

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 219—The Surface Water Management Act
(Amendments to Various Acts
to Protect Lakes and Wetlands)**

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I move, seconded by the honourable MLA for Flin Flon, that Bill 219, The Surface Water Management Act (Amendments to Various Acts to Protect Lakes and Wetlands), be now read a first time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Motion presented.

An Honourable Member: We're taking turns today.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley.

Mr. Altemeyer: And this is my day job.

I'm very pleased to introduce this legislation. As members will probably be aware, this is a piece of legislation that, indeed, enjoyed all-party support just prior to the last election and widespread support from different stakeholder groups as well. It addresses a number of very timely and important issues related to saving our wetlands and helping reduce the risks of flooding and keeping nutrients on the land and out of our rivers, lakes and streams, and Lake Winnipeg first and foremost.

So I look forward to the opportunity to hear from the government if they still support this bill, and how

we can work together to make a positive difference for all Manitobans.

Thank you very much.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I move, seconded by the member for—

Madam Speaker: Pardon me, sorry—I need to ask, related to the past bill: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

**Bill 216—The Financial
Administration Amendment Act
(Economic Indicators)**

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 216, The Financial Administration Amendment Act (Economic Indicators), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Allum: This bill will require the government to be open and transparent with Manitobans about the consequences of their plan for our province's economy now and in the future and will require the government to provide accurate interprovincial comparisons.

This government has so far refused to produce clear long-term budget projections that Manitobans deserve. This bill will rectify this transparency deficit. What's more, to guarantee Manitoba as an affordable place to live, we need accurate interprovincial comparisons, not arbitrarily chosen statistics. This bill will restore these important comparisons to our budget.

We urge the government to vote for this bill in an effort to show Manitobans that they are committed to a transparent and accurate reporting process.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I have a statement for the House.

Before we proceed with ministerial statements, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to Mr. Blake Dunn, our Sergeant-at-Arms, who is retiring from his post at the end of this month.

I understand there will be further comments about our sergeant following mine, so I will ask all members to wait and join me in standing to appreciate Blake following all of the statements.

Blake joined Chamber Branch in December 1998 as a gallery attendant. By 2000, he had moved on to become the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms under then-Sergeant-at-Arms Garry Clark. In 2008, Blake became the acting Sergeant-at-Arms, before being formally appointed to the position in 2011.

Over his 18 years with the Assembly, Blake served under four different Speakers, but throughout his tenure here, he devoted himself to serving the House and all members equally and fairly, earning the respect of MLAs and staff alike.

Prior to joining Chamber Branch, Blake proudly wore a Winnipeg Police uniform from May 1966 until May of 1994. Blake joined the police at a young age, when walking the beat was the first assignment and officers wore the buffalo coat, which was nice when it was cold but very heavy when the weather warmed up.

In 1988, Blake earned the Police Merit Medal for 20 years of dedicated service. He worked in many departments throughout his career while happily remaining a CFL, or constable for life.

An interesting footnote to Blake's law enforcement career emerged with his discovery that his great-grandfather had joined the Irish police in 1866, while Blake joined the Winnipeg Police a century later in 1966.

Born and raised in beautiful Transcona, Blake met his lovely wife Barb, who is in the Speaker's Gallery today, and they were married in 1968. Blake and Barb have two daughters, Karen Bartlett and Jacqueline Brisley, along with their spouses, Raymond and Ian. Blake and Barb are also blessed with two wonderful grandchildren, Ryan and Mathew.

Blake is looking forward in his retirement to having more time for reading, history and science

especially, as well as travel with Barb and more time to enjoy the lake each summer.

Blake would like to thank the many gallery attendants and message room attendants he worked with for their help and support over his time here. For Blake, working with our young pages was a great part of his role with the Assembly, noting that, and I quote: It was a joy working with these bright young adults. It made one feel that the world would be well off, end quote, in the future.

*(13:40)

Blake would also like to thank all past and present MLAs for welcoming him into the Chamber and being so supportive and friendly. He says he will miss the good conversations he has enjoyed over the years.

On behalf of all members of this Assembly, as well as the Clerk and all Assembly staff, I would like to thank Blake for his years of service to this institution, and to wish both he and Barb the very best in the sunny years to come.

And I would ask all members to hold their applause until we hear from some more members in the Chamber. So, Blake, this is your day.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The required 90-minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2). Would the honourable Premier please proceed with his statement.

Blake Dunn

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who has devoted most of his adult life to serving the public and is retiring today.

Blake Dunn was born in 1946, and 20 years later he joined the Winnipeg police department, and he served with honour and distinction for 28 years until his retirement from the force in 1994.

Four years later he joined our Legislative Assembly in 1998 as a gallery attendant. He assumed the position of Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms in 2001, he became the Acting Sergeant-at-Arms in 2008 and he was confirmed as Sergeant-at-Arms in January of 2011. He has faithfully served in that capacity since then.

Madam Speaker, I know I speak for all members of the Chamber when I say that it has been a joy to

work with Blake. His pleasant demeanour, his helpful demeanour, his patience in the face of chaos has impressed us all, his sense of humour, his strength of character as well. These are the qualities of a person we all have tremendous respect for, Blake.

It's often said that retirement is merely the transition from one adventure to another and this was certainly the case for Blake in his life. He retired from the police service in '94 and then transitioned here to this place, and I have no doubt that there will be, in the future, many new and exciting opportunities awaiting him as he moves on in the years ahead.

I am told that next year—hard to believe, looking at the young man here before us—would be his 50th anniversary, and I am sure that Barb has some plans for you and I am sure you have some plans to help out in areas that she doesn't need much help in, but I expect that's what you'll be doing. I know that you will have the opportunity to celebrate a wonderful milestone then and I know that you'll be able, in the time ahead, to spend more time with your family, with your daughters, with your grandchildren. I know that you'll enjoy that time.

I join with all members here in the Chamber and I know staff, as well, and colleagues, in saying that we wish you the very best in the years to come and we thank you for your years of service here, Blake. We wish you tremendous good health and joy in the future as you experience rewarding experiences in the days ahead.

All the best.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, for two decades, Blake Dunn has been a steady presence in this building, with his black robes, golden mace and warm smile. Friday will mark Mr. Dunn's last day as Sergeant-at-Arms of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Born and raised in Winnipeg and a lifelong resident of Transcona, Mr. Dunn first began his career with the Winnipeg police department in 1966, where he served for almost 30 years. In 1998 Mr. Dunn joined the Legislative Assembly family as a gallery attendant. With his experience working with the Winnipeg police department, Blake naturally fit into the role of Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms in 2001, acting Sergeant-at-Arms in 2008 and finally Sergeant-at-Arms in 2011.

As the terrorist attack just today near the UK Parliament building has demonstrated, the role of the Sergeant-at-Arms is about so much more than simple ceremonies. It is about keeping this Chamber and this institution safe. It's thanks to Mr. Dunn's efforts that members of the Legislature and staff can come to work every day feeling secure. Throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Dunn has fulfilled his duties with the utmost professionalism and dedication.

On behalf of the NDP caucus, I would like to say thank you, Blake, for your years of service here at the Legislative Assembly and your unwavering commitment to the job. We wish you all the very best in your much deserved retirement, and hope you'll be spending it lakeside with your kids and grandkids. I think I can speak for all of my colleagues when I say you will be greatly missed.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) statement.

