

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

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	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	Ind.
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
<i>Vacant</i>	Point Douglas	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 16, 2017

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Please be seated.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

##### House Business

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader):** On House business, pursuant to rule 33(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Thursday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino). The title of the resolution is protecting Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced by the Official Opposition House Leader that pursuant to rule 33(8), the private member's resolution to be considered next Thursday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Logan. The title of the resolution is Protect Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Maloway:** On further House business, I would ask for leave to proceed to Bill 217.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave this morning to proceed to Bill 217? [*Agreed*]

#### SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

##### Bill 217—The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Right to Collective Bargaining)

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I move, seconded by the member from Fort Garry-Riverview, that Bill 217, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Right to Collective Bargaining), be introduced now for—be read now a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Lindsey:** Please, please, contain yourselves. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is an honour to raise up this morning to stand up for working people in the province of Manitoba yet again. There's been so many Supreme Court rulings already around enshrining the rights of working people to form unions, to form unions of their choice and to respect the collective bargaining process. Three cases come to mind: one involving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and their ability to form a labour union; one with the BC teachers; and another, I believe it was with the Saskatchewan health-care workers.

What this bill does, really, is it enshrines in our provincial legislation that which has already been ruled elsewhere. And it makes sure that we respect, in the province of Manitoba, the workers' rights—workers' rights to form a union, the workers' rights to better themselves, because, for the vast majority of working people in this province or elsewhere, the only ability they have to try and balance the power inequality that takes place in workplaces is through the formation of a union.

Certainly, when the NDP was in power, Madam Speaker, unions didn't get everything they wanted. And I would be the first to stand up here and say that, because there was many times that I met with ministers of Labour to discuss things that we wanted. But they tried to strike a balance, whereas this government has tried to undo that balance and tried to strike fear into the hearts of working people throughout the province, be they union members, be they future union members, by talking about ripping up collective bargaining agreements, renegotiating when is a deal a deal. Apparently, with this government, a signed deal between workplace parties is not necessarily a deal. What deals do they rip up next?

What this does, by introducing this legislation, is ensures that not just this government but future governments respect the rights of working people in Manitoba to form a union, to form a union of their choice, and that's a pretty important statement there in itself: to form a union of their choice, not of someone else's choice, to form a union of their choice to collectively bargain the best deal that they

can get for themselves, whether it's with a private sector employer or with a government employer. The point of collective bargaining is both parties come to the table to try and achieve the best deal for those that they represent. An individual worker going to the employer trying to negotiate the best deal possible is not likely to achieve that.

The purpose of a union and an employer signing a collective agreement, Madam Speaker, is that then it is an official legal binding document, the same as any other legal binding document that you sign your name to, that you have agreed to that which precedes the signature.

\*(10:10)

What this legislation does is enshrines that which others have fought—other governments have fought against these rights and lost, because under the Charter of Rights, the right to form a union is a protected right. So I'm abundantly confident that all members of this Legislative Assembly will recognize that which has been recognized so many times already as being a true right under the Charter. I can't imagine that anybody would stand in this House to oppose the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly—particularly, Madam Speaker—when those rights have already been fought, when those very subjects have already been the subject of rulings that quite clearly said that workers have the right to collective bargaining, that workers have the right to form a union, that workers have the right to form a union that will collectively bargain on their behalf.

And somebody in this House, at some point in time, said a deal is a deal. And now what this legislation does is ensures that people live up to a deal being a deal, that it's enshrined in legislation, that workers have the right to bargain to get a deal, to get the best deal that they can possibly get for themselves through their collective strength. To suggest that, well, we'll just rip up those legally binding agreements and impose a new agreement on workers, is constitutionally unacceptable. It should be unacceptable to every member of this Legislative Assembly, and this legislation ensures that every member of the Assembly, when it passes, which I'm sure it will, recognizes the importance of these previous decisions, Madam Speaker, recognizes the importance of workers' rights in this province, which even having a union doesn't completely balance the playing field, Madam Speaker, but what it does do is

ensures the workers have a fighting chance to maintain some form of equity in the bargaining process.

If governments merely come by and say, well, yes, you bargained and came to an agreement, but we don't respect that agreement, we don't respect—not just that agreement, Madam Speaker, but they don't respect the Supreme Court's rulings that say that workers have the right to collective bargaining. They're not just showing a complete lack of respect, then, to the workers that have negotiated those agreements; they're showing lack of respect to those that have made rulings that say workers have the right to collective bargaining, workers have the right to join a union of their choice. It's showing a complete lack of respect to the Canadian Charter, then, not just to the workers that may immediately be affected, Madam Speaker, but a lack of respect for all working people, a lack of respect for the system that guaranteed them rights.

What rights, then—if the government doesn't respect those rights that have been enshrined in the Charter, what rights are next, Madam Speaker? What will they attack next and take away, irregardless of what has been ruled as a basic right? What freedom will the government take away?

So, as my time quickly comes to an end to talk about this important piece of legislation, I look forward to members opposite standing to support the Supreme Court of Canada. I can't imagine that they wouldn't stand in support of the Constitution of this country. I'd be shocked if this bill doesn't pass unanimously. So I look forward to hearing what the members opposite might have to say in support of this piece of legislation. So, Madam Speaker, again, I just want to reiterate the importance of workers having the right to collectively bargain, of it being enshrined in the Charter and I fully expect everyone to be in support of this.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

There any questions?

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I want to thank the member for bringing this forward this morning.

How does this bill help enshrine the worker's right to collective bargaining in Manitoba law?

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I'd like to apologize. I wasn't paying attention.

However, the importance of this bill being enshrined is making sure that Manitoba law reflects what the Supreme Court has already ruled, that it merely makes governments aware that workers have rights to collective bargaining, and this enshrines that in our legislation.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** Why does the member feel the need to redebate previous session Bill 7, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, which guaranteed a worker's right to secret ballots?

**Mr. Lindsey:** Madam Speaker, we're certainly not redebating Bill 7 from last session. This is introducing protections for workers going forward, protecting their right as guaranteed under the Charter of this country.

**Mr. Allum:** The member need not apologize. It appears that the government's not paying attention either.

Is it fair to impose contracts on workers or reopen existing collective bargaining agreements?

**Mr. Lindsey:** Certainly, that is not fair; it's not justifiable; it's not right, Madam Speaker. Workers have the right as been guaranteed under the Charter, to bargain collectively to come to the best agreement possible. And it's unconscionable that a government would rip up those legally binding contracts and say they're going to renegotiate them or impose something contrary to what the collective agreement says.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** I'd like to thank the member from Flin Flon for bringing this bill forward and ask: Where did the bill come from? Was there communication with the Labour Board or did some employees and workers approach you?

**Mr. Lindsey:** I generally don't have to schedule special meetings with labour because I talk to them all the time. And, certainly, they're very concerned—very concerned, Madam Speaker—that this government is going to try and rip up existing agreements. This legislation, of course, labour is in favour of it because they want to make sure that their

right to collective bargaining is enshrined as it is in the Charter.

**Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital):** Does the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) refute that Bill 9, The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, will improve the powers of Manitoba's Children Advocate and strengthen the protection of young people in our province?

**Mr. Lindsey:** I'm sure during the next hour of debate we'll talk about the business that the member has brought up. For now, though, we're talking about the right to collective bargaining being enshrined in legislation as the Supreme Court has suggested that it should be.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** Will the member from Flin Flon please explain the meaning of the phrase, a deal is a deal?

**Mr. Lindsey:** Certainly, I can explain that a deal is a deal, but I'm not sure that the members opposite fully understand that when you sign a deal, when you sign a collective agreement as enshrined in the Charter, that that deal is a deal. When the terms of that collective agreement are open to negotiation, certainly, then, either party can try and make changes. But to rip up an existing deal means that this government does not believe that a deal is a deal.

\* (10:20)

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** You mentioned collective bargaining means both parties coming to the table. Would the member please explain to me what he believes collecting—collective bargaining in a tangible sense would look like?

**Mr. Lindsey:** Having sat on negotiating committees several times throughout my illustrious career, a tangible benefit to collective bargaining is giving a voice to people that don't normally have a voice: women, new Canadians, people whose language is not necessarily English as their first language.

