And if he wants to have further explanation about that he should talk to the person who's sitting right in front of him.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Bell's Purchase of MTS

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

The background of the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

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

Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, we'd like to continue debate on Bill 7.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the Government House Leader that this House will consider Bill 7 this afternoon, Bill 7, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, standing in the name of the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), who has unlimited time.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 7—The Labour Relations Amendment Act

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's my pleasure to rise again today in this Assembly and talk a little bit about Bill 7, talk a little bit about what's wrong with the premise behind Bill 7.

But before I get there I just want to draw attention to something that really is becoming painfully obvious in this Legislature.

When we talk about child care, the government has no plan; when we talk about social housing, the government has no plan; when we talk about the North, the government has no plan; when we talk about jobs, the government has no plan. The economy: well, the government has no plan.

Well, let's talk about the east-side road. Once again, Madam Speaker, no plan. How about Freedom Road? Let's talk about that. Oh, wait—no plan there either. What about infrastructure? Again, no plan.

But, Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please. I understand that the member for Assiniboia has a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): There's many rules in this House that say that a member should stay on topic. If they're so keen on discussing Bill 7, why don't we do it? He's not talking about Bill 7.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised—oh, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader?

* (14:30)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order the rules of the House certainly give members latitude when making speeches. I listened to the member for two hours yesterday, and almost every word that he spoke was on Bill 7 and I'm certain that that is what his intention is this afternoon: to speak on Bill 7.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order, I would indicate that we would encourage the member to keep his comments relevant to Bill 7 and the principles of Bill 7. I would indicate that this appears

to be more a dispute of the facts, that there is no point of order. But I would encourage relevance in all of us as we debate these issues.

* * *

Mr. Lindsey: I guess if the member opposite would've been patient for one more second his question would've been answered. Because the whole point of the conversation was to talk about things that this government doesn't seem to have a plan for as a lead up to the one-and-only thing that they do seem to have a plan for, and that's to attack working people in this province, Bill 7 being one part of that attack on working people. So I'm sorry that the member ran out of patience, but Bill 7 is one part of an attack on working people.

The only plans that this government has put forward to date are not to raise the minimum wage, which is an attack on working people. They've come up with a plan to cut jobs in the civil service, which is an attack on working people. And the emphasis of my words today are Bill 7, which, again, is an attack on working people.

It's shameful that the only plans that this government seems to have are to attack hard-working Manitobans. The only plans they have are to take the rights away from hard-working Manitobans. The only plan they have is to take food out of the mouths of hard-working Manitobans, and for that, Madam Speaker, they should be ashamed, and I feel bad for all hard-working Manitobans.

So let's just have a brief recap of that which we talked about yesterday, just so that the members opposite are sure that we are, in fact, still talking about Bill 7.

An Honourable Member: Remind me too.

Mr. Lindsey: The member from Fort Rouge would like me to remind him of some of the points we covered yesterday as well. So, certainly, this member is more than happy to accommodate all members of this House to bring those points forward again and talk about and really, hopefully, at the end of the day, at least one of the members opposite the lightbulb will come on and they'll understand why this is an attack on working people.

So what's the basic premises, once again, of Bill 7?

Well, as we talked about yesterday, it's supposedly about democracy and it's supposedly every Manitoban is in favour of democracy, and,

certainly, I'm in favour of democracy as well. There's many different forms that democracy takes throughout the world, throughout Canada. There's different rules for different things. One of the clearest forms of democracy that we could see anywhere is really when working people in a nondemocratic workplace—because make no mistake about it again, a workplace is not a democratic institution. Clearly, there's a boss who makes the rules and clearly there are workers. If the boss makes—[interjection]

Well, I hear one of the members opposite saying they're a team. Clearly, he's not been in some of the workplaces I've been in, because they are clearly not a team. They're not a democracy.

There's a need for unions in this world. There's a stronger need today than there's been for many years.

But to get back to the point of democracy, before I vector off—[interjection] And the members like to comment and I'm not afraid of their comments. In fact, sometimes I welcome them because, really, it gets to the heart of the problem that they don't understand. So a workplace, again, is not a democracy.

So they talk about a secret ballot, and because they have no concept of how a union gets organized in the first place, they wrap themselves in the words with no understanding of the words. When workers sign a union card during an organizing drive, they do so of their own free will and there can be no clearer demonstration of their will to join a union than when a super majority of 65 per cent has expressed a free will to join a union. That, Madam Speaker, that is democracy in action. That is real democracy. That's not an illusion of democracy. That's not some vague concept that the members opposite seem to have. That's real democracy affecting real people in real workplaces in this province.

So why would this government want to change? Why would this government want to make it more difficult for workers to join a union? And, again, Madam Speaker, let's be perfectly clear about this. Forcing a union certification to go to a secret ballot vote—to use their words—every time will discourage unionization. It will put another roadblock in the way of workers exercising their true democratic rights. Why does this government want to do that? Because they don't like to have a strong middle class; because that's really not what they're about. That's not the friends that donate to their party. That's not the debt that's owed. The strong middle class, the working

class, the impoverished are not their supporters. They want to ensure going forward that the voice of workers is muted.

There's been innumerable studies undertaken by innumerable people so much smarter than me that clearly point to lower levels of unionization equal a bigger wage disparity, and make no mistake about what that means. That means that less and less people in this province will enjoy more and more of the money. More and more of the wealth will be concentrated in less and less of the hands, the hands of the few that show so much greed, Madam Speaker, while they basically steal the money, steal the bread and butter out of the mouths of children, and that's really quite shameful when you think about it.

* (14:40)

But that's what this bill is about. This bill is nothing more than that. You can wrap it up in whatever pretty paper you want. You can try and sell it to the public in whatever means you want, using the buzzwords, again, which a politician in the States seems to be so adept at using. I shudder to think that Donald Trump-style politics come to this province where we use the vague impression of what a word means to wrap up people's emotions rather than have the meaningful debate on what the concepts really mean.

As I've said earlier, Madam Speaker, there's no truer expression of the workers in a workplace democratically expressed free will to join a union than when they sign a union card; and, when they have the super majority of 65 per cent of those workers, there is no clearer expression. Any attempt to always say that you have to have this secret ballot vote that this government likes to trot out is merely to put a roadblock in the way of workers being able to defend themselves, of workers having rights in this province.

So what are they afraid of with workers having rights? Well, they're afraid of everyday, hard-working Manitobans having a greater share of the profits that they've earned with their blood, sweat and tears.

When the resources come out of the ground, very few people benefit from those resources, although there are some workers. Oh, wait a minute; those workers are highly unionized workers, do enjoy a greater share of that wealth than what

workers do in the service industry for example, where the level of unionization is much lower.

And thank heavens over the years we've had unions—unions that help everyday workers find their voice, unions that help everyday Manitobans stand up for their rights. And I hear the members say nobody's arguing that. He's right, because to argue that point would be to argue the facts. To argue an emotional concept of a word is so much easier for this government, that they don't have to dirty their hands with facts. All they need to do is—which they're very adapt at, and I give them credit, throughout the proceedings in this House of throwing out their favourite buzz words and getting a round of applause for themselves while they fail miserably, fail Manitobans miserably, fail you, Madam Speaker, miserably with their refusal to discuss facts, whether it's facts that are asked in this House on a daily basis when no answers are given, or when it's in the public sphere when the facts of why they're attempting to attack workers through their buzz words of secret ballot, through their buzz word of democracy.

They don't want to debate the facts, Madam Speaker, and that became really clearly evident with this bill when they held off introducing it to second reading almost as long as they could. Well, in fact, I'm sure they would have held it off until much later today if the court of public opinion wasn't maybe mounting against them and they were afraid of a little backlash that maybe once the press started reporting that why are they holding off, why are they afraid to debate this bill, then and only then did the bill come forward.

Facts, Madam Speaker, can be a powerful tool in an argument, but they only become a powerful tool in an argument if they're allowed to be presented.

So, again, to reiterate, the facts in this are quite simply the unwarranted, unnecessary, unneeded attack on working people. And again, whether it's attacking working people by refusing to raise the minimum wage so that those families can't support themselves or whether it's an attack on working people by the introduction of an anti-democratic bill like Bill 7.

So the members are faithfully paying attention still. I'm not near as fired up as I was yesterday. And I changed my tie today, Madam Speaker, because yesterday I had a blue tie on and it was choking me. It was making me, you know, just so uncomfortable, so I changed my tie today.

One of the—[interjection] Yes. That would have probably done it, all right. One of the strongest bodies of labour in this province is the Manitoba Federation of Labour. It's not the only one. It is the umbrella organization that really represents the majority of unionized workers in this province. And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, as they will tell you when this bill gets to the committee level, that they are most 'vehemently' opposed to Bill 7.

Now, the member's opposite will probably say, well, that's self-serving because it'll affect their members. Well, wait a minute. If they say that, then they're freely admitting that this bill is an attempt to stop unionization because that's what it is.

So, of course organized labour, whose mantra is to organize the unorganized for the sole purpose of giving them a voice, has a strong interest when a government such as this introduces a bill, introduces legislation that will make it more difficult for workers to organize, because that is not in the workers' best interests, and that's where organized labour has the workers' best interests at heart.

They are also very concerned, Madam Speaker, as I've said, that passing Bill 7 will make it harder for everyday Manitobans to exercise their democratic right to join a union. Fewer unionized workplaces will mean fewer families with the benefits that come with having a union, benefits that many members of this Legislature clearly enjoy, benefits that their families clearly enjoy. And we talked about those yesterday: weekends, eight-hour shifts, holiday pay, pensions.