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

Ms. Klassen: I rise today to wish a fond farewell to our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Blake Dunn. Blake has served the public for over 50 years as both as—police officer for the City of Winnipeg and his time here as our sergeant of arms. Blake is such an inspiration to those who choose to serve. Throughout his career, he has made the world a better place.

I am sure he has some incredible stories from his time here. It was such an honour to work alongside another person whom always such—had such a welcoming smile upon his face. I really appreciated all those days when it was hard to come into here and to see your smile.

He goes forth with a bigger and better things to focus on, like his family, his children and especially his grandchildren, Ryan and Mathew.

On behalf of my colleagues from the Manitoba Liberal caucus, we thank Blake for his years of work and dedication and wish him safe travels and many relaxing days ahead. You have truly earned it.

Miigwech, Mr. Dunn. You will be missed.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I think this would be a good time to introduce you to some members that we have in the public gallery. I would like to draw your

attention to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today the wife of our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mrs. Barbara Dunn, and welcome her to the Legislature on this very special day—Barbara.

Also joining Blake today, here on his special day, we have six former pages who have served the Assembly and wanted to be here today to be part of the celebrations for Blake. They are Hilary Ransom, Megha Kaushal, Tiffany Fernando, Julia Antonyshyn, Sarah Cormier and Ceanray Harris-Read.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Sue Hjalmarson

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to recognize a great community leader from my constituency.

During one of my I Love to Read visits last month, I was greeted by the familiar face of Sue Hjalmarson, the teacher-librarian at Laidlaw School. I have had the pleasure of knowing Sue since becoming the MLA for Tuxedo in 2000. This year will serve as a milestone in our friendship, as I learned she will be retiring this June.

In her 28 years as an educator with the Pembina Trails School Division, Sue's passion for literacy has greatly impacted both students and colleagues alike. She is the creator and keeper of an amazing library sanctuary where students are surrounded not only by an expansive collection of wonderful books but also beautiful displays of their own artwork. It is truly a place that nurtures the love of reading and the appreciation of literature.

* (13:50)

Beyond the library, Sue was instrumental in creating the very successful Laidlaw School MakerSpace that provides students with creative, hands-on ways of demonstrating their learning. Activities in the space include problem solving, design projects, computer coding, 3-D printing, robotics and more. She has also extended her love of the community and learning into being involved with We Day, the Pembina Trails Human Rights Project and the Canada 150 Project.

Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to have Sue, as well as Laidlaw School principal, Ryan Scott, and

Sue's colleague, Liann Pelser, as well as her sister with us today, as my guests in the gallery.

Sue, I Love to Read Month won't be the same without you. I ask that all members of the House join me in thanking Sue for all of her heartfelt service and for being such a positive role model for her students and colleagues. I wish her all the best for a very happy and, no doubt, very productive retirement.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Charles Plett

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour Charles Plett in recognition of his achievements in the Christian music industry. He is a young man of faith and a songwriter and business owner with a bright future who is passionate about seeing lives changed.

Charles grew up in the small farming community of Menville, Manitoba. As a young boy he had a solid Christian influence in his life, but it was not until high school that he made the decision that his faith would be the enduring part of his life. After struggling with some internal conflicts, he says he had to make the difficult choice between staying in his comfort zone or taking a path he knew was right for him. Around this time he found—he was introduced to Christian hip hop music, and he hasn't looked back since.

Charles performs Christian rap under the name Solitude. He believes that, even when life is crazy around you, peace can be found in the guiding principles of faith. His life experience and belief in God and the inspiration is—was the inspiration for his songwriting. Charles has been nominated for two Covenant Awards sponsored by the Gospel Music Association of Canada for songs Fire Flame, in 2014, and Come Alive, in 2016.

In addition to pursuing excellence in music, his love for technology led this young entrepreneur to establish Lakesidedigital, a successful computer sales and service business in Gimli.

He and his wife, Jody, have two sons, Jonathan, four, and Kaden, two, and have another child on the way. They hope, by example, to inspire others to strive for healthy family relationships.

Madam Speaker, I ask my fellow members to join me in congratulating Charles today in—with this leadership and vision for his community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ovarian Cancer Awareness

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I'm sure every one of us in this room has experienced the loss of a family member or friend to cancer. In Manitoba alone, around 100 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer this year and around 75 women will die from this disease. Today, I would like to bring awareness to ovarian cancer and its devastating impact on the lives of women and their families.

I know this is an issue many people in my constituency of Flin Flon hold close to their hearts, and that's why every September, Flin Flon holds a Relay for Life where team members register to walk for 12 hours straight, in shifts, to raise money for cancer research. Registration is open, and I would encourage everyone in my constituency to sign up a team and show their support.

Community members, individuals and organizations all play an important role in the fight against ovarian cancer and supporting the families of women who have been diagnosed. But this is not a disease that we can fight alone. Important government investments in research and health care, like the recently cancelled CancerCare building, are also needed to make sure those currently battling ovarian cancer have the support they need and to give them hope that one day a cure will be found.

I'm humbled by the strength and courage of women battling ovarian cancer and the incredible resilience of their families. I would like to offer my thoughts and support to all Manitobans who have been affected.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Further members statements?

J. Frank Johnston

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, today we honour a great father, entrepreneur and public servant. J. Frank Johnston, former MLA and provincial Cabinet minister, passed away last month.

Janice Cook, a friend of the family, reminds us, for many of us who grew up in St. James, the Johnston home was a home away from home. She continues to say on behalf of the many of us teenage brats that just wouldn't go away, we thank you, Mr. J., for the many memories you allowed us to have in your home. Friend, Mike Mooney said, J. Frank was the perfect gentleman—classy, great sense of humor, and a man of his word.

This remarkable man served as deputy mayor of the municipality of St. James and served four terms as an MLA. A few of his successful projects included the Grace Hospital, the Assiniboine Golf Club, Sturgeon Creek Masonic Temple and the St. James Civic Centre.

But perhaps J. Frank's most remarkable and long-lasting legacy is his family. Public service can have a heavy price on a family. J. Frank's life partner of 66 years, Hazel, and he had a symbiotic relationship. Each built on the other's strengths, and each supported each other in tough times. Together, they raised three kids, Robyn, Scott and Donna, in their home in St. James.

Our colleague, a chip off the old block, member for St. James (Mr. Johnston) can be proud of his father, as he was proud of his children and life partner.

Thank you for everything, J. Frank.

Royal Manitoba Winter Fair

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I might need a moment, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to invite all of you, along with your family and friends, to the 2017 Royal Manitoba Winter Fair in Brandon. The fair begins Monday, March 27th with Sunrise Breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and runs until Saturday night. There is free admission for children under 12 if you download your ticket in advance, and plenty to see and experience for the whole family.

As an honour to our history and Canada 150, the Lord Strathcona's Horse mounted troop and the Royal Canadian Regiment will be prominently featured.

World-class show jumping is one of the main events all week with the RBC Challenge on Friday night and the MTS Grand Prix on Saturday evening. The SuperDogs are always a big draw and on Wednesday, which is also MLA day at the fair, the SuperDogs will team up with the horses and riders for a show-jumping relay event.