Bargaining collectively guarantees that those people have a voice, Madam Speaker, and the tangible benefits are as the working people that become unionized, as their standard is raised up, standard for everyone is raised as well.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** I'm interested in the member's disclosure about deals. I seem to remember that the previous government had a number of legal actions against them. In fact, there's a lot of them that were there because of broken deals.

But I'm wondering, you know, Bill 3, we have The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act, gives everyday and hard-working Manitobans access to quality savings vehicles. Why is the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) against additional tools and services to help Manitobans save for their retirement?

**Mr. Lindsey:** Apparently, the people that prepare the members opposite's speaking points are a couple of days out of step or a couple of hours out of step. Madam Speaker, we're here to talk about enshrining workers' right to collective bargaining, and that's what we'll talk about.

**Mr. Marcelino:** Why is precarious work especially problematic for the private sector, and how do unions help protect workers from precarious work?

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank the member for the question; that's an excellent question.

Precarious work means that all workers, particularly disadvantaged workers, continue to be disadvantaged, continue to be taken advantage of by employers or potentially by governments that want to make sure that workers cannot get ahead because they're only working part-time. They have to scramble. Their kids can't go to university because they don't make enough money. Belonging to a union helps ensure that they actually have a future, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Smook:** Under the NDP, mining investment rankings for Manitoba fell some of the lowest levels in Canada.

Will the member for Flin Flon join us in celebrating Manitoba's recent ranking, under our government, for the second-best worldwide investment attractants?

**Mr. Lindsey:** I don't know where these guys get their notes. Apparently, the pages got mixed up somewhere along the way.

Having said that, if this member that asked the question could show something, somewhere, that this government has done to change the concept of mining in this province, other than listening to the Fraser Institute, which, Madam Speaker, it's certainly not non-partisan in its very nature, and to quote statistics by that group.

Madam Speaker, let's stick to what the legislation we're talking about. Let's make sure that workers are protected in this province.

**Mr. Marcelino:** Could be the last question. Is it constitutional to impose contract on workers or reopen existing collective bargaining agreements?

**Mr. Lindsey:** Finally, somebody that's on the right page.

Madam Speaker, it has been shown that it is not constitutional to rip up collective bargaining agreements, and that's what this legislation does, is it ensures that existing collective agreements are in place and remain in place. That's been proven in the Supreme Court already.

I'm shocked and aghast that not everyone opposite believes in the rulings of the Supreme Court and that there would be any question—and maybe that's why their questions, Madam Speaker, have had no bearing whatsoever on the bill before us, because they actually agree that workers should have that right.

**Mr. Marcelino:** Yes, and I thought that was the last question. I have another question. How will imposing mandatory reduced work weeks affect important services like education and health care in our province?

**Mr. Lindsey:** That's a very good question that the member asks. Any time you start imposing mandatory days off for workers on the front line, that will affect our health care, our children's future. If you take a teacher out of the school, kids aren't learning. If you take a nurse out of a hospital, people aren't getting the care they need. Imposing a contract that takes those front-line people away from their duties, Madam Speaker, is just plain wrong.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for questions has expired. Debate is open.

#### Debate

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Good morning. I certainly appreciate the member bringing forward Bill 217 so we can have a discussion about collective bargaining and, certainly, I guess, maybe in more general about labour relations this morning in the Chamber.

First of all, I do want to acknowledge our pages. I certainly think our pages do a marvellous job here in the Chamber, day in and day out, and we do appreciate the work they do on our behalf here each and every day.

Certainly, this morning, Madam Speaker, we heard references to fear in the Chamber, and I would

expect that the campaign of fear that we've seen by the previous government over the last 17 years continues. And, clearly, there's motivation out there to scare people into certain beliefs, and, clearly, I think this legislation goes forward and talks about more fear mongering. And it's interesting, certainly, the timing of this particular legislation and the debate about—around this legislation this morning.

We recognize the NDP are going into a very important weekend where they will be deciding how they're going to select their next leader, so it'll be a very interesting weekend ahead for them. We're certainly interested in the outcome of their discussions over the weekend, certainly interested in the debate around their resolutions that are going to come forward as well. But they obviously have decisions to make, important decisions to make, and they will be deciding how important a role their union leaders will have in selecting the next leader of their party. So we will certainly be watching very intently for the outcome of their discussions.

Madam Speaker, they also talk about a deal is a deal. And we go back an election ago—let's go back two elections now, actually, and the premise that was being put forward by the government of the day, the NDP, was that they were not going to increase taxes to Manitobans. Manitobans took their word that that was going to be the deal. The deal was going to be, we're going to keep the PST at 7 per cent. The concept of increasing provincial sales tax was nonsense. That's what Manitobans were led to believe. They took the NDP's word on that. They thought that was a deal. The deal is a deal. Well, they quickly found out that the NDP were not going to keep that word and they were going to break that deal and they did. They went and they broke that deal. They increased the PST on various goods and services that Manitobans rely on, and then they went and increased the provincial sales tax from 7 to 8 per cent. So they broke the deal, and when you break those deals, it has repercussions and that was the repercussion back last April when Manitobans decided they'd had enough of the NDP after 17 years and it was time to change.

\*(10:30)

Madam Speaker, we had a really intense debate last session about workers' rights to vote. And we really believe—and I think most Manitobans believed—it was the right thing to do, to allow workers the ability to have a secret ballot just like every Manitoban does when they have the

opportunity to vote every four years. We believed it was the right thing to do, Manitobans believed it was the right thing to do, and most workers believe it's the right thing to do.

Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to debate this bill that the member brought forward. It's an odd bill brought forward—actually just changing the preamble within this particular legislation. There's no fundamental changes to the legislation outside of the wording around the preamble, but it is an opportunity to talk about labour relations.

Madam Speaker, we recognize that we've got 169 bargaining units in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority alone—169 bargaining units. Can you imagine? So, if we talk about bargaining, we spend all our time—both employees and the employer—bargaining, trying to find outcomes for 169 different units. By having 169 units within the RHA itself, it takes away managers' ability to manage because workers can't—don't have the ability to do other jobs, whether it be one side of the floor or the other side of the floor. They could be, because of the collective bargaining unit they're in, restricted to very minimal—certain tasks, and not be allowed to use their skill set in another area. And we find this very troubling because no other jurisdiction in Canada will you find this many bargaining units in one entity.

So we recognize this has to change. I believe the union movement recognizes this has to change. If we're really serious about sustainability of delivering health care to Manitobans, we have to have a discussion about bargaining units. And I think Manitobans are coming to understand just how complicated a system we have developed in health care alone. And, by making it a complicated system, we're not delivering the outcomes that Manitobans expect.

And our goal as a government—which I think every government should have a goal—is to provide outcomes and is to provide positive outcomes for the very limited resources that we have. And the resources that we have come from the taxpayers of Manitoba, so it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we are delivering the services in the best way possible for the limited resources we get from Manitobans.

I know the previous philosophy was let's just tax Manitobans more. Spending money was always the solution to every problem the NDP encountered. I

think after 17 years, we have proven spending money does not provide the outcomes we're looking for. We look at health care. We have some of the worst results in Canada across the board, yet we're spending almost the highest per capita on health care. So clearly, spending money does not provide solutions. The same thing can be said in education. We have some of the highest per capita expenses per student in education, but again we're bottom of the barrel in terms of results.

This has to change, Madam Speaker. Spending money is not the solution to outcomes. We, as a government, are focused on outcomes and focused on results. This is why we're asking the unions, the labour movement to come to the table, have a discussion about how we provide outcomes for Manitoba. We certainly want health care to be sustainable. We want frontline service to be protected, and we want those services delivered to Manitobans in an efficient manner and make sure that Manitobans have the results that they are asking for.

It's certainly, I believe, the right thing to do and we're having positive discussions with unions. They recognize there's issues around bargaining units and other issues, and I think it's a positive discussion to have, and we look forward to having that discussion.

We're also excited about the optimism in the business community. Certainly, there was reference to the mining sector. We know there's challenges in the mining sector for sure, but we do believe there's potential for great things to happen in mining in Manitoba. Obviously, with the labour that's required to do that, we want to make sure we have as many people in Manitoba working as possible. We believe these positive partnerships will lead to prosperity for Manitobans, for the workers of Manitoba and certainly for the government of Manitoba.