One of the things that I'm very proud of in my role previous to this, as a long-time member of a labour union, was my ability, along with the backing of my union, to save workers' lives. When I first took over as a full-time health and safety representative, the company I worked for had a dead worker on average every 15 months, and if anybody in this room thinks that that would've changed without—not just me, I'm certainly not taking the credit for it. I was one voice—one voice—in organized labour, one voice in organized labour that pushed government to make changes—to make changes in laws that would clearly protect workers and keep workers alive. And it was only through the strong voice of organized labour lead by little people on the shop floor that saw too many bodies and too many broken bones.

* (14:50)

Without organized labour there to lead that charge, without organized labour there to know that they're behind me when I was standing up speaking quite publicly out against what was taking place, nothing would have changed.

Organized labour was very effective at lobbying governments, lobbying the former NDP government. We weren't as successful at lobbying former Progressive Conservative governments because, as we see with this Progressive Conservative government, they don't listen to workers. They don't listen to organized labour—[*interjection*]

Well, the member opposite says, come on, we're reasonable people. And I guess if I was a major corporation in this province, a big business, maybe even a small business, I might agree with him. If I was a worker, working in a—I don't know—a turkey factory, who works long hours, does gruelling work, repetitive, mind-numbing, for little reward, with no rights, I'm pretty sure, Madam Speaker, I would not agree with him that they're a pretty reasonable bunch. Because if they were a pretty reasonable bunch, they wouldn't stand in the way of those very workers organizing and trying to protect themselves and trying to make a better life for themselves.

Madam Speaker, workers, people from other countries, come here to enjoy a better life. That's why people from all over want to come to this country. And, slowly, under regressive Conservative governments, the very fabric that draws people here is being destroyed. The reason that people come to this country is because for many years there's been a social conscience, a social conscience more visible in our Canadian fabric than it ever was in the United States.

And as we move more towards an American style of labour relations, of government, of using the media, of abandoning the facts for the emotion, we become a less desirable place to live for the vast majority of Manitobans. And that's too bad. That's why I got involved with a union once upon a time myself, was to try and make life better for my fellow workers—[*interjection*]

Apparently, we're getting through to somebody, which is good, because it's always nice to know that somebody's paying attention. So, Madam Speaker—[*interjection*—I have no idea what you're talking about.

An Honourable Member: We have no idea what you're talking about.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, then you should pay more attention. And if you have no idea what I'm talking about, let me repeat myself.

Madam Speaker, Bill 7 is not required in this province. There's been no hue and cry from anybody, any person, any organization that need to be introduced. So why do we even have to debate this?

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I implore, beg the government to reconsider, to save us all a lot of time at committee, just withdraw the bill and let's get back to the business of governing this province.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

But then, of course, Madam Speaker, that would get back to my earlier points. They'd have to have a plan about something else, which seems to be somewhat bereft at the moment.

So the government wants to undermine Manitobans' constitutional right to join a union, and Bill 7 is a disingenuous tactic to rob them of their rights to organize. There's no reason to make it harder for Manitobans, vulnerable workers to unionize—no reason whatsoever. As has been said so many times already, is really this was a solution looking for a problem, a problem that didn't exist, a problem that doesn't exist.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

But, if this government keeps on its present tact of attacking working Manitobans, I suppose it'll be a problem that will exist, and that's too bad that they've created the legislative framework that will allow them to attack workers and make it harder for workers to fight back. That's just shameful a tactic.

So, again, to get back to where I was, this bill really is about the rhetoric; it's not about the facts. It's about a belief that, unfortunately, some members opposite have very strongly; I suspect not all members opposite. I mean, I'm sure most of you fellows are pretty decent folks; some maybe not so much. The ones that thoroughly believe in their own minds that there's a need for this legislation are the ones that I feel sorry for, because someday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and welcome back to the Chair, by the way, someday, one of their family members, be it their child, be it their grandchild, is not going to enjoy the life of privilege. They're going to be working when they're 30 years old in a fast-food restaurant, through no fault of their own. I mean, mom and dad maybe made pretty good money over

the years, but not every child rises to the top, not even theirs, no matter what opportunity they have that other Manitobans don't have. So—

An Honourable Member: Relevance.

Mr. Lindsey: It is very relevant, because attacking working people today with this bill is attacking your children and your grandchildren's future. That's why it's relevant, Mr. Speaker—Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the government's spin on this is that it's restoring a secret ballot vote, as though the secret ballot vote—[*interjection*] Let me say the word democracy, and I'm sure I can get another round of applause. [*interjection*] Not today? Not today. That's kind of too bad.

So, again, it's about restoring rights that workers already have. It's about restoring rights that Manitobans already have, because, when they sign a union card, it is a secret ballot vote. Nothing could be more secret, and nobody will keep it more secret than a union. And 65 per cent of that super majority has clearly expressed their free will to join a union. Anything that they throw up, that this government throws up, that gets to Manitobans' emotion about a secret ballot without bothering to throw the facts out there at the same time, the fact that if a union organizing drive doesn't have 60 per cent of cards signed, doesn't have 65 per cent—65 per cent—which is way over and above a simple majority—if they don't have 65 per cent of the workers signed up, then it has to go to another vote. It has to go, then, to the second vote.

* (15:00)

So all the things that they've wrapped the flag around themselves in, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are already there. They don't understand that, and apparently they're never going to until it's one of their own that needs to join a union. And the roadblocks that this government throws in the way today will prevent that from happening.

So we talk about other jurisdictions, and the 65 per cent requirement is possibly the most restrictive already in Canada. Even with a simple majority vote or a secret ballot vote that this bunch want to have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would only require 50 per cent plus one. Sixty-five per cent—I know some of them may not be that good with math—is a lot higher percentage required to pass that.

In fact, the question has been asked and not answered. The question will be asked in committee,

and the question will be asked many times: What if 100 per cent of the workers in a workplace sign a union card? A hundred per cent: You can't get a better majority than that. Every worker in the workplace has freely expressed their desire to join a union, and that's still not good enough for this government. A hundred per cent of workers expressing a desire to join a union is not good enough. No, we have to go and have a second vote.

And as much as the members opposite might like to pretend that employers won't intimidate, won't threaten and won't coerce workers into voting against the union once they're aware that that union drive's out there, they're sadly mistaken again. Because they haven't been there, they don't know. They've bought into the concept that they've been sold, that their leadership has sold them based on emotion, not based on fact. And the fact is that workers in the most vulnerable workplaces, the most vulnerable workers—new Canadians, Canadians with little education, Canadians that are already disadvantaged—will be the ones that are most clearly affected by any attempt to limit their ability to join a union. And that's really quite disgusting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government has such low regard for anyone other than themselves.

You know, the other day, I heard a comment from the other side about some of our Canadians who live on First Nations communities, that if they don't like where they are, if they can't find a job where they are, well, they should just move. And those very people that come to our cities are the people that will unfortunately fall into the workplaces that need unions, because they don't have the same education level that somebody in the city has, because they haven't had the same opportunity. Opportunity has been denied them, and when they're forced to leave their home community as the member opposite suggested and come to our glorious cities, opportunity will continue to be denied them. They'll be forced into low-wage, no-respect jobs if they can find jobs.

And this bill, this Bill 7, will once again deny them opportunity, and, really, that's what this government seems to be about. There's no plan for anything else other than denying opportunity for the people that need it the most, and that's terrible.

So maybe at the committee stage, who knows, maybe there will be some amendments made. Maybe we'll make some amendments along the way to try and restore some dignity, to try and restore some

rights, to try and get us over this hurdle of attacking working Manitobans.

Do I have a lot of confidence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that those amendments will be listened to, will be passed, will be considered? No, I don't because there's already been, in the limited amount of time that we've had to talk about this bill, there's been suggestions about how to make it better. When we talked at the budgetary process about it, suggestions were made, but no changes have been forthcoming because this government is very set in their minds that it's our way or no way.

They're not interested in amendments that we might put forward. Well, they stand up and say they want to be open and transparent and work together. Clearly, what we've seen so far is that's not true either. They don't want to work. They don't want to listen. They don't want to work with us.

My friend from Fort Rouge put a bill on the table last week that was a very good bill. Could it have been made better? Sure. Were they listening? Did they want to take that bill and make it better? No. They wanted to introduce their own bill, which was really my friend from Fort Rouge's bill.

Suggestions have been made about how to make this Bill 7 better. Suggestions have been made about how to make the existing legislation better. Do they want to listen to those? No, no, they don't. They just want to ram this piece of legislation through because the government knows that it will inhibit working people from joining a union, and that's what this is about. It's making sure that the voices of hard-working Manitobans are not heard. They're not heard because, as an individual without the backing of a union, if you try and raise your voice and try and protect your fellow man, the consequences to you will be very harsh.

If you're a union member who wants to raise your voice and protect your fellow man, you can do that. It doesn't mean you can run wild and say whatever you want because, even in that environment, there's rules. There's what's acceptable and what isn't. But what's not acceptable today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this government continuing to attack working people.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we talked a little bit yesterday about some organizing drives that didn't go well. Well, as it turns out, at the end of the day, maybe they did because some of those very cases were so egregious once the Labour Board looked at

it. Once they took into account the threats and intimidation and things that the employer had done, they very quickly came to the realization that certification was granted simply because of the horrendous things that the workplace had done.

* (15:10)

You know, I hear lots of talking off on the other side and not much listening. It doesn't really surprise me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they're hollering back and forth amongst themselves, having their own conversation, while they're here to listen to debate on the bill.

So we talked again about some cases yesterday that went before the Labour Board, and I encouraged the members opposite to look and see if they could find some cases where the union had intimidated workers. I challenged them, and yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no one has come forward with one case—not one case. Contrary to all the comments and all the things that were said yesterday, not one member opposite has come forward with one single case that supported that which they were on about. So I'm left with the conclusion that they don't exist, and yet very quickly we were able to find cases in the Manitoba Labour Board files—recent cases that clearly do exist—where once a vote was called, workers were intimidated, workers were fired. And they all say no, no, that's not the way it is in workplaces. We're teams; we're great places.