It wouldn't be a fair without fair food, and there is plenty available. The mini-donuts are always difficult to avoid, so enjoy. One of the most popular areas is the Royal Farm Yard where you can hold and pet the animals, learn about agriculture from producers and farmers and even milk a cow.

Barrel racing, draft horses, and the ever popular Miss Piggy Scramble are always highlights. Many competitors have been coming to the fair for years or decades. Fred Gilbert has participated in every fair since 1957 when he showed ponies with his uncles. Fred and his family will have five hackney ponies in competition next week, Fred's 60th consecutive year at the fair.

Doodles the Clown will be back, along with the Spin Cycle comedy duo, hypnotist Colin Christopher, Christina the Crazy Hooper, Treehouse favourites Max and Ruby, and family entertainer Al Simmons.

* (14:00)

Madam Speaker, this is the 110th year of the fair and it wouldn't happen without the volunteers, staff of Provincial Ex and Keystone Centre, Westman Place, sponsors, participants and, of course, you, the fairgoers. Come for an hour and stay for a day. The MLA for Brandon East and I hope to see many of you there. There's much more to discover at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

(Continued)

Madam Speaker: I am going to revert back to Ministerial Statements. The required 90-minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

World Water Day

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): Today is World Water Day. It's a day to celebrate water. It's a day to make a difference for the members of the global population who suffer from water-related issues. It's a day to prepare for how we manage water in the future. In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly designated March 22nd as the first World Water Day.

World Water Day allows us to focus on the importance of fresh water and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

This year's theme is waste water and the 2017 campaign, Why Waste Water? is about reducing and reusing waste water.

We are extremely fortunate to live in a province with an abundance of clean and sustainable freshwater resources. Our lakes and streams are not only a source of economic well-being for us, for example, by allowing us to generate clean, renewable

energy, they are also the foundation for preserving our environment and for the health of Manitobans. We are also fortunate to have highly advanced treatment framework here in Manitoba and infrastructure in place, so as to allow our waste water to be recycled across the province. This prevents negative impacts to our freshwater sources and to human health.

Nevertheless, some communities in the North continue to struggle with access to clean and healthy fresh water and we should therefore remember that, even here in Manitoba, there is work left to be done. Our government will continue to protect our water and ensure our waste water is treated adequately and that our approach is based on scientific evidence.

I invite all Manitobans to join me in the celebration of water day and to think about the wonderful resources we have to access, and especially next time you stand on the shores of one of our wonderful 100,000 lakes here in Manitoba. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I want to thank the minister for her statement recognizing World Water Day. I think this would be more of a day to celebrate were it not for some of the very concerning provisions contained in the recent Bill 24 tabled by this very same government.

One the many concerning elements related to water in that legislation is the government's proposal that all water systems in Manitoba will no longer need to be inspected and assessed for their safety every five years.

This timeline is not accidental, Madam Speaker. In the month of May, in the year 2000, in the Ontario community of Walkerton, people started to get sick. And by the end of that horrible water tragedy, thousands of people had fallen ill and seven people had lost their lives, and the cost was estimated to be in excess of \$155 million.

These are very serious concerns when a government is looking at weakening standards, which have been in place for a very good reason, for a very long time, and it is ironic that on World Water Day the minister has chosen to refer to scientific evidence but has not tabled any, suggesting that moving to once-in-every-ten-year inspection period is appropriate.

So we very much hope the minister will help us change this legislation. Thank you very much.

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

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to speak to the statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: World Water Day, today, is about taking care of one of our most important resources: water.

Canada has more fresh water than almost any other country on earth and it is therefore remarkable that, on any given day, there are roughly 1,400 drinking water advisories in effect. In Manitoba, we currently have 64 communities with boil-water advisories, 13 of these are First Nations.

This year's theme for World Water Day is waste water. The vast majority of all the waste water from our homes, cities, industry and agriculture flows back to nature without being treated or reused, polluting the environment and losing valuable nutrients.

More must be done to manage and to protect our freshwater lakes and river systems, and I would add to make sure that we keep them unpolluted, but also that we're preventing floods.

I'd like to remind the members of the House that in the last 15 years Winnipeg alone has accidentally dumped over 500 million litres of raw sewage or partially treated sewage into the Red River. There remains, clearly, much yet to do to finish the job of removing most of the phosphorus in Winnipeg's sewage and much yet to do to address the combined sewage and greywater system which results in spillage of sewage into the Red River, and yet, of course, the deregulation of water testing is on this government's agenda.

It's on the responsibility now of every single citizen in Manitoba to be responsible stewards of our fresh water. And it's critical for all of us to invest—the importance—and recognize the importance of investing in making sure our water is healthy.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Federal Health-Care Transfers Inclusion in Budget

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Health care is Manitobans' No. 1 priority, but you wouldn't realize it from the actions of the government. They have outlined a plan that

hurts patients and hurts our health-care system. They have cancelled important projects like CancerCare. They closed a QuickCare clinic and demanded massive cuts from RHAs, and they have threatened to close emergency rooms. Truly, a pitiful record.

But more will be cut if the Premier does not receive adequate funding from the federal government.

Can the Premier inform the House if the federal government's budget will contain a 3.5 increase in health transfers for Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question—pertinent to the No. 1 priority of, I believe, all Canadians: a sustainable health-care system. I, and all members on this side who have been standing up for health care, would have, some time ago, appreciated the support of the members opposite in our struggle to achieve a better level of support from the federal government.

Any support announcement in today's budget in excess of 3 per cent will be as a result of provinces such as ours and their efforts in standing up for health care. I applaud the efforts of our Health Minister who has, above all others, stood for Manitobans' health care and stood for Canadians' health care. I thank him.

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

Mental Health and Home Care

Ms. Marcelino: I thank the Premier for the answer.

But the Premier has picked a political fight with Ottawa for nearly a year over health-care funding. He now stands alone in his fight. He wasted time with his many vacations to Costa Rica instead of collaborating with the federal government. He wasted time by having his Department of Health create a website that influenced nothing. He wasted time by linking this deal with other national agreements in an unproductive fashion.

The Premier has failed in his negotiations, and his failure will hurt Manitobans.

Can the Premier advise this House today if Manitoba will receive important moneys from the federal government for mental health and home-care services?

Mr. Pallister: I very much appreciate the topic the member raises, not so much the way in which she

raises it, but the topic itself is about sustainable health care. And, Madam Speaker, that has been a top priority for this government from day one.

And our challenge as a country, of course, is to make sure that we rise to the realities of an aging population. The costs that are going up exponentially, every study has agreed, are going to propel the obligation of every province, in particular, to provide better service. And we will need more resources to do that.

Unfortunately, the federal government has taken the position that they do not wish to participate as partners in the manner in which they have participated in the past, and so the burden will fall disproportionately on the shoulders of provincial governments.

*(14:10)

We are working diligently on behalf of the people of Manitoba to make sure that we have a sustainable partnership with the federal government, while the members opposite sit on their hands and do nothing.

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

Contract Negotiations Nurse Layoff Concerns

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): The time for grandstanding and pointless websites has long passed. The Premier has shown that his commitment to health care is hollow. He demands hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal government on one hand, while slashing millions from the health-care system on the other.

Now we have heard that he's thinking of trying to lay off our front-line workers, care workers like nurses. We know what happened the last time the Premier was in power. Our province lost over 1,000 nurses due to the PC's misguided policies. Our province and health-care system needs more nurses, not less.