So we're also encouraged to see a recent report on business optimism from the CFIB that indicates that Manitoba businesses are the most optimistic in Manitoba. We believe that optimism will put more people back to work in Manitoba and, quite frankly, Madam Speaker, that is what it's about, is making sure Manitobans are employed and providing the services as well to Manitobans that Manitobans deserve.

I do appreciate the opportunity to discuss this important piece of legislation this morning. Thank you.

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** I'd like to start off by congratulating everybody who's back in House. It's my first opportunity to get up and speak, having such a large caucus. But it's an honour to be here today and be able to stand up and put some words on record in regards to Bill 217, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Right to Collective Bargaining), brought–brought forward by the member from Flin Flon.

I agree with the member that it's government's job to protect workers, and that is exactly what our Progressive Conservative government is doing. Madam Speaker, we have and are bringing forward legislation, over 20 pieces of legislation, that will do exactly that.

A little less than a year ago, after a decade of debt, a decade of decay and a decade of decline, Manitobans gave us a mandate, an overwhelming mandate to fix Manitoba's finances, repair Manitoba's services and rebuild Manitoba's economy.

Manitobans elected our PC government with a 40-seat majority, a record majority because they were tired of a spend-and-tax government. They wanted an open and transparent government. They did not want a government that went door to door and promised not to raise taxes.

Well, Madam Speaker, this is what Manitobans did not want, is a bunch of false promises, and it showed by what they did by electing a new government.

The member from Flin Flon says his–he fights for all workers. Why did he not vote for Bill 7, a bill that amended The Labour Relations Act to make a vote by secret ballot mandatory before a union can be certified as a bargaining agent for the group of employees?

Madam Speaker, I understand that there's an important event going on this weekend and then one later on this fall, where, I would imagine that secret ballots are going to be used. So, I think this government is doing a lot to protect workers.

Madam Speaker, members opposite will have a lot of opportunity to help Manitobans by supporting the bills that our government is introducing this session. Over 20 pieces of important legislation, legislation Manitobans are expecting from our government. Legislation will correct our province's course and get Manitoba back on track.

\* (10:40)

The NDP have wasted over eight sitting days to filibuster Bill 8, an interim 'impropriations' act, instead of debating important legislating—legislation and sending these bills on to committee and getting public input. The interim appropriation act is an important legislation as well, but it is a routine piece of legislation, Madam Speaker. All governments have used it to ensure that civil servants get paid. I know in the five years—five-plus years that I've been here, I've seen this bill come forward before in order for the government to have the money to pay the civil servants. And this is an important—it is an important piece of legislation, but it is also legislation that should be brought forward, voted on, and done. It is important that we move on to other bills. There are—I mean, in the 20-some bills that we have, there's a lot of important bills in there and we need to get them to committee.

Bill 9, the advocate for child's act—children youth act. This bill has been on the Order Paper for debate and second reading since basically the beginning of session. And I know it's an important bill because, I believe, even one of the members opposite had a very similar bill to this that was to be brought to the House, so I don't understand why we're not moving forward with this—with some of these bills since the beginning of the session. Even one of the members—like I said, the advocate for children's act, it is an important piece of legislation. Children are our future, Madam Speaker. We need to make sure that they are protected, so I don't know why we aren't debating some of these bills. It's important that we start working on that.

Since I've been in this Legislature, the New West Partnership—this is a bill that has been brought forward many times. As a matter of fact, I believe I introduced it in my first year as critic, and it's important because it also protects workers across western Canada and it helps build the economy. So I don't know why the provincial government is—or like, the NDP is not supporting it. In previous years, one of their biggest concerns was the conflict of resolution part of it. And I don't know what they were afraid of there, but I believe it is a bill that will help all Manitobans.

And as government, I believe that is our job: to help all Manitobans with whatever piece of legislation that we choose to work with. So I would strongly suggest that the opposition start looking at some of the bills that are in front of them and

bringing them forward so we can move them on to committee.

Another important piece of legislation, the Manitoba East Side Road Authority appeal act. In looking at what the Auditor General had to say with the east-side road, it's really important that we're not wasting Manitobans' tax dollars. Those tax dollars are extremely important to provide services for Manitobans: health-care services, education services, new schools. So, when you take money from the people of the province, it is difficult to continue on and make it better for people in this province.

I mean, there are several bills that we'll be looking forward to bringing forward, and they will have a lot to do with labour, and I imagine that this—Bill 21, The Fiscal Responsibility and Taxpayer Protection Act, this bill sets a principled course of sound financial decision making to ensure a sustainable financial future for the province of Manitoba. And that's what this Legislature is all about, is maintaining a stable financial future for everybody in this province.

And, in April of 2016, the people of Manitoba gave our government a mandate to bring laws forward, to make sure that all the laws that we bring forward are there to better Manitobans and to make sure that we are presenting a strong financial, fiscal course for Manitoba. These are important things that we need to do as a Legislature.

And I don't know why we can stand in this Legislature at times and continue on the same course. Like, there's been a lot said about a 20 per cent wage increase. Well, I would say that it's the NDP government who did not follow regulations back in 2010—there—it was the NDP government that changed law in order so that they wouldn't have to take a 40 per cent increase—decrease.

It's very interesting because I'm sure anybody who was a member—who was a minister back a number of years ago, but, unfortunately, there's not very many of them left in here to remember how they would have been getting those higher wages. The wages are set by a commissioner; they're not set by individuals. They're set by a commissioner, so it's unfortunate that they keep bringing forward items that are not relevant to anything.

Anyways, I see my time is drawing close, and I'm sure there's other members who have a lot to say on this bill, so we'll let them continue. Thank you.

**Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital):** Madam Speaker, I stand before you today in hopes of continuing the important legislative business that each member has been elected to do, and yet we find ourselves in the midst of eight days of delay by the members opposite because of political game-playing.

The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) states he stands up for workers, and in his past career, I'm sure that he has done that. But now his job as an MLA is to deal with the bills that are on the floor of this House. So, instead of member opposition having wasted eight days, there are many, many bills that are before us that we should be addressing.

But, before I get into that, I just want to stress that my team and I are working hard on this side of the House. We are making decisions that are changing the lives of Manitobans. Every day decisions are made and reinforce what we have heard from Manitobans. Since April 19th, Madam Speaker, we have worked to make that happen.

So the member of Flin Flon talks about wanting to stand up for the rights of workers, and the members opposite can clap all they want, but there's legislation on the floor that talks about, for example, Bill 2, The Securities Amendment Act. It's protecting investors and consumers, and the member opposite didn't want to answer any of the questions that we, on this side of the House, had to ask him, because those were not important for him.

So Bill 2 strengthens security legislation—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would just like to remind members in the debate this morning that we are debating Bill 217, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Right to Collective Bargaining), and I would ask that in terms of the content in the debate that members move fairly quickly to pull together the relevance as it relates to this topic. Thank you.

**Mrs. Mayer:** So Bill 217, the labour relations act that the member has put forward is something that he wishes to keep talking about. We go back to Bill 9; was it, where, you know, the secret ballot vote, you know, he just wants to reiterate and bring it back on and it's not really something that—we've passed that part. He wants to keep rehashing that.

\* (10:50)

So we go into—if we're standing up for the rights of Manitobans and we're standing up for workers, Bill 3 talks about registered pension plans, you

know. It provides employers and employees, Madam Speaker—and the self-employed, as well as employees and employers—the right to access new options to save for retirement. It's important, Madam Speaker, and I—you know, that I—that we continue to get that message through to the members opposite that wage earners and employers continue to have access to a new option to save for retirement. It's imperative that wage earners and employers in Manitoba continue to have access to quality products and assist all of us in the exercise of saving adequately for our retirement.

Our goal, Madam Speaker, is to accomplish what we've set out to do. Bill 217, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, that the members opposite wishes to talk about and just spin it in a different way, doesn't actually—it spends time and doesn't actually want to talk about some of the important issues that are on the floor. The Provincial Court Amendment Act, Bill 4—this legislation provides a more effective administrative structure within the judicial justice system for the peace program. It's an important step towards ensuring that Manitoba is compliant with the Supreme Court ruling in the Jordan case.