Clearly, that's not true, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because if they were all great places where everybody felt like they were part of a team, there would be no organizing drives. There would be nobody that wanted to belong to a union. When a union showed up and said, do you want to sign a card, quite clearly workers in a loving family workplace environment would say no, we're really happy where we are. We don't need a union. Go away.

But, clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the case. Contrary to the member opposite's very limited experience, there are workplaces that are not a team. There are workplaces that are not one big happy family. There are workplaces that clearly need unions.

A certain market was found to have committed unfair labour practice in the form of distributing written communications to their employees that threatened potential changes to working terms and conditions in the form of attempting to buy a no vote

and, once again, the Labour Board ruled on that case of that one big happy family that the employer had violated the workers' rights. Once it became clear that there was going to be a vote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those workers were threatened. Those workers were intimidated.

And that's what's wrong with this bill. That's what's wrong with this bill, and yet that's the very reason that this government wants to introduce this bill. Because from the time an employer becomes aware that there's an organizing drive until the time of the vote is the time when they ramp up the pressure, make threats, either veiled or open, against those very workers if they join a union, and at that point in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, keep in mind that they do not have the protection of a union yet. They're merely seeking the protection of a union.

Lots of workplaces that need a union never get one because the drive stops long before they ever get to the point of asking a union to come and help them sign cards because the troublemakers, as management often likes to call workers that stand up for themselves, have been threatened out of existence before they ever get to signing cards. *[interjection]* That is exactly the fundamental of the private vote, my friend, the private vote where 65 per cent of those workers have clearly voted, have clearly signed the card, have clearly said they want to join a union. That is the point of that democracy. Not in a secret ballot.

Throw out the buzzwords: democracy, secret ballot. When they sign those union cards, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a secret ballot. It's not open to the public. It's not open to their fellow workers. It is the most secret secret ballot that they're ever going to partake in.

And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a super majority of those is required 65 per cent, not a simple majority, not the 50 plus one, 65 per cent of that secret ballot, and yet this government says we have to have another vote. We have to give the employer an opportunity to harass the workers, and threaten the workers, and try and get the workers to change their mind when, clearly, 65 per cent of them have already expressed their point of view in a secret ballot system. It's very unfortunate.

Yes, I'm sorry, but I do believe, and I believe very strongly in the rights of working Manitobans. And I find it very egregious when I see members opposite that are supposed to represent all of Manitobans not doing that; they're only representing

their special interest friends. They're not representing the vast majority of Manitobans wishes.

And make no mistake, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they talk about, well, we had an election and they won the election. Clearly, that's true. I can't dispute that. What percentage of Manitobans voted in that election? Was it 50 per cent? Certainly wasn't 100 per cent. A lot of Manitobans didn't express their view which is unfortunate. And yet—and yet—we're willing to accept that as being democracy, but we're not willing to accept a democratic system that clearly requires 65 per cent to have clearly expressed their desire. That's not democracy, because well, that might accomplish something that this government doesn't like. And that's just so shameful.

We can continue to cite examples, and we can find them in other jurisdictions. I was reading one the other day about temporary foreign workers that were treated so horribly that imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people come from another country, don't speak our language, and are treated no better than slaves. And they, clearly, stood up for themselves in the province of BC and expressed their desire to join a union, because they very quickly realized that was the only protection they were going to have in this great country of ours—was to join a union.

And yet, in the province of Manitoba, this government wants to deny those workers, those types of workers, the very right that they need. And, again, the members opposite really don't want me citing a bunch more examples while they fail to excite—or recite any to support their claim.

You know, we've asked the Premier (Mr. Pallister), we've asked the minister, we've asked a lot of people to supply us some something that indicated there was a need for this. Was there a lot of labour strife in the province? No, strikes were at an all-time low. And, while I can quote examples of employer abuse of the system, the current system clearly worked. It worked for the workers. It worked for the employers. What it didn't do was protect employers that were bad employers, which is why workers wanted to join a union in the first place, not because they were one big happy family, not because the workplace was a team, as some members would suggest that all workplaces are teams; they're not. They're certainly not. Workplaces may seem like they are and, certainly, if you're the boss and you treat your employees somewhat harshly, you might think that they all love you, because they're all afraid

to say anything until, all of a sudden, one of them stands up and says: This—this—cannot be—this cannot be. Mr. Deputy Speaker, one worker will stand up and then two and then three and then six and then 10, and yet this government doesn't want to recognize their true desire to join a union.

* (15:20)

This government is afraid of unions. This government is afraid of unionized workers. This government doesn't respect workers. This government doesn't respect unionized workers, for sure. You know, we've asked any number of times of the Premier (Mr. Pallister), do you have any union personnel on your Premier's Enterprise Team, which—maybe that's another plan that didn't come to fruition, because when we first sat at the first sitting of this Legislature, we heard a lot about the Premier's Enterprise Team. We don't hear so much about it anymore, because maybe if he had a team, they'd have to have a plan. And they clearly don't have a plan, and it doesn't sound like they have a team.

So it's shameful. It's—they couldn't find people to be on their team, I guess, the team that wanted to destroy the fabric of working Manitobans' lives. It's—you know, they really—I thought a lot about this. Charles Dickens comes to mind. Well, really, you know, it was a different time. It was a different era. It was a place where workers didn't have rights. And I don't know whether it was a movie or a play or where I saw it where little Timmy had his hands out saying please, sir, can I have some more, and that's what this government wants to reduce working Manitobans to, to begging for scraps. They want to deny them the right to stand up and stand up strongly and demand their rights in this province and that's wrong.

When we get to the committee stage of this bill, they're going to hear from average Manitobans. Well, they may hear from some bosses. I don't know what speakers that the members opposite have lined up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They may have some bosses that are their friends; I don't know. I have some bosses that are my friends, so they may too. I never once have suggested that every workplace, every boss is a bad boss, is a bad workplace. *[interjection]* I would suggest to member's comment opposite that some members of some unions don't appear to always have everybody's best interests at heart, because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they're humans. And if humans treated each other fairly and honestly and openly, we wouldn't have a need for

unions, we wouldn't have a need for governments, we wouldn't have a need for religion, we wouldn't have a need for a lot of things. But unfortunately, sometimes that's not the case.

So the unions have systems in place to make sure that their members, that their leadership that doesn't have the best interests of the members at heart, do they have systems in place to control that? And the answer is yes.

Now, I don't expect the members opposite to know that or to understand that because they don't understand what a union is. What they bought into is the same old rhetoric about the union boss. It's another word that—couple of words that they like to throw out and wrap themselves in, like democracy. Well, union boss is the same thing. It brings up an image of some thug with a broken nose who's got a crowbar and going to break your leg if you don't do as he says. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest that the members opposite quit watching old gangster movies and get into the 21st century.

Certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unions don't do everything that I would like them to do, because, if a union did everything I wanted it to do, the world would be a better place. If a government did everything I wanted it to do, the world would be a better place. But we need to make sure that governments don't drive us backwards.

We need to make sure that a government isn't regressive, and that's what this government is. They're going to take us back, they're going to take us back to a time when workers didn't have rights. They're going to take us back to a time when workers didn't have jobs because, as we talked about earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their plan for this province is sorely lacking, whether it's jobs, whether it's the economy, whether it's how they're going to grow the North, whether it's how they're going to have some people working in the North. They don't have a plan, unless their plan is not to have us working because they don't have a plan to have us working and they don't seem real eager to make one, so then one is left to assume that they must be planning the opposite because that seems to be working. So they can claim credit for that. Their plan to put Manitobans out of work seems to be working, and that's terrible. *[interjection]* I do need a coffee. It calms me.

Unfortunately, this government doesn't calm me. When they introduce such legislation as Bill 7, it gets under my skin; it upsets me to no end because I know what the alternatives are. I know what happens

to workers that don't have rights. They die at work. They get maimed at work. They get fired for no reason. They get fired because somebody doesn't like them. That's the way it is when we go back to a previous era where workers didn't have rights.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will certainly fight tooth and nail to make sure that we move forward in this province, not backwards. Bill 7 is a giant step backwards. Any government that claims to want to make Manitoba the most improved province—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: I thank the members opposite for once again proving that the puppets still dance when you pull the string. *[interjection]* Well, okay, maybe some of my own do too.

This really gets to the heart of the matter. When you say the buzz word, they all jump up and clap and pay attention because that's what it's all about for them. It's the buzz word; it's the emotion that that word will bring out. It's not about the facts. It's always just the sound bite. It's the word democracy that they wrap themselves in it, it's secret ballot votes that they wrap themselves in with no concept of the facts, with no regard for the facts which is really too bad, because I'm sure if they paid attention to the facts, if they had some vague concept of the facts they would come to a different opinion very quickly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is too bad.

So let's get back on case. I guess maybe I vectored off a little and for that I apologize. I've forgotten where I was in my notes now, so I just have to start over.

* (15:30)

You know, there's workers at a fast-food restaurant, a well-known fast-food restaurant—it's a local fast-food restaurant, that the threats and intimidation were so 'agrarious' that even the employer had to admit, yes, we're bad; we said those things; we did those things. Even the employer had to admit that they violated the rule of law.

And yet, knowing full well that those examples exist today—not 50 years ago, not 100 years ago—those examples exist today, this government still wants to throw a roadblock in the way of workers organizing for no other reason than, I guess, their friends in big businesses, their business bosses, want them to.