Will the Premier commit today that his government will not seek the layoff of nurses in any new contract talks?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): While we choose to set partisanship aside and stand up for the province's best interests, Madam Speaker, the members opposite put partisanship forefront. And as they did in the 1990s, when they sat quietly by and

watched the Liberal federal government gut health-care funding and said nothing about it, they're doing it again. They're doing it again in an effort to capture support from what they call, in the backrooms of their party, soft Liberal support.

And so, in a desire to be more popular tomorrow, they ignore the challenges today. The challenge today is eerily reminiscent of the challenge of the 1990s, which was put upon this province and all other provinces by a federal Liberal government that refused to understand the importance of health care for the people of this country, Madam Speaker. We're facing up to that challenge.

Members opposite had a choice to make, and they've made it. They decided to stand quietly back and do nothing while we lead the fight for health care in this country.

Health-Care Services Government Intention

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Will the Premier confirm today that all remaining QuickCare clinics and ACCESS centres that Manitoba families count on will remain open?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I will certainly confirm that we will continue to look for ways to ensure the health-care system is sustainable not just for today, but for tomorrow. That will mean talking to health experts. And I know the member, at different times, has said that we should talk to health experts, and other times he said we shouldn't listen to them. Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) at some times says we should have analysis and sometimes we shouldn't have analysis. But at the end of the day, we will listen to health experts, have analysis and do what is best for patient care and sustainability, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, Manitobans deserve a clear yes or no answer to the question of their front-line—closure of their front-line services.

Yesterday, the Premier and the Health Minister threatened to close ERs, but so far they've refused to give Manitobans the details. The Premier spent months ducking and dodging questions on cuts to front-line services. He refuses to give a clear answer because he knows that Manitobans didn't vote for his agenda of cuts to health care.

Will the Health Minister just give us a straight answer and tell Manitobans which ER he plans to close?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, this is the member who, only a few months ago, demanded that we look to Quebec for solutions in health care to try to privatize health care to 35 or 40 per cent as is done in Quebec. He wanted us to expand privatization into other parts of the United States and to Grand Forks. He demanded that in the paper.

Now he says, don't listen to the health experts, even though a few months ago he said, listen to the health experts. We are going to continue to listen to those experts within the health-care system who are also concerned about sustainability, unlike this member for Concordia.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, we know this government's record of cuts. Instead of investing in community health care, they cut the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic. Instead of building patient care, they cancelled CancerCare. Instead of protecting northern health care, they cancelled The Pas clinic.

They're squeezing nurses. They're eliminating the home-care programs that people count on, and now QuickCare clinics, ACCESS centres and even emergency rooms are at risk.

Will this minister just tell us the truth? What other health services are on the chopping block?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, for 17 years that member had his hand on the wheel. He was in complete control along with his colleagues in the NDP. They could do whatever they wanted in the health-care system.

They poured billions of dollars into the system, and what did they get? Dead last. Dead last in wait times in the ERs, dead last in wait times for surgical procedures, dead last when it came to diagnostic tests, and now the member wants to do exactly the same thing.

Why does he feel that after 17 years of a failed health-care policy it's going to be any better if you continue to do the same thing, Madam Speaker? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Safe Drinking Water Water System Inspection

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): The Walkerton inquiry followed the death of seven Canadians in the community of Walkerton, Ontario, and the illness of thousands more. E. coli had managed to get into their drinking water system, and one of the main conclusions from the Walkerton inquiry was that all water systems should be inspected every five years.

Why is this government now weakening and violating the recommendations from the Walkerton inquiry?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question.

You know, perhaps he failed actually to read the legislation or, you know, perhaps failed to actually analyze it correctly.

This is about valves and pipes and infrastructure. It has nothing to do with water quality. This is about—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cox: This is about opportunities for small water suppliers and campgrounds to actually put more money—invest more money into infrastructure, not reports.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Altemeyer: That answer kind of begs the follow-up question, Madam Speaker: When people are camping, do they not deserve safe drinking water?

Mrs. Cox: Won't take any lessons for the member opposite. I mean, you know, 17 years and they actually failed to actually pass a surface water management act. The member opposite brings forward a bill that talks about, you know, surface water and concerns like that. However, after 17 years, as I said, they failed to actually implement anything like that.

This will have no impact on water testing. The same amount of water testing will continue. This will just put us in line with other provinces, such as the province of Alberta which, I believe, is an NDP government and has—as had the member over there—

has the same rules and requirements as what we do here.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: I had a very interesting and instructive conversation this morning with someone who I think the minister should hear from: Dr. Eva Pip, who for decades has been an aquatic scientist and professor at the University of Winnipeg. Her scientific opinion, quote: This proposal is a very negative situation where water protection laws are being set back 30 years.

What does the minister know that Dr. Eva Pip, apparently, does not?

Mrs. Cox: Thanks again to the member opposite.

You know, I am aware, as well, that Eva Pip indicated—I think it was five years before they failed to bring in a aquatic invasive species program at all. That, in fact, you know, they were there and they were in our lakes and in our streams. However, they failed to act on that.

*(14:20)

We will get this right, Madam Speaker. We're bringing this in line with the national health-based guidelines and other provinces as well. This is not an issue with regard to water quality; this is an issue about ensuring that, you know, we have this—the—*[interjection]* Sorry.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cox: We have the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cox: —legislation in place to make sure that we're protecting our water. Thank you.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Freshwater Fish Legislation Impact on Indigenous Fishers

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): On this important World Water Day we are reminded of how critical water is to all of us, particularly to our fishers. Our fishers are people who provide us with so much sustenance day in and day out, but, Madam Speaker, the fact is this government has shown its contempt

for fishers by moving to gut the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Why did the government ignore the vast majority of fishers who want to maintain the single-desk FFMC?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'd like to thank the member opposite.

This is about opportunity for commercial fishers. We've talked to them, we've listened to them and we've heard from them. We're going to provide them with opportunities to get more—put more money in their pockets, not have—fishermen have to go out and have to deal with one individual, not a monopoly. We believe in opportunity, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Indigenous fishers in the North deserve meaningful consultation regarding their fishing that provides for their family, yet the government did not consult meaningfully with industry nor ask fishers whether they wanted to keep the FFMC before they announced their intentions.

Instead—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Lathlin: —they took out the same firm that dismantled the single desk for hogs to do the same task for our fishers. The government has unilaterally decided to end the single desk, which ensures a good price for many fishers, particularly for northern and indigenous fishers.

Why is this government ignoring our fishers and putting their livelihoods at risk?

Mrs. Cox: We've been out talking to Manitoba fishers, and I've personally talked to commercial fishers and I've heard from them and listened to them and listened to them about their problems. As a matter of fact, I know that we met with the individuals from Skownan First Nation, and they are so looking forward to having fishing freedom and having the opportunity to market fish they—in the manner that they see fit.

Also, according to the minister of fisheries for the Manitoba Metis Federation, John Parenteau, he said, I think the fishermen are very happy with the decision government made in regards to open market.

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

Ms. Lathlin: The government could have negotiated with the federal government to improve the system for the benefit of Manitoba fishers, but like we have seen on health care with Ottawa or flood mitigation with Saskatchewan, this government's approach is my way or the highway.