Again, you know, we keep—the members opposite want to keep putting up time and talk about Bill 217 and talk about it over and over, but again here's another bill that we're working on, Madam Speaker. The east-side road authority repeal act, whereby it fulfills our election pledge as well as helping to fix the finances of Manitobans.

You know, our government was elected on April 19 because we've gone out and talked to them and listened to them and heard what they wanted from a government. And we were elected to fix the finances, we were elected to repair provincial services, and we were elected to rebuild Manitoba's economy, Madam Speaker.

Here's a very good bill before us, but the members don't want to talk about it, and so the Bill 9, the advocate for children's youth act—and I'm sure that the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) is very upset and frustrated—

**Madam Speaker:** Order please.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I mean—I very clearly heard your direction to the member to deal with the subject matter at debate here

of Bill 217, and she's done everything but talk about Bill 217.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Government House Leader):** I think you said that I was trying to act official or something like that, Madam Speaker, which is probably true.

The member opposite knows that this is a matter of debate on general issues around The Labour Relations Act. There are many different bills within our system that touch on labour relations. The member knows that. Our member is speaking about a number of things that do impact labour relations, and she has every right to continue to make that linkage, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I have heard both arguments, and I do believe that the official Government House Leader does have a point of order—the Opposition House Leader does have a point of order, and I would urge that in debate that the debate contain more relevance to Bill 217, The Labour Relations Amendment Act (Right to Collective Bargaining), and I would hope that the member would be able to pull those comments together in the remainder of her debate.

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Mayer:** Well, what I'm trying to get across, because apparently the members opposite don't want to listen to us on this side of the House, is that if we collectively work together, Madam Speaker—collectively, all of us in the House—we can improve the lives of Manitobans, not just unionized workers.

So, Madam Speaker, I just want to touch on my last comment on Bill 9. This is standing up for workers. This is advocating for people in this province. The advocate for children youth act, I believe, wholeheartedly is good work. And we know that the members opposite would like to stand up with us but because the members opposite from St. Johns has her own, but her own members are blocking the good work that we need to be doing in this province because they're wasting time talking and going on and on.

The Teachers' Pension Amendment Act, Madam Speaker, Bill 13, regulated health care—all of these tie in to what we need to be doing in this province. And I'm sorry if the members opposite do not like what we have to say but the ones that matter the most in this province are the ones that voted us to do the job that we set up to do.

So I thank you for your comments, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand up in this House. This morning when I came into the Legislature the sun was shining and so I hope that that can continue all day and hopefully brightens every member. We can all take a moment to look outside, brighten our day and work together for the people of this province.

Thank you.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** I wasn't sure if I was going to get the opportunity to get a few words on the record here. The amendment is—it's more symbolic than it is full of new substance; however, it is strong and sound and therefore should be considered. So I'd thank the member of Flin Flon for bringing it forward.

The amendment is clearly intended to ensure individual employees and employers are not taken advantage of in any way. When you talk about an individual employee potentially not feeling comfortable with or not being aware of how to approach a bargaining situation with their employer, I would argue that there needs to be a human element added. This is even noted in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms which guarantees all employees the right to a meaningful process of collective bargaining.

Let's bring it back to Manitobans. Let's say a person who recently started a new job just found out that there was a passing in the family. This person may be in a bit of a funk, rightfully so, Madam Speaker, and they would like to request a couple days off so they can attend the out-of-province funeral. But they may feel hesitant to ask for permission for a wide array of reasons, even though this unfortunate circumstance is out of their hands. Perhaps they are still on probation or they are fearful of being let go, perhaps the employer is not easily accessible or is coming across as intimidating. I believe it is safe to say that there's always a bit of fear. However, with that said, there should never be fear so severe that an employee refrain from asking a question, from the fear of losing their job or being let go.

Madam Speaker, it is not hard to prove how much more a person can thrive and do well in their workplace, their place of study, in their home life, their families, any atmosphere, really, when they feel confident and assured that their rights are being protected. The amendment talks about bargaining in

good faith, and I believe this is a real fact because there's always going to be uncertainty.

I am very uneasy by this government's actions, as I do not understand their intentions. I can recall back to Bill 7 and I witnessed first-hand how dismissive this government was in the witnesses who came to committee. I am—it was abundantly clear how those who came forward felt and this government chose not to listen. I can only hope this government is considering the Labour Board.

Thank you.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I regret that I have so little time to speak about this bill on the week that is the anniversary of the election being called last year, Madam Speaker; a year has gone by quickly. It was a year ago that the former NDP government didn't seem to recognize what the priorities of Manitobans are, and it doesn't seem like a year later anything has changed. They're still struggling, not only internally and I won't speak about the internal problems in the NDP caucus. I think that would demean the discussion that I want to have here this morning. *[interjection]*

Well, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) actually wants me to speak about the great divisions within their caucus. I would—

\* (11:00)

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable minister will have nine minutes remaining.

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 5—Protecting Health Care for Seniors and Families

**Madam Speaker:** The hour is now 11 a.m., and time for private member's resolution. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Protecting Health Care for Seniors and Families, brought forward by the honourable member for Concordia.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine),

*WHEREAS protecting health care services for seniors and families is a number one priority for Manitobans and should be the priority of the Premier and the Provincial Government; and*

*WHEREAS this Provincial Government has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on health care reviews which they refuse to release to the public, despite the fact that the Premier explicitly promised to do so; and*

*WHEREAS after campaigning on a promise to protect frontline services, the first action taken by this Premier in regards to the health care system was to close the Quick Care Clinic in St. Boniface; and*

*WHEREAS this clinic provided crucial frontline care to families and seniors in the St. Boniface and St. Vital areas as well as offering essential, bilingual healthcare services to the largest and most concentrated Francophone community in Manitoba; and*

*WHEREAS after closing this clinic, the Premier ordered the Minister of Health to make over a billion dollars of capital cuts to the health care department; and*

*WHEREAS these cuts to health care services will mean that the Provincial Government will no longer build a new Cancer Care facility despite the millions of dollars raised by private groups and the thousands of hours of planning and effort that have been put in by volunteers to support this important project; and*

*WHEREAS these cuts to health care services will mean that the Provincial Government will no longer build a wellness centre for seniors in the Concordia region in order to support their unique and important health care needs; and*

*WHEREAS these cuts to health care services will mean that the Provincial Government will no longer proceed with shovel ready projects for personal care homes in south and northeast Winnipeg, as well as in Lac du Bonnet, thereby cutting hundreds of personal care beds; and*

*WHEREAS these cuts to health care services will mean that the Provincial Government will no longer build a community clinic in St. Vital and will no longer proceed with community clinics in The Pas and Thompson; and*

*WHEREAS these cuts to health care services are shortsighted as the need for these important projects across the province will not diminish and the cost will only increase.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to call upon the provincial government to immediately reverse the Premier's damaging cuts to the Manitoba

health-care system and to make meaningful investments in the public health-care system in the upcoming provincial budget.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Wiebe:** It's my pleasure to rise this morning to bring this important private member's resolution before the House to urge some thoughtful debate once again here in this House about the future of health care in this province, and to talk about the vision—certainly that this side of the House has—with regards to health care, the importance that this caucus places on health care and front-line services for Manitobans, and perhaps to get some further idea about the cuts that the other side, that the government is proposing to make in their upcoming budget.

*Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Now I do want to start, though, by saying how difficult the last few months has been with regards to speaking with Manitobans about health care in this province. And I have to admit that I've had some pretty difficult conversations with folks who have been affected by the cuts that we've seen so far.

I've had some difficult conversations with young families, with seniors, people in my own neighbourhood, people throughout the northeast part of the city where my constituency is, who are just bewildered, quite frankly, about the closure of the QuickCare clinic in St. Boniface, and they've told me how, you know, when, you know, they've had a child who has a cough, has a flu or a cold or some medical situation where they do need treatment, they do need some attention from doctors, and they know if they go to the emergency rooms they may be waiting for other patients who are prioritized and they say, you know, where can I go?

And we've talked to them. I mean I go out on the doorstep—I'm sure other members have done the same—and said, well, the QuickCare clinic is available in your neighbourhood, and right away that's the first place that they want to go because they know they can get good care and quality care there. So that's the first priority for them, and when they were informed that that was going to be closed, it was going to be cut from their health-care options, it was devastating; it was devastating to those people who have come to count on those services.