That's payback—payback for voting for them? Payback, I don't know, for what? Well, I do know, but I wouldn't want to make unproven allegations in this Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I won't. But clearly it's payback. It's payback to their friends so that their friends can profit and the profits can continue to grow while the workers' wages do not.

Bill 7 very clearly takes away workers' rights. Contrary to what anybody else might try and tell the workers, what anybody else may try and tell the public, this bill is all about limiting workers' rights to organize. It's throwing as many roadblocks up as this government can without appearing too obvious in the public's eyes. So it'll be the death of workers by a thousand cuts. They'll make a few little minor changes now that make it harder for workers to organize, to make it harder for workers to represent themselves, to make it harder for workers to get ahead in the world, and everybody in the public will buy into it because they're wrapped up in the words democracy; they're wrapped up in the words secret ballot—secret ballot that already exists but this government doesn't want to take the time to explain that fact to anybody, including their own members, that workers already participate in a secret ballot process, that workers that haven't expressed a super majority of 65 per cent still have to go to the second step of having a secret ballot vote which allows them to be exposed to intimidation, threats and decreases the likelihood of them being successful in their union drive, and that's really a shame.

You know, this government, I've talked a little bit about their attack on workers and their plan to attack workers, which everything else we've talked about when we first—when I first came to this Legislative Assembly, I heard a lot from the members opposite about their plan north. Well, I didn't hear a lot—I heard the words plan north a lot—

An Honourable Member: Yes! North.

Mr. Lindsey: Yes! North. I stand corrected; it's Yes! North. Good thing that it was grilled into the members opposite so they were able to correct me and make sure that I got the term right.

But we don't hear much about Yes! North anymore because they don't have a plan for the North. They don't have a plan to protect employees and, really, that's all wrapped into the same mentality that brings about a Bill 7. They clearly don't seem to appear to care that 10 per cent of the population of Churchill is unemployed, immediately, just like that. And that's another example, the same as—

An Honourable Member: Is he on topic?

Mr. Lindsey: Yes, he is, but thank you for asking. That's another example of their attack on workers and that's what the topic of debate today is, is the attack on working people in this province.

Bill 7 is an attack on working people. Ignoring working people who all of a sudden find themselves unemployed is an attack on working people. And it's just—I use it as an example, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So what do we suppose the overall effect will be on working Manitobans in the years to come? If it's harder for workers to organize, which, as I've pointed out repeatedly, this bill will make it harder for workers to organize, harder for workers to be represented. The lower rates of unionization will disadvantage all working families, not just the ones that are unionized, because as workers organize and as unions are successful in negotiating collective agreements, it brings up not just the standard of living of the union members but it brings up the standard of living of all members of society.

And that's really at the heart of the matter before us. Bill 7 is merely one piece, I'm sure, of the overall puzzle that the minister—welcome for joining us, Mr. Minister—it's only one piece of the puzzle that we're going to see going forward. It's one small piece, but it's one small piece that has big effects, big effects on working people, and that's why they're introducing it. *[interjection]* Well, I'd better talk a little longer, then.

This bill is an attack on women because women statistically earn quite a bit less than men. When women in a workplace belong to a union, that difference goes down. I know in the workplace that I came from, man or woman, didn't matter. If you were doing the job, you got paid the same rate of pay. And that's as it should be. It's not how it is in many workplaces because not all workplaces are fair. And that's why workers want to organize.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, would it surprise you to know that Aboriginal workers earn \$6.60 cents an hour more, on average, when they work in a unionized workplace? That's something that people should be proud of, that a union represents all workers. They don't pick and choose. They don't pick and choose what workers they're going to represent. They fairly and equally represent all workers, which is something that this Legislative Assembly should strive for, to equally represent all Manitobans. But, clearly, when they introduce a bill like this, they've

made their intent to not treat all Manitobans equally and fairly painfully obvious, painfully obvious to everyone.

An Honourable Member: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House leader—Government House Leader.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): You cannot comment on any member's absence or presence in the House. Point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Point of order. Okay. Taken.

The honourable—the member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Lindsey: I certainly apologize if I inadvertently—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. Sorry. I'm meant to rule on the point of order. We can't use—make sure that you don't mention that people are out of—if they're not attending in the House or are absent in the House.

* * *

Mr. Lindsey: I certainly apologize if I did that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I shan't do it again.

So now I've lost my place again. Well, we're not quite—oh my, look at that, there's not much left on that page. One would think that might be in conclusion, but one would be wrong.

*(15:40)

You know, it's good that we can have a couple of laughs while we're talking about some very serious business. And I appreciate the fact that, you know, we can do that and we should be able to. But, at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, together we should be able to recognize the seriousness of that which we're talking about, which is the ability of workers to organize. It's a right that's guaranteed in the constitution.

As I pointed out yesterday, some other governments in other jurisdictions, namely Saskatchewan, namely under a progressive conservative government, chose to introduce legislation that even more clearer than this attacked workers. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that attack on workers was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. The regressive conservative government of Saskatchewan lost that battle.

The federal government, previous federal government, decided to pass some legislation, as well, that attacked working people and attacked their rights. And, after much debate and much carrying on, that government is no longer with us. And thank heavens for that. I might point out that they were also a regressive conservative government that was bent on attacking working people and making sure that big business came out ahead and workers did not. And that's really shameful. But they're not there anymore.

The present federal government has indicated that they're going to repeal those legislative changes that were made by the progressive Conservative government. And yet—and yet—Mr. Deputy Speaker, here we have another Conservative government, in our jurisdiction, that wants to try again. They failed twice—not this particular government, although some members of this particular government were members of that federal government that failed in their attempts to break the backs of working people. So now they're going to try in this province.

How many times—how many times—will they attack working people before they actually get away with it? I certainly hope not—not this time. I hope this is not the time that they get away with it, because I don't want to be a part of the province that broke the backs of working people, that broke the backs of unions, that made it so difficult for workers to freely express their right, to freely express their will, to freely 'express'—express their desire to join a union.

An Honourable Member: What's more freer than a secret ballot?

Mr. Lindsey: Absolutely nothing, my friend. And workers have clearly already done that when they signed a card, in secret.

An Honourable Member: Nothing secret about signing a card.

An Honourable Member: That's not secret. That's not secret.

Mr. Lindsey: They voted—clearly, the members opposite have no concept of how a union drive actually works. Clearly, the members opposite have no idea.

I have taken part in union drives, one in particular, although it was under federal jurisdiction. And, very clearly, the employer threatened workers, tried to intimidate workers, and, very clearly, the workers needed a union, and, very clearly, those

workers freely expressed their desire to join a union when they signed that union card. When they decided to put their jobs on the line, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and sign that union card, they clearly expressed, in secret, their desire to join a union. There is no system in place that's more secret than that. There's no system in place that requires a higher level of acceptance than that.

And yet this government won't even admit that if 100 per cent of workers clearly express their desire to join a union, that they won't accept that. They have to have a second vote. They have to make sure that workers are going to be subject to intimidation, threats and coercion. This government is bent on making sure that workers have as many stumbling blocks in their way as possible to limit their ability to join a union, because ideologically, they're against unions without knowing the facts, without knowing why people join unions in the first place, and that's too bad.

So let's recap. This Premier (Mr. Pallister)—*[interjection]* I didn't say end; I said recap. This Premier and his Conservative government, they have a record of putting workers at risk by opposing measures to create safer workplaces. I found this really troubling, that when they were in opposition—and not all members, certainly, were a part of that opposition group, so I shan't tar them all with the same brush, but the members that were voted against legislation to protect highway workers in construction zones, because they didn't think their lives were that important, I guess. They tried to end speed reduction for cars passing emergency workers. Huh, guess they didn't think their lives were that important either.

Now, one of the very first things that this government actually comes up with a plan for—and you are all included in this now, because you are all part of this government. One of the very first things they come up with is to introduce Bill 7, which is a law very clearly intended to weaken the ability to organize in a workplace. By weakening the ability to organize in a workplace, that will weaken workers' protection, whether it's health and safety laws, whether it's actually having somebody enforce health and safety laws, the absence of a union in a workplace puts their health, their safety, their lives at risk. But clearly this government doesn't care about that.

What concerns me going forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this government has also talked about

reducing red tape, getting some of those pesky regulations out of the way to make it easier for employers. And whether those regulations are protecting the environment so that our kids and grandkids have a future or whether those regulations are protecting workers such as workers in construction zones, flagmen, miners, you know, the ability of workers to have unions increases their ability to stay alive and healthy at work. And there can be no argument about that because the facts are very clear.

So one is left to conclude that this government doesn't care about workers, about whether workers get hurt at work, because they don't want them to be organized; they don't want them to belong to a union. And I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, without unions, the world becomes a whole lot less safe.

An Honourable Member: Nobody's arguing that.

Mr. Lindsey: Nobody's arguing that. You're right. They're merely arguing the point that workers will not be able to join unions freely, that employers will have the opportunity to threaten, coerce, intimidate, fire workers that want to express their right to join a union.

* (15:50)

And, again, I can't say this often enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'll say it again and again and again—I'll say it as many times as need to be said before somebody actually listens—the current system allows workers to have a secret ballot vote. In fact, if you only have 40 per cent of the workers signed up, it requires that second vote that this government is so insistent upon. But, when 65 per cent of workers have freely and clearly expressed their desire to join a union, this government doesn't accept that as being a democratic action; 65 per cent of workers have expressed their desire, but this government discounts that. This government doesn't like that outcome. This government says, no, we've got to give our friends in business a chance to threaten you. We have to give our friends in business a chance to fire you because we don't want you joining a union because they're ideologically opposed to unions. By very nature of being ideologically opposed to unions, they must obviously be opposed to all the good things that unions do, which is too bad.