Now, the government seems to have found someone they can push around: northerners and indigenous fishers who rely on FFMC for the basic necessities of life.

Why—what study has the minister done into the impacts of her decisions to northern and indigenous fishers?

Mrs. Cox: Again, I'd like to thank member opposite for that question.

A quote from President David Chartrand of Manitoba Metis Federation: I commend Minister Cox and the Manitoba government on their vision for a responsible approach with direct accountability to the fishers. The Metis make up a significant portion of the fishers in the freshwater fish industry, a fish in desperate need of renewal and investment. This new direction will give the industry a chance to survive and will open up opportunities for Manitoba fishers.

We've listened to Manitoba fishers, and the members opposite should get on board and ensure that Manitoba fishers have more opportunity to put more money in their pockets.

Madam Speaker: I would just like to indicate to the minister, and all members in the House, that when we are referring either to ourselves or other members, that we do not use the name of the person but their role or title.

Thank you.

Public Service Employees Government Position on Layoffs

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, on Monday the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was quoted in the press, saying his government had chosen not the layoff option that other governments, provincially, have chosen. Today, in the press, this same Premier was quoted as saying that layoffs are not off the table.

Can the Premier explain to the people of Manitoba if his position has changed?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for the Civil Service): That member knows, and all Manitobans know, that it is our plan as a government to protect front-line services.

But, Madam Speaker, let's be clear, it is exactly—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: It is exactly the record of the NDP that puts at risk the very jobs that they now say they seek to protect.

Madam Speaker, \$900 million in debt service charge, a debt that has doubled, a deficit that was never reigned in, they missed all their targets. Our plan is to bring the stability to the province of Manitoba that is so desperately needed at this time, and we will succeed.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Let's try again.

On Monday, the Premier told the people of Manitoba, saying they've chosen not to lay people off. And that's a quote. Today, the Premier is quoted in the press as saying layoffs are an option. Families need to know if they're going to be working to plan for their car payments, mortgages, pay for daycare.

Madam Speaker, will this Premier live up to his words on Monday and tell the House he will not seek layoffs of front-line workers?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, earlier this week, our government was proud to introduce legislation, Bill 28, which is designed to create and to bring back sustainability to the government's finances. It calls for all hands on deck. It is a reasonable, moderate and time-limited bill that would provide a real path forward, a real road to recovery. We believe that labour has a role to play. We look forward to our continued discussions with labour.

Let's understand: They put a system at risk. Stability is needed. We will guide that process back on a road to recovery.

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

Mr. Lindsey: On Monday, the Premier was quoted in the press, stating his government will not seek layoffs. Now we learn the Premier may seek layoffs. And now, today, in this House, he won't answer the

question. He has his minions stand up and answer the question in his stead.

Will this Premier (Mr. Pallister) tell the House today if he will demand layoffs or unpaid days off?
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

I would caution members on some of the words that may be flung across the House at this time and urge members to please be cautious with the words you're using in this Chamber.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, that member speaks about affordability, but no government in this province did more to negatively affect the affordability for Manitobans: widening the RST, raising the PST, measures that right now take almost \$400 million per year out of the pockets of hard-working Manitobans.

* (14:30)

We are the party that stands up for Manitobans, for affordability and for a sustainability of our systems. That's the challenge before Manitobans; it's one that Manitobans recognize.

When will they recognize it and get on board?
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Children's Special Allowance Government Intention

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): The current minister responsible stated when in opposition they had advocated for the previous NDP government to set aside the children's special allowances for our CFS children in care.

The budget is coming. On behalf of the over 11,000 kids in care, minister, what has the department done to ensure those special allowance funds are used only for our children in care?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Repairing some of the services that were left in the last NDP administration is something that we take very seriously.

Our administration introduced amendments. We introduced The Protecting Children Act right in the first 100 days of our administration. We're taking actions in terms of comprehensive plans to address the child-welfare system and make it more effective and focus on prevention, early intervention for all Manitobans.

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

Number of Children in Care Need for Reduction Plan

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): My question was in regards to those funds.

Sadly, perhaps this government had enough time to realize what the financial gains are of keeping our indigenous people and our most vulnerable in perpetual poverty. This is causal and it's cyclical as this government—current government does not invest in my people. This government does not educate the majority of my people.

Can this government provide us with an outline of what steps they have taken that fixes the broken CFS system that will enable us to reduce the number of kids in care?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Our Throne Speech outlined that we are introducing a comprehensive plan to address the child-welfare system. We think items such as early intervention and prevention is something that makes sense. We think looking at the funding models is something that is a priority. We think looking at permanence, ensuring that there's not the amount of long-term wards, permanent wards of the province of Manitoba is something that can help address the child-welfare system. It's something I'm very passionate about. It's something the government will be talking about a lot over the next number of months.

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

Ms. Klassen: When there is more money for a foster parent than for actual parents, something is obviously broken. When there are better supports for foster parents than actual parents, something is broken. Why is the government not focusing on supporting the committed parents of these CFS children?

Use that money to invest in the thousands of impoverished and broken families. I guarantee this government will see fewer kids in care when we invest in families.

Is this government even willing to move to a system which invests in families first?

Mr. Fielding: We are left with, let's face it, a mess in terms of the child-welfare system from the previous administration: over 10,500 kids in care.

We're working on a comprehensive plan that we think will make a difference. It's a priority to this government, that's why we introduced the protecting children act within the first 100 days.

We are also working the federal government in terms of the child welfare. There's obviously money that's been dedicated from the federal government in terms of this. We're working as a collaborative approach to this. That's something we're going to work with the communities, with the federal government and with the provincial government to make it more effective, to make it more sustainable in terms of the long-term care of our children, Madam Speaker.

New West Partnership Agreement Reduction in Trade Barriers

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Business owners, community leaders and chambers of commerce from across Manitoba have long called for our Province to pursue new opportunities for growth and reduce trade barriers.

We know the NDP work against trade agreements at every level.

My question is for the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade: How will the passage of Bill 7 help us to achieve the goals of growth and reduce trade barriers? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): It's certainly refreshing to get a question on the economy.

Bill 7 will allow us to implement the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. This agreement will strengthen and expand Canada's largest barrier-free interprovincial market. This legislation will allow Manitobans to participate in a market of over 11 million people with a combined GDP of \$750 billion. The bill will allow goods and services to be traded more easily, will help eliminate red tape and streamline regulation.

The New West Partnership is an important part of our economic strategy on our road to recovery and our journey to be Canada's most improved province.

We look forward to opposition members supporting this legislation later today.

Advanced Education Act Request to Repeal

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): With the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) plan to hike tuition, students could see their tuitions rise by 5 per cent a year, plus inflation, plus fees. This would create huge financial burdens on students and the families who are already struggling to afford post-secondary education.

Now, we live in a society—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —where work is less stable and more precarious. The government thinks it's reasonable to ask these students and their families, who already struggle, to struggle more just to afford education.

Will the Premier recognize he's putting too much of a burden on Manitoba students and their families, reverse course on Bill 31 and cancel his plan to raise tuition fees?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I appreciate the question.

We are working with post-secondary institutions to work—to develop a sustainable, long-term program to give quality education to these same students so they can get their money's worth in terms of tuition. We are very pleased to be part of a government that supports that.