I've had conversations with health-care workers, people who are on the front lines, as we like to talk about here in this House, who are providing the

services, who—doctors, nurses, maintenance staff, other people who are doing the work on the front lines, and they're saying, you know, we're working harder than ever; we're doing more than ever to ensure that there's quality health care, and yet we don't know what our future holds. We don't know when these cuts are going to start affecting us. And they're concerned. And so the quality of care that they're able to provide then has been impacted, and that's been an impact that they've felt in their own personal lives.

And then I've talked to people who have been involved in some great projects, capital investment projects in our health-care system who have said, look, we've been working on this in some cases, you know, five years; we've been raising money; we've been working with the provincial government. We've been honing exactly what the project would look like, making a good business case, a solid case in our health-care system of the importance of that, and now their future is in jeopardy as well, Mr. Speaker.

So people are devastated and, as I said, bewildered, right. They know that we have a growing population in our province. They know that we have an aging population. They know that there's always new treatments and new opportunities to improve our health-care system. They know that, and yet what they see from this government is cuts and uncertainty. And, quite frankly, all we're asking here this morning is that the government simply stand up and say we won't cut anything more from this health-care system in this budget. We will prioritize health care and ensure that it's sustainable going forward.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, we've done a lot of probing here in the House. I've asked—I had the opportunity to ask many questions of the Health Minister. I've asked—we've had Estimates time; we've had, you know, opportunities to ask and to probe what exactly the cuts are going to be, and I remember very distinctly last spring, throughout last fall, we were asking these questions, sort of saying, look, you know, we don't know where this government is going. What are you trying to actually accomplish? Where are you going? Tell us.

And they said—you know what? In fact the minister himself said, you know, this opposition is just trying to scare people. They're simply trying to scare people, and he said, you know, why—why are they going around trying to scare people? In fact, he said, you know, there's no end to who they'll scare.

He says, you know, are they trying to frighten the doctors? Are they trying to frighten the nurses? He says they're trying to frighten teachers. Well, we know how that's worked out. And he says, you know, they're—they have even tried to frighten Hydro workers—900 losses in Hydro because—so far—because of this government's decisions.

So this government, when we didn't know what the direction they were going would be, they said we were just trying to scare people, and yet we've seen it borne out now and expect it to be borne out even further going forward.

They also went ahead and set up study after study after study and said to Manitobans: Just wait. We will find hidden efficiencies in the system that nobody has ever thought of, don't worry. Your cuts will—well, we'll cut, but you won't even feel it.

However, in the face of the evidence from the health-care system, in the face of public opinion, certainly—again if you talk to, you know, Manitobans, this is what you'll hear—is an interest in investing in health. And when you talk to health professionals and front-line workers, they know what the future of health care is, and that is investment in the system rather than cuts. And yet the only solution that the opposition—that the government can come up with is cuts.

And now they've even tried, Mr. Speaker, to shift the blame over to Ottawa and to say, well, Ottawa's cutting our health-care funding. It's totally different than the education cuts that we are imposing on the education system, but Ottawa's cutting our health-care funding and so we have to make these cuts. Of course they forget that they made some of these cuts already before the negotiations were even completed.

In fact, when the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was kicking it back in Costa Rica on the beach there, and the rest of Canada was getting to work on trying to get the best deal for their own provinces, you know, this government was cutting the health-care system without actually having the results from their own studies, without having a deal from the feds, and with zero justification other than that's the only idea that they can come up with.

Now I see my time, Mr. Speaker, is getting very short and I barely have touched on the impact that these cuts have had, but I do want to take a little bit of time just to talk about some of the impacts that cuts in the health-care system have already had. And

I want to start with the capital funding cuts, because it's the most concrete—pardon the pun—concrete way that we can see our health-care system growing and expanding and changing to meet the needs of people going forward.

And the one that, of course, has hit everybody the hardest is CancerCare Manitoba. CancerCare—you know, I would imagine there's probably not a member in this Chamber who hasn't had some experience with CancerCare for a family member, for a loved one, for a friend or a constituent, and heard feedback about the amazing care that they've received there and about the suggestions on how to improve on that care.

You know, CancerCare has been an amazing partner for us as a provincial government. When the proposal came forward to expand their facility, you know, right away they stepped up and said, you know, we're going to fundraise our own 20 per cent. This is good value for money, I might add, Mr. Speaker. Invest in CancerCare, improve the health of Manitoba, save lives, improve research, and the community's going to step up and give 20 per cent.

You know, this is a world-class facility. They want to bring in the brightest, the best specialists from around the world, and ultimately this is about saving lives, and yet this government has chosen to cut that.

\* (11:10)

Again, Mr. Speaker, my time is very short. I'll simply rattle off a few other cuts that are being felt acutely in our communities: primary clinic in The Pas, consultation clinic in Thompson, the community clinic in St. Vital, again, community services, our wellness centre in—at Concordia Hospital, personal-care homes, Mr. Speaker.

I wish I had more time. This is—you know, these are some of the toughest discussions I've had with individuals. You know, Lac du Bonnet, 70 people on the waiting list for a bed. Seventy people. Two million dollars already spent on the project, \$5 million on the table, and totally cut. RHAs, cut. QuickCare clinic in St. Boniface—you know, Madam Speaker, this government is out of ideas. It's—it has no sense of how to build health care in this province and it's a shame. I hope that this government will change course, will support this private members' resolution today—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time is up.

### Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence; the first question may be asked by members of another party. Any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties. Each independent member may ask one question, and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Under the Selinger NDP, more doctors left Manitoba than anywhere else in Canada. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was no more evident than in my constituency of Riding Mountain. After 17 years of this poor NDP health-care record, does the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) truly believe that losing the most doctors to other jurisdictions helps protect essential health-care services?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before we begin, I just want to remind the member that you can use Selinger government but not to use Selinger NDP. Okay, just a reminder, so—for everyone in the House to address as an era, not the—as a political party. Thank you.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** So little time, so many facts to put on the record.

I don't know where the member opposite is getting his numbers. Over 700 doctors hired, 4,000 nurses, Mr. Speaker. We increased the medical school spaces from 70 to 110.

You know, honestly, what is this member's plan? Is he going to cut his way to a more—a better health-care system?

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I just want to commend my colleague here for this important discussion, but would he be so kind as to tell me and tell the House when in the election campaign did the PCs announce that they would actually cut \$1 billion from the health-care system?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, and I think the member from St. Johns has hit the nail on the head, Mr. Speaker. You know, this is the great deception in the campaign, that the government said that they would keep things as they are, that they would protect front-line services, protect front-line workers, and the first move that they made was to cut the community clinic in—the QuickCare clinic in St. Boniface. That's shameful.

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** For 17 years, the health-care legacy of the NDP were longer wait times to access emergency treatments than anywhere else in Canada. I have to ask this member: Is this one of the many reasons Manitobans rejected another NDP government during the last election?

**Mr. Wiebe:** I appreciate the member asking this question, and of course, as the—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —member will know, you know, we have some of the best health outcomes in Canada. Wait times are an issue. I think it's important to move on it. In fact, this government said it was going to move on it, and yet set up a wait times task force that won't release the information and, in fact, have been starting to make cuts that will affect those front-line services and wait times rather than actually investing in. How is that a plan?

**Ms. Fontaine:** Would my colleague be so good as to explain to the House here how many Manitobans did the government ask as to whether it was a good idea to cut the CancerCare building?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Again, a great question from the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine).

Not only are—have Manitobans been bamboozled by this government and their bait and switch on investments in health care, but it's also the front-line workers, the people—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —at CancerCare who have a vision for building in this province, for investing in health care.

And they expected that this government would, at the very least, understand the need for the CancerCare expansion. And yet they've totally failed Manitobans.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** On March 9th, 2017, the MLA from Concordia alluded that the PC Party's electoral win in 2016—predictable and inevitable.

Is it true, then, that he also believes our PC Party had a better vision for health care than his during the last election?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Very good question—I think I've said many times that this member opposite, as well as many members of the government side, were just trying not to trip over their own shoelaces through that campaign. And they only said a couple things.

And the one thing they said was: wait times are too long, and we're going to do something about it. And the first thing that they did was they cut the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic, which will affect wait times at our hospitals.