When this government talks about they're going to fire 200 civil servants, they're managers, but they won't tell us who they are. They don't tell us who they are, nor do they tell them who they are because they want to be able to control those workers. They

want to be able to control those workers in ways that people in this Assembly don't understand because every one of those workers now is in fear that they may lose their job. That's a threat. That's intimidation. And that's what unions are against. And that's too bad, that again this government has shown its clear desire to attack working Manitobans, just as, you know, we go over it again, that Stephen Harper's Conservative government in Ottawa was against working people, was against unions, and did everything in their power to bring in laws that would break unions because, clearly, their bigger picture involved workers not being organized, workers not earning a decent standard of living, workers not being able to equally participate in the great wealth that this country generates.

The current Liberal government has said that they're going to repeal many of those anti-union, anti-worker bills. They haven't done it yet. And there's a few other things that they've said they're going to do that they haven't done yet. So I have high hopes that they will still live up to those promises and do away with those very undemocratic bills that were put in place.

We've talked about Saskatchewan and how their bill went to the Supreme Court of Canada and was found unconstitutional. You know, it was about a lot of things that involved unions. Today yours is about a secret ballot. Well, it isn't really. That's—it's about democracy. It's about democracy; it's about secret ballots; it's about all the fancy little buzzwords that say nothing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that say nothing at all but bring up that emotion again, which is too bad. *[interjection]* New notes are good.

So I talked a little bit earlier about a world-famous fast-food chain that became unionized. Well, not the whole thing, but one step at a time. And this—Tim Hortons, on Portage Avenue, here in Winnipeg. And I'm going to read parts of this. I won't read the whole thing, because I certainly don't want to bore the members opposite with a lot of details because they're not big on details.

A Tim Hortons location, on Portage Avenue, has become the iconic coffee chain's first unionized shop in Manitoba. Thirty-five employees have joined workers unite Canada, effective Wednesday—whatever the date was—'06, 11, 2:15. Support among staff was galvanized last winter after one employee who'd worked there for nearly five years was fired, Mr. Deputy Speaker, fired for allegedly talking to a union representative, nothing else. Talking to a union

representative got that worker fired. And yet—and yet—this government wants to say, well, that's okay, because that worker should be fired. Wait a minute. Why should that worker be fired for talking to a union representative? Union representatives not allowed to go for coffee? I know a lot union reps would argue that.

The union subsequently filed an unfair-labour practice against the employer, and that unfair labour practice was successful. The former employee was reinstated to her job and given \$1,500 to cover her emotional stress. And—and—according to the Labour Board, they issued a consent order granting a discretionary certification to the union after the franchise's management admitted it had engaged in several violations against workers' rights to unionize.

An Honourable Member: Automatic certification.

Mr. Lindsey: Automatic certification. And yet—

An Honourable Member: We're in favour of that.

Mr. Lindsey: You're not. You're not in favour of that, actually, because, once again, you're not sure what your group is in favour of.

There used to be a provision in the act that said that, in the interim, where there really was no dispute about the intent of the workers to join a union, there'd be an interim certification. That's not there anymore—that's not there anymore—it's sometimes the devil in the details that the members opposite have missed out on while they wrap themselves in the words.

An Honourable Member: Democracy.

Mr. Lindsey: There we go. I've got them trained now too. And it's too bad that they wrap themselves in the words and the emotion rather than the facts, because the facts can go a long way to clearing up why we're opposed to this legislation.

Once the franchise owner found out the union activity, he threatened to close the store down, take away employee benefits. The workers were afraid of losing their jobs. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who were these workers? Generally, most of them were newcomers to Canada, people that this employer clearly thought that he could bully, threaten, and that he could get away with it. But, clearly, under the existing laws, he could not.

Now, if this situation was to play itself out again, if this bill ever gets passed, would these workers be

as successful? I doubt it, because there'd be so many roadblocks thrown in their way to organizing that they'd be fired and out of jobs and they'd lose.

So that's in 2015 that that organizing drive took place and became successful, based on the threats and intimidation that that employer, which, you know, Tim Hortons—everybody likes Tim Hortons, right?

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Lindsey: It's a pretty good place. Everybody stops there and has coffee.

An Honourable Member: I don't.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, I don't either. I might stop at this one, though, now that I know it's unionized.

An Honourable Member: That's your right.

Mr. Lindsey: It is my right. And you know what? The workers at that store expressed their right by signing a union card. This bill—oh, Madam Speaker, this bill impinges those rights of workers to organize. It makes it more difficult for workers to protect themselves, to form a union, to organize, because there's things in that bill that take away those protections.

* (16:00)

You know, we've talked, and like I said, we've talked about some proposals that could make that legislation better. Really, the best way to make that legislation better would be for the government to withdraw, to admit that, yes, there was no reason for bringing this bill into place.

So let's talk a little bit about—well, look at that, another world-famous restaurant. KFC/Taco Bell, September—oh, wait a minute, this is September 16th, 2016. You know, this is not historical fact and fiction; this is today, this is now. Staff at a local KFC/Taco Bell, and I should just see where I'm reading this from, the Winnipeg—okay, so it's in Winnipeg, they become the first in Manitoba to unionize at that chain. Workers United Canada Council says 28 employees consisting of shift managers, food service, customer service staff received automatic certification after more than 65 per cent signed union cards.

Congratulations to them, Madam Speaker, and I welcome them to the brotherhood of unions. I welcome them to having protection in this province. I welcome them to a better standard of living that this bill would have denied them.

An Honourable Member: And what did the unions say about it?

Mr. Lindsey: Well, let's see what the unions had to say about it. They've said, we're very excited and pleased to welcome these workers into our union. This demonstrates just how important card-check certification is to ensure workers have a collective voice at work in order to improve their working conditions.

This is the very system that this government wants to destroy, a system that works. Pretty sure, Madam Speaker, that KFC's not going out of business because the evil union got in. I'm pretty sure, however, that those workers will enjoy a better standard of living.

And, really, lots of times when you read the newspaper you would think the only thing that unions get certified for is to get more money for workers, and that's not true. The biggest thing that unions do for workers is protect their health and safety. And, as it turns out, that was one of the big things that workers at this particular restaurant were concerned about, was they had concerns about health and safety, wages, unequal distribution of benefits and lack of hours. It wasn't just about wages, it was about working conditions.

And that's why it's important, Madam Speaker, that we should be encouraging workers to organize, that we should be encouraging workers to protect themselves. We shouldn't be throwing roadblocks that will make it harder for workers to join a union. We shouldn't be trying to impede their right to a safe, healthy workplace. That's what this bill does. Make no mistake about it. All the talk and all the rhetoric aside, this bill is about making it more difficult for workers to organize, pure and simple. Pure and simple, that's what this bill is about.

It's too bad that in today's day and age, the 21st century, we still have to fight the battles that were fought in the 1930s, in the 1920s, back in the days of the Industrial Revolution when workers really first started joining unions.

It's too bad that, as governments, we have to fight against going backwards in time, Madam Speaker, and that's what this bill does. It regresses us backwards. It takes working rights backwards. It makes it harder for workers to protect themselves.

One of the big things that belonging to a union does is helps you get a pension, a pension that will keep you out of government care when you get old.

So, while this government wants to make it more difficult for workers to join a union, they also weren't real thrilled about increasing the Canada Pension Plan.

So, really, that's one more strike that this government took at working people in this province, which is too bad.

You know, it's a shame that unions have to come here, that working Manitobans have to take time out of their lives to come here to come to committee to talk about something that really there's no need even being on the Order Paper because there was no problem. There was no situation. There was no hue and cry that demanded this bill come into being. It's really a shame that this government brought in this bill. And, yes, it was an election promise, and apparently it's one of the ones that they're actually going to try and keep, and not so much about getting rid of the PST and some of the other things that they promised.

But, again, it gets back to my earlier comments about the only plan they seem to have is the plan to attack working people and the only promise they seem to keep is the promise to attack working people. The plan they have is to pay back their friends.

Not that most employers had a great problem with unions, not that good employers had any problem with unions because good employers generally didn't have a union and didn't have a need for one. Workers at a good employer didn't sign union cards, not 50 per cent of them, not 65 per cent of them, because they didn't need to. So keep in mind that this bill really attacks the people that need protection the most. It attacks people in workplaces that aren't friendly, well-run establishments that look out for rights.

You know, it's too bad that this government brings in this bill and, you know, attacks on working people are not new. They're not new in this province, as I pointed out yesterday. Next year—not next year, I'm sorry, 1919-2019 becomes a very important date for us, it's when conditions for workers became so bad that they took to the streets en masse. Throughout the country, worker unrest demanded that their rights be protected. I hope that we do not end up going back to those days as we take rights away from workers, Madam Speaker, as we allow workers to be unprotected. That's where we're going.

* (16:10)

Will we go back to the days, Madam Speaker, when workers were shot in the street for trying to stand up for themselves? People will say, well, now you're just getting carried away. This bill doesn't do that. But this bill does take a step down that road, and it's a step down that road that we don't want to go down, that none of us should want to go down. None of us should want to go back to those days when workers didn't have rights. None of us should want to go back to the days when workers were shot in the street for standing up for themselves. I wouldn't suggest that for a minute. What I've suggested is you've taken a step down that road with this bill, and you are.

Anytime you try and slow down, interfere with, block, make a worker's attempt to unionize, a worker's attempt to protect themselves more difficult, anytime you throw a roadblock in that process, it's a step down that road; it's a step backwards. It's a step in the wrong direction. It's not a progressive step. It's not a step that will build a better Manitoba. It's not a step that will make Manitoba the most improved province. It'll make Manitoba a more improved province for a few people at the top. It certainly won't make Manitoba a more improved province for Manitobans trying to protect themselves, trying to earn a decent wage for their family. It's a shame, Madam Speaker, that we have to have this conversation in this day and age, that we go backwards again.