It's hard to take seriously criticisms about debt from the previous government, especially when they were adding probably \$1,000 a year to the debt of every one of those students just on the deficit alone. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Premier wants to cut education. He wants to cut the Dakota Field, the Kelvin gym, small class size program. The only thing he's committed to increasing is tuition rates, but we need investment.

And I'd like to read the words of somebody on the record who agrees: Education will be the No. 1 investment in the future of our province. Who said that? Well, of course, that was the Premier to the Winnipeg Free Press on January 18th, 2016.

So will the Premier live up to his election promise: invest in education and reverse course on Bill 31?

Mr. Wishart: We're very pleased to work with the 'post-secondary' institutions to improve the quality of our education, and after 17 years we went from No. 5 in Canada on the K-to-12 system under—with their government, to dead last. That is hardly a record to give as an example of how to manage education in this province.

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

Mr. Kinew: If you look at the numbers at just one institution in our province, the University of Manitoba, under the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) plan to increase tuition rates they could be charging \$90 million more over the next four years to students right here in Manitoba. That's not affordable.

We know that the challenges around—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —precarious work are real and so are the challenges around student debt.

So I would ask again: Will the Premier admit that his plan to raise tuition hikes—raise tuition rates, rather, is too much of a burden on students and that he will commit to reversing course on Bill 31 and his plan to raise tuition?

Mr. Wishart: As I said earlier, we are committed to getting a good, quality education for post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

* (14:40)

During that same period of time the member just quoted, we will be putting, through the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary initiative, \$80 million directly into the hands of students to help them with their education.

I think that our plan is much better and much more sustainable than anything we saw from that government.

Fiscal Performance Review Request to Release Report

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): The Premier's commitment to front-line workers has proven to be about as empty as his commitment to openness and transparency.

In December, his Finance Minister commissioned a fiscal performance review at a cost of \$1 million. We asked for that report in January;

Finance Minister said no way. We asked for that report in February; Finance Minister said no chance.

Madam Speaker, it's March now. Will the Finance Minister do the right thing and produce—table that report today?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): The member could not be more hypocritical.

I note that in 2014, when the former government took on a consultant's report, the Dunsky Energy Consulting report that they commissioned in 2014, not only did they not release it to the public, they didn't actually tell Manitobans that it existed.

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

Mr. Allum: The reason we asked for this report is because this week alone the Finance Minister tabled legislation which is almost certainly unconstitutional. And yesterday the Premier of this province threatened the jobs of front-line workers.

Presumably—presumably—these things were recommended in the Finance Minister's \$1 million private sector consultant's report. So I'm asking him: will he do the right thing and release the—this doomsday report today?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, like a fan, that member oscillates between misinformation and just false assertions. But, Madam Speaker, I would challenge him to switch his settings to a third one: on accuracy.

Madam Speaker, that member knows full well that this government is listening to all Manitobans, through our prebudget consultation, to experts in the field, to civil servants through a special portal where they can provide advice to government.

That government never listened; we're in the business of listening. The real experts are Manitobans.

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

Mr. Allum: You know, here it is March. We've asked for the report now three times. The Finance Minister has clearly said no, and yet the Premier of this province is on record as saying 97 per cent of that report is going to be made public. And we're still waiting, Madam Speaker.

Jobs are at risk. Services are at risk. Programs are at risk. All of these things were presumably recommended by this doomsday report.

It's a simple request: Will the Finance Minister do the right thing, come clean with Manitobans and table the report today? My goodness, we'll wait for him to go to his office and get it and he can bring it back up right now.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, earlier I misspoke. Actually, the member is like a three-speed fan with fear, misinformation and also false assertions—so all three speeds.

Madam Speaker, if that member would like to go in the right direction, he would acknowledge that the report of which he speaks is advice to government, the same type of advice that his government sought. The difference is we read the reports. We listen, not just to experts, but to all Manitobans. The advice we've received will be visible to him in the good news and the good work we will bring in Budget 2017.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

East Side Road Authority Support for Bill 6

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Madam Speaker, the Auditor General noted numerous problems with the management of the East Side Road Authority, including not following a number of standard accounting practices. Reports were filed late, some expense reviews were not completed.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure explain why Bill 6, The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act, is vitally important?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I'd like to thank my colleague for that excellent question.

Bill 6 repeals The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Act and transfers the work back to Infrastructure to manage its affairs professionally and in an open and transparent way.

The East Side Road Authority is just another example of the disrespect the previous NDP government had for the taxpayers of Manitoba. They spent \$500 million and built 50 miles of road.

We look forward to the opposition supporting Bill 6 for all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Neighbourhoods Alive! Funding

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Since 2001, the Neighbourhoods Alive! program has supported stronger neighbourhoods and communities in Manitoba.

(2) Neighbourhoods Alive! uses a community-led development model that partners with neighbourhood renewal corporations on projects that aim to revitalize communities.

(3) Neighbourhoods Alive! and the neighbourhood renewal corporations it supports have played a vital and important role in revitalizing many neighbourhoods in Manitoba through community-driven solutions, including: employment and training, education and recreation, safety and crime prevention, and housing and physical improvements.

(4) Neighbourhoods Alive! now serves 13 neighbourhood renewal corporations across Manitoba which have developed expertise in engaging with their local residents and determining the priorities of their communities.

(5) The provincial government's previous investments into Neighbourhoods Alive! have been bolstered by community and corporate donations as well as essential support from community volunteers, small businesses and local agencies.

(6) Late in 2016, the minister responsible for the Neighbourhoods Alive! program said new funding for initiatives was paused and that the future of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program was being reviewed, bringing hundreds of community projects to a standstill.

(7) Neighbourhood renewal corporations and their communities are concerned this funding freeze is the first step in a slow phase-out of the Neighbourhoods Alive! grant program, which would have severe negative impacts on families and communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the Neighbourhoods Alive! program

and the communities served by neighbourhood renewal corporations by continuing to provide consistent core funding for existing neighbourhood renewal corporations and enhancing the public funding available for specific initiatives.

This petition is signed by many Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

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

Neighbourhoods Alive! Funding

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly. The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Since 2001, the Neighbourhoods Alive! program has supported stronger neighbourhoods and communities in Manitoba.

(2) Neighbourhoods Alive! uses a community-led development model that partners with neighbourhood renewal corporations on projects that aim to revitalize communities.

(3) Neighbourhoods Alive! and the neighbourhood renewal corporations it supports have played a vital and important role in revitalizing many neighbourhoods in Manitoba through community-driven solutions, including: employment and training, education and recreation, safety and crime prevention, and housing and physical improvements.

(4) Neighbourhoods Alive! now serves 13 neighbourhood renewal corporations across Manitoba which have developed expertise in engaging with their local residents and determining the priorities of their communities.

(5) The provincial government's previous investments into Neighbourhoods Alive! have been bolstered by community and corporate donations as well as essential support from community volunteers, small businesses and local agencies.

(6) Late in 2016, the minister responsible for the Neighbourhoods Alive! program said new funding for initiatives was, quote, paused, end quote, and that the future of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program was being, quote, reviewed, end quote, bringing hundreds of community projects to a standstill.