That is no plan, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Has the government—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —considered the jobs and livelihoods that will be lost as a result of these funding cuts?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, and this is a great question as well, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that we've been—I've been asking this, I've been trying to get this from the Health Minister, asking for some clarification.

How will this affect patient care? Because ultimately we want to make sure that the patients in Manitoba are not being affected by cuts. But when you make significant cuts throughout our system, to expect that there will be no impact is short-sighted. It shows a lack of vision. And quite frankly, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I think it's disingenuous.

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** The member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) was part of the NDP government who created a situation where more Manitobans than ever before travelled outside our province to try and receive timely health-care services.

Does the member for Concordia believe when more Manitobans are forced to travel for health care this helps with wait times?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Once again, a question from the government side which I think cuts to the heart of the matter, and that is that investments in our health-care system is what this resolution is talking about.

You know, the member opposite may have different ideas about how to invest in our health-care system but, at the very least, could actually support this private member's resolution, could support investments in our health-care system.

We can bicker about where that money goes to. We want better care for Manitobans. That's what this side is prioritizing.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Is it not the case that investments in health care now lead to savings of health care in the future?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Once again, a great question, Mr. Speaker. And this speaks to the idea of vision

and true investment and planning for our health-care system. And I can't think of a better project than the Concordia health and fitness centre, a project that actually promotes wellness in all its forms, and prevention. So preventative exercise and activity that ultimately—that investment will more than pay itself off over the years, because we're—we have that vision for health care in this province.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** I'd like to thank the member from Concordia for bringing forward this resolution.

I've heard you mention the wait times task force, but can you share with us other specific health-care reviews that have been done with these hundreds and thousands of dollars but have not yet been released to the public?

**Mr. Wiebe:** A very good question. I would encourage the member to pose that question as well to the Minister of Health, because I think there's a lot of opportunity to sort of untangle exactly which review and what the outcomes expected are.

We know the mental health task force is another priority that was put out by this government, and yet we're now waiting until the end of the year to get any results from that.

We know that KPMG is doing a health-care audit. And again, some of those results have been published—or have been provided to the government—have not been provided to the public or to us, Mr. Speaker.

\* (11:20)

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake):** Under the NDP government, ERs were closed in the Interlake. After 17 years under the NDP, Manitobans were burdened with the highest ambulance fees in Canada.

Is this yet again another horrible health-care legacy left by the Selinger government?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, this sounds like a fantastic backbench question for the member from Interlake and I expect him to ask that of the Health Minister because this Health Minister said that he was going cut ambulance fees by 50 per cent for Manitobans. And it was 5 per cent this last year.

I think rural health care is absolutely important and that's why when I brought down Mr. Milne to talk about the importance of health care in

southeastern Manitoba I was proud to get results for him.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I just want to remind the members to speak through the Chair, not through to the individuals. Thank you.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Funding for two northern clinics has been cut by this government's reckless behaviour.

What does the government have to say to northern Manitobans who already have scarce access to health care, who have to travel for hours to access health-care resources in Winnipeg and who were relying on these new initiatives?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Yes, excellent question again from the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), something that I know has been brought up by my capable colleagues, the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) and the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey).

You know, Mr. Speaker, northern health is—has unique needs, it needs unique investments and, you know, quite frankly, I think this is something that the government could talk about again. We can talk about where this investment takes place. There's a lot of need in our system. But what this PMR is asking for is simply investment in our system. Let's move forward with a vision for health care in this province that builds and doesn't cut.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Time for question period has expired. The debate is open for—is open. Any speakers?

### Debate

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** I want to thank the member from Concordia for bringing this resolution forward. I know—I want to welcome also everybody back to the Chamber, like the member from La Verendrye. My first time speaking since we've been back and it's an honour to be here.

I know the first time we had a good conversation with the member from Concordia, it was during the election at Gurdwara, and I believe that is was probably maybe almost a year ago today, so again, you know, we had a little discussion about what it's like door knocking and talking to constituents. And, to be fair, and I can only speak for myself when I talk about this but, you know, in my own community knocking on doors and talking to my—the folks in our area and saying, you know, what are the issues that are top of mind here, never once did I hear anybody say you know what, the status quo is working; we need to keep on track, because, of course, everybody

understands and constituents have understood in many of our communities that the status quo wasn't working. And, in fact, we were spending—this province was spending more money than it was bringing in and getting less and less. Spending more and getting less was not a—an equation that was acceptable to Manitobans, and that was certainly demonstrated in the last provincial election.

So, again, you know, we understand that health care's a very important issue in this province and we want to make sure that we do everything we can to make sure it's not only sustainable for today but tomorrow. You know, we can't keep spending our grandchildren's money and expect that the health-care system, let alone all the other departments in this province, can be sustained on that kind of economic model.

No, our Progressive Conservative government believes that partnerships will lead to prosperity, you know, partnerships with front-line workers, public servants, entrepreneurs and community leaders. Our Progressive Conservative government is committed to providing a clean, open government that will reflect the values of integrity, caring, inclusion, common sense and teamwork in everything that we do.

The Health ministers agreed to work individually and collectively on the following immediate priorities where efforts would yield the greatest impact: enhancing the affordability, accessibility and appropriate use of prescription drugs; fostering innovation in health-care services to spread the scale—or to spread and scale proven and promising approaches that improve the quality of care and value for money.

I know that health care is the single largest budget item for the provinces and territories. The provinces are responsible for front-line delivery of quality health services for Canadians. The provinces now pay more than 75 per cent of health-care costs. The federal government's share of health spending has been declining over time, and the current proposal will see that share drop even further over the next 10 years.

Our goal is to improve care in the community, as well as home care and mental health services, to better meet the needs of patients closer to home and outside institutional settings.

Since the July 2016 Health ministers' meeting, ministers from provinces and territories attempted to

steer the federal government towards renewed federal funding discussion around the Canadian health transfer. The 2016 budget did not reference a long-term funding agreement for health as outlined in the federal Health Minister's mandate letter.

The 6 per cent annual growth rate in the CHT, or the Canadian health transfer, expires on March 31st, 2017. Starting in 2017-2018, annual growth in the Canadian health transfer will be determined by a three-year moving average of growth in nominal—or national nominal GDP, with funding guaranteed to increase by at least 3 per cent each year.

The Prime Minister committed to meeting with provinces and territories to negotiate long-term health funding. However, calls by the premiers for a first ministers' discussion on health care have gone unanswered for more than a year. The federal government's unilateral approach to health-care funding puts the services of Canadians that Canadians rely on, as well as the sustainability of provincial and territorial health services, at risk.

Federal government has reduced growth in health-care funding to a rate that will see the contribution fall well below this required amount. Mr. Deputy Speaker, even with the additional \$11 billion in targeted funding over the next 10 years, the current federal funding proposal will provide nearly \$30 billion less than what the research suggests is needed to maintain the sustainability of health-care systems.

This offer has been presented as a unilateral, take-it-or-leave-it proposal. The proposal that is currently on the table from the federal government will further erode the federal share of health spending and put additional strain on provinces and territories. This current federal proposal and targeted funding will see that the federal share drops from 23.3 per cent to 20.6 per cent in the next decade.

The federal government's language that they are supporting transformative change in the health-care system does not align with the reality that if Manitoba wants to receive similar to other provinces, we'd be challenged to meet the needs of sustaining the status quo.

Our government has inherited among the worst wait times in the country for emergency departments and other services, and we've been left to battle a massive, inherited deficit. The future of our provincial health-care system and our ability to improve the quality and delivery of services is

dependent on a sustainable partnership from our federal counterparts.

The Prime Minister committed to meeting with provinces and territories to negotiate long-term health funding. However, calls by the premiers for a first ministers' discussion on health care have gone unanswered for more than a year. The Manitoba government has been at the forefront in calling for a first ministers' meeting to discuss Canadian health transfers and to work together to achieve a national agreement that sustains health care for the long term.

Under the federal offer made to other provinces, Manitoba would receive \$18 million less from the federal government in 2017-2018. This accounts for more than \$1 billion less over a 10-year span. This would fall considerably short of what the evidence suggests is required from the federal government to cover their share of the province's growing health-care costs. Federal funding is needed to ensure high-quality health care—that high-quality health care is available as our population grows and changes.