Every time we move forward, when we get an actual progressive, an actual democratic government, now we go backwards when we have a regressive government that wants to make it more difficult for workers to have rights, wants to make it more difficult for workers to get ahead in the world, wants to—*[interjection]* I've only got 45 more minutes? Well, I best get to this set of notes, then.

You know, Madam Speaker, we hear terms, some of the terms that we've heard that this government knows that people are thinking mom and apple pie, terms like democracy. One of the terms that I've heard thrown out here repeatedly today is union bosses, which, I suppose, when next we talk about this, it'll be union thugs, because they like to throw that one out as well when they talk about people that are trying to help people stand up and protect themselves. Union leaders stand up and try and help workers, everyday Manitobans, protect themselves and have a better standard of living, but this government doesn't like that, which is too bad.

I've got to talk to my guys for making this print even smaller. I can't even read it.

So let's go a few more examples because, apparently, there's lots, which is a shame in itself, Madam Speaker, that there are so many examples of workers being threatened and union interference. A union alleged an employer laid off six employees for their involvement in organizing the union. The employer did not produce evidence to substantiate its claim that the layoffs were for economic reasons. The manner in which layoffs conducted intended to warn other employees not to support the union. The board ordered laid-off employees be reinstated. In compensation the employer paid the union \$500 for interference. That was in 2001.

A union that's close to my heart—United Steel Workers, they've—no, I'm sorry. This one is about successor; it's not about organizing.

You know, Buhler Versatile and national automotive, aerospace, transportation and general workers' union, CAW, duty to bargain in good faith. Each time union modified its position, employer offered less, purposely avoiding attempts to find common ground. And it goes on and on and on. And, in this case, I believe the workers were not successful. Buhler Industries broke their union, which is a shame.

You know, again, I guess I could spend all day going through those examples, and maybe I will. Let's put them off to the side for now. I've got some pages yet. And, at some point, we will recap what's been said just to make sure that it's in—fully ingrained so that when the members present go back to their caucus room, maybe they can talk to their leadership, to their boss, and say, you know, by golly, we've got to do something different here, that that member from Flin Flon brought up some good points that we should take into account. And he brought them up repeatedly, which is too bad that I have to bring them up repeatedly. But I'm really not getting through to a lot of the members yet, although it's much quieter today than it was yesterday. So maybe some of them are listening.

You know, this government talks about the need to do away with red tape, and yet, in the very process of them talking about doing away with red tape, making a process simpler, they throw a roadblock. They throw red tape in front of workers trying to organize, because that's exactly what making workers have this second vote, that's exactly what it is. It's more red tape. It's another system put in place

to slow the system down. It's a system that this government plans to put in place to make it harder to accomplish the goal. And yet, supposedly, they're against red tape, which is really—you can't have it both ways, I guess. Or maybe you can, I guess, if you're in charge. Wait a minute—that's why workers want to organize: because some employers want to have it both ways. They want to take advantage of workers and they don't want to pay. They don't want to protect them. And that's why workers want to organize.

You know, there's probably—look at that—a whole raft of decisions that have taken place in other jurisdictions. *[interjection]* You want to hear them, do you? The member opposite is begging me to read them. I don't want to bore all the other members opposite, but, you know, I like to accommodate. I like to accommodate the members on this side. I do my best.

London automotive company, the company's owner—uh oh, a US giant, Caterpillar. Gee, we've heard some bad things about US companies lately; US companies in this province doing bad things to workers. So they closed the plant, threw 465 employees out of work. The Canadian Auto Workers union warned that would happen. Union had no bargaining power against an employer that refused to negotiate. They locked out the workers after they rejected a take-it-or-leave-it demand. Community rallied behind the workers, very similar to the community in Churchill that's rallying behind the workers trying to protect their livelihood against a US company that's threatening their very existence. Caterpillar shrugged. The premier denounced the company. None of this will save jobs or prevent foreign multinationals from hollowing out Canada's heartland.

* (16:20)

The labour movement, weakened by dwindling membership and globalization, can't stop these raiders—apparently, nor can the Province, particularly if they don't want to. Its laws are designed to facilitate traditional bargaining, and this article said, well, that leaves only Ottawa. Only, at that time, Prime Minister Stephen Harper could have demanded job guarantees; he didn't. He could have mounted a vigorous defence to the US government's policies; he didn't. Wait a minute, that's starting to sound very similar to what's happening in this province while an American company shuts down part of the fort and throws 10 per cent of the

population of Churchill out of work, and the Province, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) remains silent, does nothing to defend workers, does nothing to help workers. But instead takes the opposite tact and attacks workers with Bill 7. So it's a double-edged sword, Madam Speaker.

Do nothing, say nothing, have no plan to help workers and, the other side, do what you can to hurt workers. And that's terrible, it's terrible for Manitoba, it's terrible for our economy, it's terrible for our future, it's terrible for the workers in the future. It's terrible that they throw up roadblocks when workers are trying to protect themselves.

You know, let's take a look at what's happening in The Pas. There are people in The Pas whose livelihoods are threatened, their community is threatened, their future is threatened, their family's future is threatened. Who's at the table? Who's trying to protect that town? Who's trying to protect those workers? Certainly not this government, they've said nothing, they've done nothing. Who's there trying to fight for those workers jobs? Who's there trying to fight for those workers future? Who's there trying to fight for that community's future? The very unions that this bill is trying to destroy.

Maybe that's what this government is afraid of, workers standing up and fighting for themselves; workers standing up and saying something; workers standing up and doing something while this government does nothing, does nothing but attack workers, does nothing but attack workers who are merely trying to join a union, who are merely trying to better themselves. That's terrible. That's just terrible.

So what else have we got? UFCW, they've put an article out, what's the date on this one, don't know, I'll find it I'm sure as I go through it. Well, this talks about another multinational, everybody's friend, Walmart. Want a union? You're fired. They ruthlessly proved once again that the only rules they respect are its own, when on October 15th without warning, it closed the unionized Walmart Tire and Lube Express in Gatineau, Quebec.

Those workers were successful in organizing, were successful because the employer was a bad employer. Threats and intimidation aside, they exercised their free will and their free right to join a union. And, again, a government did nothing; did nothing to help the citizens, did nothing to help the workers, Canadian Tire—sorry, it, Walmart shut the store down. That's the kind of behaviour that perhaps

this government applauds. One would almost think so because, certainly, when 10,800 jobs have disappeared since they came to power, and they've done and said nothing to try and protect those workers, to try and help those workers, one begins to get the sense that they don't really care about working Manitobans, whether it's in the North or the south. One more step will be the passing of Bill 7 that will make it harder for workers to organize, will make it harder for workers to protect themselves while this government will do nothing to protect them. They've shown that. They've shown that so many times already and they haven't really been in power that long, but they've given a very clear indication of their lack of respect for working Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

It was the second UFCW union-busting closure by Walmart in Quebec. In 2005, they fired 200 members of UFCW Local 503 when it shut the store in 'Joquinère' just before binding arbitration for a first contract was to begin. The Supreme Court of Canada agreed that we'll hear charges that the closure violated the workers' rights to organize. Somewhere in here it probably tells me that the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the workers, but Walmart still shut it down and still abandoned the workers—abandoned the workers—Madam Speaker, the same as what this government is abandoning workers. *[interjection]* Yes, a few more notes.

Pleased with the recent Supreme Court ruling—you guys are in luck because the notes are coming hot and heavy now. You know, UFCW is pleased to announce Supreme Court ruling regarding Walmart's illegal closing of a unionized store in Jonquière, Quebec. Walmart announced it was closing the store as the Quebec minister of labour was preparing to appoint an arbitrator to impose a first collective agreement. In the eyes of UFCW Canada, the Supreme Court ruling is a historic and positive milestone and will likely compel employers to justify their actions if they decide to close a store. Indeed, some corporations will now think twice before throwing their employees out of work. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of those workers.

The Supreme Court believed in protecting workers. This government does not. This government doesn't believe that workers deserve to belong to a union, that they don't deserve to better their lot in life. They'll throw roadblocks in their way, Madam Speaker, to prevent that from happening. And that's too bad. That's what this NDP caucus will fight against and continue to fight against. It's what

organized labour will fight against to make sure that workers have the right to better themselves. Bill 11—

An Honourable Member: Seven.

Mr. Lindsey: Excuse me, Bill 7. Must be getting late in the day.

An Honourable Member: Oh, we got lots of time still.

Mr. Lindsey: Oh, yes.

Bill 7 limits workers' ability to protect themselves, to better themselves. This government will mastermind a better Manitoba, but it won't be better for working people. Much as several previous federal governments masterminded free trade agreements that left the economy struggling, but then the economy recovered, it just recovered without workers. The people at the top, the 1 per cent, the ones that were doing well did quite well. And that's what'll happen in this province, Madam Speaker, as workers lose their rights, as it becomes more difficult for workers to protect themselves, the people at the top, through their unbridled greed, will do better for themselves. Bill 7 will make it more difficult for working people to do better for themselves.

* (16:30)

So Bill C-525, which was a bill introduced by the Harper Conservative government—under the labour code of Canada, a majority of workers can sign cards and certify a union in their workplace. Oh, wait a minute, that's what we're talking about here.

Under the new rules proposed by the Conservatives, there would be a vote and all workers who did not bother to vote would be counted as voting against the union. Huh. Well, that's a strange, strange law. If you don't vote, it counts. Well, why wouldn't it count for the union? Oh, wait a minute, in this province, we've already got that: 65 per cent of workers have already freely expressed their desire to join a union when they sign those cards in secret. No better form of democracy exists in this province, Madam Speaker, and yet this government is bound and determined to destroy that very democratic action, that very democratic will of the workers that's already been expressed.