(7) Neighbourhood renewal corporations and their communities are concerned this funding freeze is the first step in a slow phase-out of the Neighbourhoods Alive! grant program, which would

have severe negative impacts on families and communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the Neighbourhoods Alive! program and the communities served by neighbourhood renewal corporations by continuing to provide consistent core funding for existing neighbourhood renewal corporations and enhancing the public funding available for specific initiatives.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Kelvin High School Gymnasium and Wellness Centre

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

(1) Manitobans recognize how important it is to provide young people with quality learning spaces to succeed in school.

(2) Sport, recreation and the spaces to engage in them are critical to the health and welfare of all students.

(3) All forms of educational infrastructure, including gymnasiums and recreation centres in general, represent an incredible value-for-money investment, whereby the return is improved physical and psychological health and wellness.

(4) Kelvin High School is one of the largest high schools in the province with over 1,200 students.

(5) Kelvin High School spent several years raising almost \$1.2 million towards the construction of a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

(6) Some Kelvin students currently have to pay to use outside facilities to obtain their mandatory physical education credit.

(7) The provincial government, in a regressive and short-sighted move, cancelled funding for the Kelvin gym and wellness centre for political reasons, despite the extensive community support, fundraising and engagement.

(8) It is wasteful and disrespectful to the dedicated efforts of students, of staff and the community in general to simply lay their goals aside without consultation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the need for excellent recreation facilities in all Manitoban schools, to reverse this regressive cut and to provide Kelvin High School with the funding necessary to complete a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

And this petition has been signed by many Manitobans, including Kieran Rice-Lambert, Joe Wasylycia-Leis, Ron Kostyshyn, Jody Gillis.

Dakota Collegiate Sports Complex

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly. The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize how important it is to provide young people with quality learning spaces to succeed in school.

(2) Sport recreation and the spaces to engage in them are critical to the physical, mental and social welfare of students.

(3) All forms of educational infrastructure, including gymnasiums and recreation centres in general, represent an incredible value-for-money investment, whereby the return is the improved physical and psychological health and well-being of students.

(4) Dakota Collegiate spent several years raising money toward the construction of the Louis Riel School Division sports complex to replace the poor condition of its playing field.

(5) Dakota's varsity teams have been forced to play elsewhere because of the poor conditions of its playing field.

(6) Dakota Collegiate must put the project out to tender and break ground in a matter of months for the field to be completed in time for this coming school year.

(7) The provincial government, in a regressive and short-sighted move, cancelled funding for this project for political reasons despite the extensive community support, fundraising and engagement.

(8) It is a short-sighted move on the part of the provincial government to undercut the dedicated efforts of students, staff and the community in general.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the tireless efforts of the Dakota-of Dakota Collegiate, its students, parents, staff and the surrounding community; to recognize the need for excellent recreational facilities in all Manitoba schools; to reverse this regressive cut; and to provide the funding necessary to complete the Louis Riel School Division sports complex.

Signed by many distinguished Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Further petitions?

High School Recreation Facilities

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly. The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitobans recognize how important it is to provide young people with quality learning spaces to succeed in school.

(2) Sport recreation and the spaces to engage in them are critical to the physical, mental and social welfare of students.

(3) Kelvin High School and Dakota college have both spent several years raising money towards the construction of a new gymnasium and wellness centre and a new sports field, respectively.

(4) Kelvin High School is one of the largest high schools in the province with over 1,200 students.

(5) Some Kelvin students currently have to pay to use outside facilities to obtain their mandatory physical education credit.

(6) Likewise, Dakota's varsity teams have been forced to play elsewhere because of the negative condition of its playing field.

(7) Football and soccer teams at Dakota Collegiate must put the project out to tender and break ground in a manner-matter of months for the field to be completed for this coming school year.

(8) The provincial government, in its regressive and short-sighted move, cancelled funding for both projects for political reasons despite the expensive-extensive community support.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the tireless 'efforts' of Kelvin High School and

Dakota Collegiate, to recognize the need for excellent recreation facilities in all Manitoba schools, to reverse this regressive cut to Manitoba schools and to provide both schools with the funding necessary to complete the new Kelvin High School gymnasium and the Dakota college field of dreams.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by many, many hard-working Manitobans.

Neighbourhoods Alive! Funding

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly. The background to this petition is as follows:

Since 2001, the Neighbourhoods Alive! program has supported stronger neighbourhoods and communities in Manitoba.

* (15:00)

(2) Neighbourhoods Alive! uses a community-led development model that partners with neighbourhood renewal corporations on projects that aim to revitalize communities.

(3) Neighbourhoods Alive! and the neighbourhood renewal corporations it supports have played a vital and important role in revitalizing many neighbourhoods in Manitoba through community-driven solutions, including: employment and training, education and recreation, safety and crime prevention, and housing and physical improvements.

(4) Neighbourhoods Alive! now serves 13 neighbourhood renewal corporations across Manitoba, which have developed expertise in engaging in their local—the local residents and determining the 'parities'—priorities of their communities.

(5) The provincial government previous—government's previous investments into Neighbourhoods Alive! have been bolstered by community and corporate donations as well as essential support from community volunteers, small business and local agencies.

(6) Late in 2016, the minister responsible for the Neighbourhoods Alive! program said new funding for initiatives was paused and that the future of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program was being reviewed, bringing hundreds of community projects to a standstill.

Neighbourhoods—No. 7, neighbourhood renewal corporations and their communities are concerned this funding freeze is the first step in a slow

phase-out of the Neighbourhoods Alive! grant program, which would have severe negative impacts on families and communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the Neighbourhoods Alive! program and the communities served by neighbourhood renewal corporations by continuing to provide consistent core funding for existing neighbourhood renewal corporations and enhancing the public funding available for specific initiatives.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many fine Manitobans.

Provincial Nominee Program

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The background to this petition is as follows.

(1) The provincial government has proposed regressive changes to the Provincial Nominee Program, PNP, that create financial and social barriers for newcomers.

(2) Starting this year, successful provincial nominees must pay a \$500 fee as part of their application, adding to the financial burden of applicants.

(3) While the provincial government's stated justification for the fees, that it will be reinvested into language-support programs, the PNP already requires nominees to have proven English or French language skills.

(4) The provincial government is also changing its criteria from selecting nominees with family and community connections in Manitoba to an employer-driven focus that would only select nominees with approved job offers from 'stablished employers.

(5) The shift in focus jeopardizes the PNP's successful 86 per cent retention rate as, without family or community ties, nominees will move to other provinces with larger job markets.

(6) This change provides employers with an incentive to select newcomers based on reduced cost, leaving nominees vulnerable to exploitation.

(7) The business community and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce have made it clear that the

PNP is a successful program, driving the economy with skilled workers.

(8) According to a report in 2014, 94 to 98 per cent of nominees reported employment earnings within their first year of arriving in Manitoba and had the second lowest unemployment rate among immigrants in Canada.

(9) Despite the wealth of economic and social benefits that newcomers bring to the province, the Premier cruelly portrayed them as a burden to society by inaccurately linking provincial nominees to high unemployment rates and social assistance.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to maintain the PNP's nomination criteria to remove the \$500 fee and to continue to invest in newcomers who build the province, drive the economy and promote diversity and inclusion in Manitoba.

Signed by Bob Mensforth, Paul Sims, John Helliard and many, many more outstanding Manitobans.

**Kelvin High School Gymnasium
and Dakota Collegiate Field of Dreams**

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize how important it is to provide young people with quality learning spaces to succeed in school.