Dialysis services cost approximately \$100,000 a year for each patient in Manitoba. It costs \$70 million to operate the Misericordia Health Centre in Manitoba for one year, and it costs approximately \$50 million to provide over 72,000 MRIs in Manitoba annually.

\* (11:30)

Without a strong and sustained partnership with the federal government, Manitoba's ability to sustain the health-care system will be significantly eroded and compromised. All Manitobans need the federal government to come to the table and partner with the province to ensure quality care. Only by working together will Canada be able to find solutions and support the health care we all need to stay healthy. If this is not accomplished, any proposed reduction in health-care funding should be delayed until 2018-2019. But our government remains committed to working with the federal government to seek a renewed Canada Health Accord that encourages innovation, fosters sustainability and ultimately allows government to deliver better services for those who need it most. Our government has consistently held the position that the federal government should come to the table for meaningful discussions to secure a true and fair long-term partnership on health care. Our shared goals require focus on funding levels sufficient to provide stability and sustainability in order to provide the services we

all need. Every major independent study undertaken over the course of the last seven years on the sufficiency of the Canada health-care transfer point to the sustainable imperative.

Our government has continued to express the importance of a guideline—a genuine, rather, dialogue, involved all provinces and territories preferably at the first ministers' level to secure a multilateral framework based on a national collaborative partnership. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's important that our government calls on the federal government to continue to work with us and actually come to the table and have a meaningful dialogue on this important issue. It's unfortunate that so far that hasn't happened, and, of course, you know, maybe that perhaps our members opposite in the opposition in both parties, the NDP and the Liberals, stand up with our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and say to Ottawa that we actually need to stand up for Manitobans. Standing up for Manitobans should be our primary concern, not standing up for Ottawa. And, unfortunately, some members in this Chamber are standing up for Ottawa more than Manitobans, but we'll leave that for another discussion.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do, again, appreciate the member from Concordia's efforts on this. You know, we do all have different opinions on how things should be operating in the province but at the end of the day, our provincial Progressive Conservative government believes that Manitobans come first and that we strongly, strongly urge the federal—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member's time is up.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I am supposed to speak to this more at length about the cuts to the health-care system but I will concentrate my portion of this debate to the cuts to the CancerCare Manitoba extension.

The facility that was dumped and the facility that was supposed to be built, it was one of the toughest decisions on the part of this government. I understand that, except that it's a little bit more understandable if the cuts were not about the aging population of CancerCare patients, the CancerCare patients who tend to live a little bit longer because of the techniques at treatment that our world-class CancerCare Manitoba facility already has. The facility that was supposed to be built right on McDermot Avenue was supposed to house the aging population who are surviving cancer and it's

a cruel turn of events when the foundation and the fundraising arm of CancerCare Manitoba was suddenly slapped in the face by a cut, by a cut that was not justified, cannot be justified, cannot be reasoned out, cannot be—that should not have been done.

CancerCare Manitoba has been at the forefront of everything that we do in order to alleviate the suffering of members of our population who have been diagnosed with cancer. And people should know, and I guess members of the government should know, that a diagnosis for—of cancer is one of the most devastating news that could strike a family—not just the patient, not just the one who's told your number of days on this earth is numbered to the length of time that cancer might overtake your life.

CancerCare Manitoba was supposed to have done some of the better part of the fundraising for the facility, and it was a promise that the new health-care facility would have been started and would have been built with the help of the provincial government.

The provincial government, I understand, does not want to spend any more money. But then what I don't understand is that if it is something that's good for our people, especially for those who are most vulnerable, the cancer patients will have survived and lived a little bit longer. It is heartless and it is very cruel for this government to keep on trying to balance the budget on the backs of those patients, of those aging population, of those seniors. And it is not good when the focus of this government is value for money.

The focus itself is something that really leaves nothing to the imagination. But I'll try to imagine what happens when a family is told that the mother or father or the son or the child is with cancer. First off, the family is in a state of why my child, or why my mom, or why my dad—and that's the first thing that happens. The first thing that you try to say to the person who's afflicted with cancer is: Don't worry. Things will be okay.

But the way that this government has behaved, is that it has taken a lot of the momentum on the part of those who treat cancer as seriously as it should be—and the momentum has been taken off that part of CancerCare.

For those who are interested in maybe making contact with the CancerCare foundation, I have the

number: 204-787-2197—I'll say that again, 204-787-2197. And there's a toll-free number if you're calling from outside the city. It's 1-866-561-1026—that's one-zero-two-six. Those are the numbers that you could get in touch with in order to get more information about the things that they're doing now in order to do everything that they can for those who are—who have been diagnosed with cancer.

\* (11:40)

And one of the best things that ever happened to me was when I volunteered as a driver. And I volunteered as a driver for a patient, and I would bring them in when it was still the Manitoba Cancer Treatment Research Foundation—MCTRF. And there were those people there in the treatment area where we were waiting. There was a guy who had this speaker that he puts over his throat so that he could speak, and he became a friend, and he asked me, he says: Are you still smoking? I said I just quit. He says: Oh, that's good, because smoking caused this. I have throat cancer.

And for him, because of the treatment that he was receiving at that facility, which was on its start—initial stages then—this is 1981-82; I was not even a citizen yet—and I found that one of the best things that ever happened to me, too, was that I became involved in the mainstream fight against this dreaded disease, the disease that has taken so many lives, the disease that took the life even of my mom, and for this government to keep on harping on the cuts and saying that we need to do it and we need to cut this cancer-care investment, I think it's foolish. I don't know if that's parliamentary or not. It's stupid. I don't know if that is something that I could say.

Those are the cuts that are—it does not make sense, and when I say it's stupid, because it's a no-brainer—it's a no-brainer because all of us—all of us—will soon have to deal with our own families being diagnosed with cancer.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** You know, I'm by nature an optimistic person. I tend to give people the benefit of the doubt. I tend to be a hopeful person. I tend to want to expect the best from people, and I think that might be one of the reasons that the good people of Radisson have entrusted me with the responsibility to serve as their MLA.

And so when I came into session now for the first time—that's almost a year ago today, as the election was April 19th. I think today actually we

kicked off the election in the constituency of the—the campaign, rather, in the constituency of the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger). We had our kick-off event there, and I remember with fond memories gathering together with a good number of candidates and sharing that optimism and hope for a better future for Manitoba.

But, when I entered this Chamber, I had that same optimistic attitude, frankly, towards the opposition members, towards the members of the NDP, including the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), who has brought forward this resolution today, and that approach, perhaps a little bit naive since I am a first-time politician—first-term politician—that optimistic approach that I took would be that the members opposite had learned a lesson, that going through that electoral process, knocking on doors, hearing what people had to say and seeing the results of what they had to say reflected in the ballot boxes across this province, I thought they would have learned their lesson.

Sadly, that's not the case, and it's not the case—I say this now with a year in the rear view—it's not the case because we can see it in front of us in the resolution today. What we see in this resolution is a reference to empty promises—empty promises—and that's really—they have to ask themselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the NDP have to ask themselves: Why did they lose the election?

The member for Concordia himself said it was inevitable that they would lose the election. I somewhat agree with him that it was, but the real question comes down to root causes. What was the root cause, what was the root cause of the results that they experienced in the election? And I would put to the House, put to this Chamber today that the reason was a lack of integrity, that they had developed a reputation of breaking promises. When they knocked on the doors four years earlier and promised everybody that they wouldn't raise the PST, knowing full well that they had to, that's what Manitobans reflected on just last year, those kinds of behaviours.

And you know what, even the member for Concordia himself, we share a boundary together, we're—we abut each other, shall we say, in constituency terms, and so we do tend to run across each other from time to time. And, for instance, I hope to see him at the Concordia Foundation dinner and the honourable member from Rossmere as well, since that's a—the Concordia Foundation is right at an

intersection between all three of our ridings, all three of our constituencies.

Now, when I spoke to the foundation members, I spoke to those foundation members before election day—before election day. And I asked them, what do you think of the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) and the member at that time for Rossmere's letter that they gave you? Are you concerned about the approach that the Progressive Conservatives are taking with regards to changing the course of this province? And you know what their answer was? The commitment made by that government and by those members was not worth the paper it was written on. They assured me that even if the NDP had won the election, they did not expect them to fulfill that promise; they did not expect them to fulfill that promise. And that's because they saw it for what it was—*[interjection]* It was issued only two days, I believe, before the blackout period that prevents government from making further announcements prior to an election.