So why was bill 525 tailored to encourage union busting? Under the auspices of C-525, the only workers required to show up for a certification vote are those who want to have their vote counted in favour of the union. That means the employer will be able to know who voted. This destroys the

confidentiality of the process and renders the secret ballot process that this government apparently holds so clear to their hearts, it'll render it meaningless and will allow the employer to mark union supporters for reprisal.

This bill also allows a minority of workers to decertify the union without the support of the majority of the membership, plainly meant to encourage them to facilitate employer-sponsored decertification.

The present federal government has said that they're going to repeal that bill and in the interim they're not going to enforce it because they recognize that that's undemocratic, that attempts to coerce workers are undemocratic. And yet this very provincial government we have with us now wants to open the door to allow those kind of tactics to take place. And that's what Bill 7 does.

By mandating that the workers have to have a second vote—because they've already voted once when they sign the card, and I can't state that more emphatically, they have already voted. They've already voted in secret. They've had their democratic voice heard when they sign those cards, when 65 per cent of them, a super majority, indicated they wanted to join a union. This government, however, says, no, no, that's not good enough, because we haven't given the employers time to discourage the employees, time to discourage the employees by threatening them, by firing them, by threaten to shut the store down.

And the members opposite will say, well, that just doesn't happen. And yet we've read case after case today, Madam Speaker, and yesterday, where that clearly did happen and clearly does happen in today's day and age.

We've asked—now I'll have to start over—we've asked, you know, for the members opposite to show us any evidence of unions intimidating workers to sign cards. They have not. Because they're thinking a 1920s, 1930s, 1940s gangster film—that's not the way the world works today. But, clearly, the evidence has been presented, Madam Speaker, in this jurisdiction and in others throughout Canada where the very things that I'm talking about take place, where employers threaten employees, where employers fire employees, where they threaten and discriminate and harass employees who merely want to join a union because that workplace has been threatening them and harassing them and taking advantage of them.

That's why they wanted to join a union in the first place.

And yet this government says, well, let's give them the opportunity to take one more kick at the workers. Let's make sure that we throw up as many roadblocks as possible to prevent workers from organizing, because this government doesn't want workers to get ahead.

Clearly, when they bring in bills like Bill 7, when they refuse to raise the minimum wage, they don't want working Manitobans getting ahead, and, clearly, there's no heckling going on, Madam Speaker, at the moment because they can't argue those points because even they know that that's not right. That holding classes of workers back, that preventing hard-working Manitobans from getting ahead, even they know that's not right.

They need to go back to their caucus room. They need to have that discussion amongst themselves to say this is not right. This unnecessary, uncalled for, unwarranted attack on working people is not right. They need to make their leadership, their boss, their bosses—they need to make them understand that this bill is not right. It's not required. It's not needed. It fixes a problem that doesn't exist.

I suspect they won't, even though in their hearts they know it's wrong, which is really too bad that—talk about union bosses and thugs, maybe that's not the ones we should be concerned about. We should be talking about governments that take away the rights of working people. We should be talking about governments that want to drive us backwards. We should be talking about governments that only want to make a better Manitoban for a very few number of Manitobans.

An Honourable Member: All Manitobans.

Mr. Lindsey: All Manitobans, the member says opposite, and yet they introduce a bill that makes it harder for all Manitobans to get ahead. Their words don't match their actions. Their actions don't match the words, Madam Speaker. This bill is clearly an action that will make it harder for Manitobans to get ahead, that will make it harder for this to become the most improved province unless you're one of the ones at the top and not one of the ones struggling at the bottom.

Which is back to the original start of my rant today, was it's a shame that the only plan that they've put forward so far in their time in government is a plan to attack working people. No plan to help

workers in the North. No plan to help minimum-wage earners. No plan to build social housing—no plan, no plan, no plan, except for this, except for this plan to pay back their friends, the real bosses that we should be concerned about. That's the only plan that this government has put forward is to attack workers. That's terrible. If that's the basis of their plan going forward, we're all in trouble.

So let's talk a little bit more about some other facts.

An Honourable Member: Fairy tales.

Mr. Lindsey: The member opposite hollers out fairy tales, but these—these are facts. These are things that have been recorded in Canadian press. These are things that have happened in this country. They're not fairy tales. As much as the member opposite might like to think that these things don't happen in the real world, they do. Workers get threatened; workers get intimidated; workers get fired. That's why we already have a secret ballot. What you want is two secret ballots, which gives time for the employer to attack workers in between. I don't know why the members opposite can't grasp the concept that workers have freely and democratically voted when they sign that union card.

* (16:40)

Well, as luck would have it, I do have 20 more minutes to talk. As luck would have it, apparently I have some notes to go over. I don't want to disappoint the member opposite.

All right. Union accuses Halifax Chronicle Herald of union busting. Canada's largest independent daily newspaper says it will continue to print despite a work stoppage in the newsroom. The union for editorial staff at the Halifax chronicle says workers went on strike at midnight after talks broke down. The Halifax Typographical Union accuses the paper of union busting, but the Herald says it's just trying to cope with economic challenges. I hope there's more to this story because I don't have it.

Well, no it wasn't, because actually I was in Nova Scotia this summer and I know for a fact that these workers were locked out, that this employer brought in scabs to run his newspaper.

An Honourable Member: Nothing to do with the secret ballot, though?

Mr. Lindsey: It has to do with union busting, which is what Bill 7 is about.

As much as the member keeps saying secret ballot—kind of backed off saying democracy today, so hopefully we got through to them that workers have already expressed their democratic right—if we haven't got through to them that signing a card in secret is a secret ballot, that 65 per cent of workers in a workplace are required to vote by signing a card to get certification. They don't grasp that concept because they don't want to, Madam Speaker, because they want to make sure that organizing a workplace is as difficult as possible.

So, well, look at that, here's some more on that same story. Let's see what—I don't believe this one is settled yet, so I probably won't go into too much detail on it because it hasn't gone through the court system yet or the labour board system to have the workers vindicated, but it will.

How much pain and suffering the workers will have to endure in the process, how long they'll have to be out of jobs, well, that we don't know. What I do know is that, at the end of the day, the workers will be shown to be right. What I do know is that putting bills like Bill 7 in place will make it more difficult; will make it more difficult for workers to organize, that's why this bill is here.

This bill is not about democracy, this bill is not about secret ballots. This bill is about making it harder for workers to organize. I can't say that often enough, that that's what this bill is about. You can use all the catchphrases and buzzwords that you want to use, at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, this bill—

An Honourable Member: Stinks.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, one of the members says this bill stinks, and yes, it does. It stinks of union busting. It stinks of the same thing that we talked about, that this government seems to want to pull workers back, whether it's minimum wage workers, whether it's workers that are new to a job, whether it's workers that get into a workplace that isn't very pleasant. This bill makes it hard for workers to get ahead. It puts a roadblock in place—[interjection] Well, people of Manitoba didn't specifically vote on that did they? They voted on a whole raft of things. This was one of them.

An Honourable Member: They voted well.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, I might disagree with that.

An Honourable Member: They did in Fort Rouge.

Mr. Lindsey: Certainly in Flin Flon, where workers understand—in Flin Flon workers understand the importance of a union because they've seen the horrendous effects of an unpleasant workplace.

Now imagine if those workers had to organize after this bill came into being. That company had a long history, first strike there was in 1934, in the middle of the Great Depression. They treated their workers so bad that their workers went out. They brought in police and special constables and forced them back to work. They threatened their wives. They threatened their children. That company has unions—got organized in the 1940s. It's not near as bad a company as it used to be, but it still needs a union. It still needs protection. The workers there still need protection.

Just before I conclude, I would like to point out, Madam Speaker, that there's some members from Unifor, CUPE, the MFL here to support this NDP caucus as it fights Bill 7. Thanks for coming. And I thank those members for taking time out of their lives to come here and listen to this and to be a part of this, to be a part of this very historic fight to continue to protect their members, to continue to protect their future members.

An Honourable Member: Why are you afraid of debate?

Mr. Lindsey: It wasn't me that held this bill off all week, you know. You would have to speak to your boss about that.

There was several things put forward, Madam Speaker. This member opposite says, well, we should have a debate. We proposed staying late. We proposed introducing this bill a way long time ago so that we could have that debate so that every member in this Legislature could have that debate, but this member's government didn't want to do that. The only time they finally introduced the bill is when they were losing in the court of public opinion, because it was clear that they were holding off because they were afraid to have that debate. They were afraid to have members opposite, these members, stand up and debate and say what's wrong with this bill. Well, they're hearing it now. They're hearing what's wrong with this bill, and they heard it yesterday, they'll hear it today, and they'll hear it at committee level. Thank you. *[interjection]* More yelling? No, I don't want to get worked up. It's late in the day.

An Honourable Member: Were you afraid of our response?

Mr. Lindsey: Was I afraid of your response? He's going to get me worked up again.

You know, it's easy for this member to sit in the background and chirp and carry on, and that's his right. I'm not opposed to it. I rather enjoy—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order. Order.

We only have about 13 minutes to go here, and I certainly would appreciate everybody's co-operation. And, if everybody could please ensure that the member that is speaking now is shown the respect that we would like to see for all of us when we all stand in here to debate, so I would urge some co-operation here. And I would urge the minister—the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) to continue with his debate.

Mr. Lindsey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that. I appreciate that sometimes, in this Chamber, the heckling gets a little out of hand, passions get heated and we say things. I'm guilty of that myself. So let's carry on. Let's wrap up. You know, we're late in the day.

We know this bill is going to committee. We know that the members, my union brothers and sisters that are here, and I take pride in calling those people my union brothers and sisters as opposed to some members opposite who ramble on about being my brother. And he isn't. And he's not their brother. And he doesn't have the best interests of working Manitobans in his heart. Otherwise, he would not have introduced—he would not allowed his government to introduce this kind of regressive legislation. He's not a friend to labour. He's not a friend to these members in the gallery, and he's not a friend to me as an organized labour person.

I spent 40 years in a union, 30 years of that I spent actively involved in that union making sure that workers were protected. You know, I've heard from some members opposite: well, they were in a union for 46 years. They didn't do anything in it other than, you know, enjoy the holidays, the wages, the benefits. They didn't participate in fighting for the rights of workers; I did. And I take personal—personal—exception to this bill, because this bill is against everything that I've fought for my entire working life.

* (16:50)

Madam Speaker, I'm not done fighting yet. This bill cannot pass. I urge my brothers and sisters in the gallery to bring their friends, to bring their families, to bring their union brothers and sisters, and together, together, we can fight this bill. Because that's really what a union is all about, is being together. It's being solid, solidarity. It's not one person standing up. It's one person standing up, speaking with the backing of so many more; it's so many more standing up, speaking, speaking for the betterment of their brothers and sisters. And that's what this government seems to be against.

That's why this government is throwing roadblocks in the way of people organizing. They're throwing roadblocks, red tape—the very red tape that they claim not to be in favour of, and yet when it comes to threatening workers, they are in favour of that red tape. And that's terrible.

We need to fight against this bill. We need to make sure that labour legislation in this province moves forward, not backwards. That's what this legislation does. Bill 7 takes us back, back a step in time, backwards. This government should be ashamed that they want to move backwards for working Manitobans.

An Honourable Member: Trying to provoke labour.

Mr. Lindsey: The only plan—the only plan—they've come up with is, as my friend says, is to provoke labour.

And I hope labour is provoked. I hope labour is provoked enough that they will stand up in solidarity and say, no, no, no, no, we cannot allow this bill to pass. I'll stand with them to make sure that that happens.

I know the members of my NDP caucus will stand together in solidarity to fight against this bill and any other bill that this government brings in that's regressive, that does harm to working people. I know that we can win the hearts and minds of Manitobans who don't understand any more than the members opposite understand the ramifications of what this bill is. We need to. We need to make sure that people understand it's not just about the words. It's about the true meaning of democracy. It's about workers freely expressing their right. It's about workers secretly signing union cards, a secret ballot of the highest order—*[interjection]*

And yet the member opposite is still carrying on about secret ballot. You know, that's too bad. It's too

bad that the only thing the member opposite is willing to listen to is not facts, not the facts that have been presented, and if he wants I can go on for a week presenting facts of cases after case after case of workers being intimidated and threatened for trying to join a union. And yet this government wants to make sure that employers have that opportunity, when, clearly, if 65 per cent of workers, or if 100 per cent for that matter, have signed a union card and freely expressed their desire to join a union, this government really wants to make sure that they put some red tape in place to make sure that the boss, the very boss that these workers have been fighting against, have been trying to organize against, they want to make sure that those bosses have the opportunity to take another kick at the workers. And that's not right.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to wrap up now, yes. Bill 7—apparently my wrap-up is going to take longer than I thought—all right, so—*[interjection]* Well, I've got bosses too, don't I?

An Honourable Member: Just not sure who yet.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, yes, I'm pretty sure who. I'm pretty sure who my bosses are. They're the people that voted for me. My bosses are not the so-called union bosses. My bosses are not the company bosses that may be your bosses. My bosses are the electorate and, when they don't like what I'm saying and what I'm doing, I guess I won't be here anymore. And that's why some previous members aren't here anymore, because clearly they didn't say and do what their electorate thought they should do, and that's how democracy works.

Well, not if you're in a workplace, because a workplace is not a democratic institution by its very nature. There's nothing democratic about a workplace. Workers don't get a say in hours of work. They don't get a say in what the workplace does. They don't decide to manufacture widgets instead of tents. Workers don't get that say. Workers don't get a say in whether they should have holidays, time off, all of those wonderful things.

Well, workers actually do get a say in some of that stuff once they join a union, Madam Speaker. They still don't get a say in what the company makes, because the company makes what the company's going to make, but they do get a say in how the production line works. They do get a say in whether they get time off. They do get a say in whether they have the right to be protected from being fired for no reason.

So as much as a workplace is not a democratic institution, what it is is an institution that can have a democratic presence in it when workers freely express their right to join a union. And they can, and they have. When they signed a union card, that's democracy in action; real democracy—real democracy—that affects real people. They've clearly expressed their desire to join a union—65 per cent is the magic number that previous governments have come up with.

Even former Conservative governments, as much as I don't like to praise them, they may have been bad governments but apparently not as bad as this one's going to be, because they were still willing to recognize that workers had a right to join a union. Yet this government seems bent on making sure that they throw as many roadblocks in place as possible to prevent workers from joining a union—65 per cent is clearly a majority of workers that have clearly voted. They voted by signing a union card. If they didn't want a union, they wouldn't sign a card. It's really that simple.

Nothing could be more simple, and yet the members opposite refuse to accept that as being a democratic action. Somehow they think that there's something else takes place, and there isn't. Workers sign a card, express their will, no different than signing a mail-in ballot for an election, pressing a button on a voting machine. It's the same thing, Madam Speaker, it's workers expressing their desire freely to join a union, and freely to the extent that a super majority of 65 per cent—65 per cent—have to express that desire before they get automatic certification.

But that's not good enough—that's not good enough—for this government; 100 per cent of workers signing a union card is not good enough for this government. This government says no, we have to have this secret ballot so that we have time for the employer to take it out on the worker. And yet this government clearly admits that they don't have the ability to have those votes in a timely fashion, because right now it doesn't happen, and as they increase the workload for the Labour Board, it'll happen less often, which then gives more time for workers to be attacked, to be threatened, to be harassed. It'll give more time for workers to be less successful. It'll be more time for the employers to make sure that their employees don't have rights. And this government should be ashamed of itself for even introducing a bill like this that takes a step back in time.

I cannot emphasize often enough, 65 per cent of workers have expressed their free, democratic right to join a union, but that's not good enough. That's not good enough for this government.

* (17:00)

Imagine if all the members opposite could only get elected if they passed 65 per cent. Oh, there'd be a lot of people not sitting here, probably myself included.

So they've got the super majority already in place that says 65 per cent of workers have to sign a union card, have to express their desire to join a union, in a very secret process, but this government wants to throw a roadblock up that says, no, we have to have another vote. How often should the workers vote until they get it wrong and this government is satisfied? Once? Twice? Maybe they'll throw another roadblock up tomorrow. Maybe the next day they'll throw something else up. We need to make sure that workers in this province are protected. We need to make sure that democracy is protected, and democracy will—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

In accordance with section 5 of the Sessional Order adopted by this House on June 21st, 2016, I am interrupting debate on this bill. As identified in the Sessional Order, one independent member now has the opportunity to speak for 10 minutes before I put the question to the House.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I would like to just put a few words—and I promise it's only a few words on record here. I would like to bring the focus back for a moment and emphasize that Manitobans are counting on us as their elected representatives to act in accordance to their best interests. We need to work as a team, which is why we as the Liberals are going to continue to assess the bill on its own merits and implications as it affects so many Manitobans.

I, along with my colleagues from River Heights and Kewatinook, have reached out to our constituents. We continue to have ongoing meetings, consultations and are looking forward to public committee to more thoroughly understand the effects and impacts of the bill. This is what committee is for; let's learn from it.

It is commendable for the government to keep the secret ballot voting. It upholds the individuals', workers' rights to free choice. However, the manner by which this freedom is sustained and protected

must be considered further. We need to ensure that workers are not influenced prior to casting their ballots.

I would like to continue to encourage all Manitobans to offer their input and opinion on these amendments. Our party is keen to hear what is still to be said by more than just one side. We are looking forward to committee and being able to listen very carefully before taking a position.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The—order.

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 7, The Labour Relations Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, we would like a recorded vote, please.

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

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 7, The Labour Relations Amendment Act.

* (17:20)

Division

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

Yeas

Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Johnson, Johnston, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Reyes, Schuler, Smith, Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Chief, Fontaine, Kinew, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Selinger, Swan, Wiebe.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 30, Nays 14.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The hour being past 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 13, 2016

CONTENTS

Speaker's Statement		Indigenous Relations	
Driedger	2065	Klassen	2073
		Fielding	2073
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Tabling of Reports		Indigenous Health Care	
Cullen	2065	Klassen	2073
		Goertzen	2073
Members' Statements		Truth and Reconciliation Commission	
Concordia Village		Klassen	2073
Wiebe	2065	Goertzen	2073
National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day		Legislative Agenda	
Guillemard	2066	Graydon	2074
St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church		Micklefield	2074
Cox	2066	Fossil Fuel Report	
Long Term and Continuing Care Association		Altemeyer	2074
Lamoureux	2067	Schuler	2074
Major Ken Barling		Pallister	2075
Fletcher	2067	Civil Service Positions	
Oral Questions		Allum	2075
Economic Growth		Friesen	2075
F. Marcelino	2068	Regional Health Boards	
Pallister	2068	Wiebe	2076
Premier's Enterprise Team		Goertzen	2076
Lindsey	2069	Petitions	
Pallister	2069	Bell's Purchase of MTS	
Labour Relations Act		Maloway	2076
Lindsey	2070		
Pallister	2070		
Home-Based Child Care			
Fontaine	2070		
Fielding	2070		
Social Housing Units			
Kinew	2071		
Fielding	2071		
Shoal Lake 40 First Nation			
Lathlin	2072		
Cullen	2072		

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