The members of that board, the members of my community, the members of the member for Rossmere's (Mr. Micklefield) community, all communicated to us that they believed and they were convinced that that commitment and so many other commitments made by the members opposite were empty promises. Promises made that were going to be broken. Promises made that were essentially an attempt to buy their votes with their own money.

And Manitobans saw through it. They saw through it. And I would suggest to the member for Concordia that the member—the constituents in his constituency also saw through it. The member for Concordia is in what should be a stronghold—should be a stronghold—and, for the NDP, that's what I've been told at least; however, I believe the Progressive Conservative candidate came within only a couple hundred votes, only a couple hundred votes. And not only that but there was a Manitoba Party candidate running that would have made up the difference if he had left, and then we would have a different member for Concordia.

And I tell you what the difference would be, I'll tell you what the difference would be. And this is the sad part because the member with his actions today, the member with his words on the record, the member with what he puts forward in this resolution, I'm sad to say that he continues to proceed in the same direction. He continues to proceed in the same direction. And so, when voters are going to look at

the member for Concordia and they're going to say, did this member learn his lesson, did he get the message that we tried to send him as voters in the last election by nearly defeated him in his own seat in a supposed stronghold? Did he get the message? And I would say, no, he didn't get the message. He did not get the message.

What he is is he's part of group, I'm going to call it a group because it can't properly be called a team; it can't properly be called a team. The members opposite know that; they spend more energy and effort—the members opposite spend more energy and effort arguing between themselves and positioning themselves to see who might be the next leader. That's what they're all about.

Now, here on the other side of the House, this is a team. This is a team that works together. And I'm going to get back, I'm going back, I'm going back to the beginning of my remarks that I put on the record. I'm hopeful. I'm a hopeful and optimistic person, but I'm also a person that conducts himself with integrity, and that's something else that the voters in my constituency of Radisson recognize. When I knocked on the door, when I return their calls, when I deliver tough messages to them, when I meet with people and I explain to them what we're doing as a government, the approach that we're taking, they understand and appreciate what we're doing.

\* (11:50)

When I talk to front-line workers in health care, nurses at Concordia Hospital, they tell me they are happy to see what we're doing. They are happy to see that the bloat that's occurring in the WRHA is being addressed. This is a team on this side of the House. We're functioning like a team. We're going to continue to function like a team, and we're going to continue to lead Manitobans on a course.

The member in his resolution talks about reversing a course and I couldn't agree more. We do need to reverse the course that was set by this government—previous government, rather, over a 17-year period that was going to take us straight into the rocks and crush this province down. Instead, we're going to turn the ship and we're going to bring it to smoother waters. And we're going to do that in a way that is hard-working and that puts the interest of Manitobans first.

And you want a demonstration of that? The member for Concordia would do well—he would do

well to remember what just happened in this House last week, where I think he himself, by all appearances, was quite surprised to find out that the Minister of Health had not only dealt with a particular case of a member in Russell, Manitoba but had actually gotten in his vehicle, had driven down on a weekend, I might add, on a weekend, working—I believe, thankfully, he had his wife with him, so he had a little family time. But he's working hard. He's working hard for those Manitobans. He's working hard for the Manitobans that are across this province. And not just him, but every member of our Cabinet and our Premier (Mr. Pallister) are working hard. That's what we do.

And we—thank you. And we see it again this week. We see it again this week, because—again, I hold this out to the member in the hopes—the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) in the hopes that he will change his conduct, that he will take a different approach to politics. But this week, we've seen teamwork, we've seen hard work, we've seen our Premier and our Cabinet standing up—standing up—for Manitoba against the federal Liberals, demanding that the Canadian health transfer be properly maintained, and that's what hard work looks like. Get used to it.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** You know, this is a very busy morning for me.

I don't like this practice of separating seniors from families. The seniors in our society are the ones that created our families. They are an essential part of families and shouldn't be labelled to feel excluded from their families or from this government.

It's similar to how this current government has clumped seniors in with health-care department rather than with the children and families department. Yes, seniors need health care, but children and grandchildren do as well.

With that said, let's talk about transparency. This government ran on a campaign, on promises to be transparent, and apparently there are plans and proposals that have been created, yet we've yet to see any of them. We want something tangible, something in front of the House here, and it's been almost a year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are officially being affected negatively from these poor decisions that are being made. This government continues to claim that we are defending the federal government and the feds, but the reality is that we want what's

best for Manitobans, and this government needs to be willing to negotiate, not just present ultimatums.

In recent years, there was way too much money invent—invested in the bureaucracy of health care, and this could be—could have been handled very differently. There was a lack of evidence that these QuickCare clinics did anything to reduce the wait times in emergency rooms, which is why they were created, and they haven't been accessible to the community due to understaffing of those front-line workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our province needs to start being proactive. Think about long-term planning that will save the province money, because people would be healthier, happier, they wouldn't be clogging up the emergency rooms and correctional facilities. What is happening with the Manitoba's dedicated stroke unit? And where is the care for mental health outside of correctional facilities and addictions? What about senior homes and home care? What about accessible health care up in the North? Why are these projects being put to halt?

There are issues with this resolution that I have clearly pointed out; however, the ultimate goal of the resolution as stated is something fair that our caucus will be voting in favour of.

Thank you.

**Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk):** There we go.

With respect to the statements by the members opposite stating that protecting health-care services for seniors and families is the No. 1 priority for Manitobans and should be the priority for the Premier and the provincial government, I need to remind members opposite that it is our health-care minister and our Premier that has been asking and asking and asking for the Prime Minister of Canada to sit down and talk about health care and its sustainability long term, not only for Manitobans, but for all Canadians.

Unlike the other—previous government, health care for Manitobans was never a priority for the former government. And with respect to the member's statements, this provincial government is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on health-care reviews. Anyone involved in a project or long-term planning knows the importance of knowing where you're starting from so you're—can then make a plan on where you're going to go and how you're going to get there.

This is an important first step in any decision-making process. And the members opposite health-care planning for Manitobans was very short-sighted and very narrow in scope and continues to be very short-sighted and narrow in scope. Canadian studies have shown that our population is aging. The amount of money we are going to need for our health care is increasing and increasing as our population ages. And it's expected to increase by an average of 5.2 per cent a year for the coming years.

The former government is also famous for not making long-term, sustainable plans. The truth is that in their last campaign there were about \$100 million in health-care promises made by the previous government that they knew they could never, ever deliver upon.

Members opposite like to refer to shovel-ready projects. I'm not sure they actually know what shovel-ready means. It doesn't mean that you have a shovel and are ready to go to a sod-turning photo op. Logical people who plan projects and say projects are shovel-ready, it means that the entire plan is in place from the idea stage right through to the doors opening and continued supports needed to ensure long-term sustainability of the projects.

It is very disappointing to see members opposite try to divide Manitobans into haves and have-nots. However, coming from a party that itself is divided, I can understand where their thinking comes from. Nonetheless, we have at some point—Manitobans need to realize that it is not in their best interest to be divided.

Members opposite refer to short-sighted plans. It's obvious the only short-sighted plans in health care were the ones the Manitobans received under the former government. This is why we had the longest ER wait times in Canada. This is why we had

the longest wait times for diagnostic workups. This is why we had the longest wait times for surgery treatments. And this is why we had the highest numbers of doctors leaving Manitoban. There was no plan for recruitment and retention, an essential component of keeping doctors here in Manitoba.

These problems would have continued into the future under the former government: I know it, members opposite know it, and on April 19th, Manitobans showed they knew it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the role of health care is to meet the health-care needs of Manitobans, individuals, families, and communities. And this can only be accomplished by leading a sustainable health system that promotes the well-being of all Manitobans, something the former government could not do.

I cannot support the member's short-sighted resolution. We need to make the tough choices today to ensure we have the sustainable health-care system for all Manitobans into the future.

Members opposite are calling for increased investment in health care, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we ask for their—members opposite—support in pressuring the federal government to live up to their commitment to cost-share health care for Manitobans, we get the members opposite either sitting on their hands or trying to make us believe that the offer presently before us—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** When this matter is before us—before the House, the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) has five minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., the House recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, March 16, 2017**

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