Sport, recreation and the spaces to engage in them are critical to the physical, mental and social welfare of students.

(3) Kelvin High School and Dakota Collegiate have both spent several years raising money towards the construction of a new gymnasium and wellness centre and a new sports field, respectively.

(4) Kelvin High School is one of the largest high schools in the province with over 1,200 students.

(5) Some Kelvin students currently have to pay to use outside facilities to obtain their mandatory physical education credits.

(6) Likewise, Dakota's varsity teams have been forced to play elsewhere because of the negative condition of its playing field.

(7) Football and soccer teams of Dakota Collegiate must put the project out to tender and break ground in a matter of months for the field to be completed for this coming school year.

(8) The provincial government, in a regressive and short-sighted move, cancelled funding for both projects for political reasons, despite the extensive community support, fundraising and engagement.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the tireless efforts of Kelvin High School and Dakota Collegiate, to recognize the need for excellent recreation facilities in all Manitoba schools, to reverse this regressive cut to Manitoba schools, and to provide both schools with the funding necessary to complete the new Kelvin High School gymnasium and the Dakota Collegiate Field of Dreams.

This petition was signed by Ben Wickstrom, Alana Jones, Dave Sauer and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: For the information of members, when you're reading petitions, I would just like to indicate that just before—or—when you are actually reading the names or making reference to the names, adding words like outstanding, fine, hard-working is not allowable by the rules. You're just to indicate that the petitions are signed by these Manitobans. So just a reminder to everybody when you are bringing forward a petition.

Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would like to call for debate on bills this afternoon in the following order: second reading of bills 17 and 15; debate on second reading of Bill 7; second reading of Bill 6.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, could you please canvass the House for unanimous consent for the House to conclude debate on these four bill motions this afternoon, with the questions to be put on all four motions no later than 5 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: It has been indicated by the honourable Government House Leader the bills that will be called for debate this afternoon will be called in the following order: second reading of bills 17 and

15; debate on second reading of Bill 7; second reading of Bill 6.

And I would ask: Is there unanimous consent of the House to conclude debate on these four bill motions this afternoon, with the questions to be put on all four motions no later than 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

* (15:10)

SECOND READINGS

Bill 17—The Court Security Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: Moving then, accordingly, to second reading of Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act, being introduced by the honourable Minister of Justice.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité dans les tribunaux, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to introduce for second reading Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

This bill amends The Court Security Act to enhance overall court security across Manitoba and all courts across this province of ours. The amendment will address the safety and security concerns of key stakeholders, including members of the general public, the judiciary, Crown counsel, defence counsel, court clerks, court staff and inmates.

Sheriffs Services has a responsibility to ensure a 'safe'—a safe and secure courtroom and courthouse environment across the province.

Madam Speaker, I want to take the time to thank those sheriffs and security personnel for what they do in our courts to keep us safe. They are on the front lines and I want to commend them for what they do every day. I have had the chance to meet with many of these workers all across the province, and many hadn't ever seen a Justice Minister before, let alone have one ask them about what they do and the job that they do. And they're so proud of the jobs that they do.

Many told me that they want the tools to do their jobs well, and that is in part what this bill is all

about, providing a better legislative framework, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that sheriffs and security personnel can keep our courtrooms safe and our courthouses safe.

I am proud to table this legislation that will increase safety at our courts and allow sheriffs and other security personnel—enable them to do their jobs.

Madam Speaker, the amendments provide for the following:

Security officers will be granted the authority to evict a person who has caused a disturbance and to evict—or prevent a person from entering a court area where there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe the person will cause a disturbance, with specific exceptions to those rules.

In addition to screening for weapons, security officers will be granted the authority to screen for prohibited items and to refuse entry if a person refuses to be screened or is in possession of a prohibited item.

Security officers will also be granted the authority to seize and dispose of weapons, as well as prohibited items.

As the Minister of Justice, I'm mindful of the importance of access to justice and the need to ensure public confidence in our justice system, and an important component of that is safe and secure in-court environments across the province.

So, I look forward to the support of the—of this House with passage of this bill this afternoon. And I want to thank the member—or thank Deputy Speaker and I look forward to comments from members opposite.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by the member of the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions may be asked by each of the independent members, the remaining questions asked by any opposition members, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds. Any questions?

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I note that in this bill, prohibited items would include cannabis, which, generally, I think everybody can agree upon, but can this minister tell the House, what about medical

cannabis, if a juror or a family member or a witness or a party to litigation requires medical cannabis?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): You know, these are prohibitive items. I don't believe prescription medication would be included in that as well.

Mr. Swan: Well, I'm just—I'm asking this because it simply defines prohibited item as cannabis, and, again, although I think everyone in this House can agree why in most cases that would be appropriate, I'm specifically asking the question of whether medical—medically required cannabis would be prohibited under this bill.

Mrs. Stefanson: I think I answered that in my previous question—or in my answer.

Mr. Swan: Well, I guess we'll debate that, and we may have to bring forward amendments to fix up this bill.

In terms of security officers and the definition of security officers, the minister spoke about sheriff's officers and other security personnel. Could she tell the House who exactly will be defined as a security officer and is she planning to make a—changes on that at the same time that this bill becomes law?

Mrs. Stefanson: Security officers are defined as sheriff officers during the day time. They—as the member opposite will know—are in charge of the security of the courts during the day. In the evening the security officers are part of the protective services, and so those will be the officers that will be in charge at those times.

Mr. Swan: Again, a provision which, on the face of it, is reasonable, of course. We're going to give security officers the ability to refuse entry or evict persons who may pose, in their view, a security risk.

Could the minister just let us know, how long would this eviction be effective for?

Mrs. Stefanson: I think the member opposite will know all too well, as he is a lawyer himself and has spent some time in the court house, the importance of the security of our courtrooms.

Certainly, this gives the ability for officers, if there is a disturbance or if they predict that there could potentially be a disturbance, that someone's at risk of that, that this gives them to tools that they need to be able to fulfill their jobs, which is obviously to be able to provide security within the courts.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): To what degree are security officers evicting or preventing people from entering courts when there are reasonable grounds for a disturbance?

Mrs. Stefanson: I want to thank the member for the question.

Of course, we know that this is—this just offers the officers the ability to have the tools that they need to ensure the safety and security of those individuals, so—of the individuals within the courthouses. So it's all of those who are visiting, all of those who are working within the courthouses. That's the purpose of this, and to be able to ensure that if, in the event that a sheriff officer or a protective service officer believes that there could be a disturbance of some nature and that there's a safety risk involved, that that person—the security officer—will have the—

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

Mr. Swan: The member for Burrows and I are actually on the same track. We're not any way suggesting that it's unreasonable to evict persons or to refuse entry to persons who may pose a security risk.

The question I had and didn't get an answer to is: Is that just for the rest of the day, or is it then possible for security officers to say that the person is banned indefinitely? It's unclear in this act, and I'm just wondering if the minister could give some clarification on that.

Mrs. Stefanson: Obviously, first and foremost, we want to ensure the safety of all of those in the courthouse and that is what this legislation is doing. It gives the tools to those officers to be able to, in the event that there is a disturbance or that peoples' safety is at risk for some reason or another, it will be able to—they—allow them to evict those people from the courtroom.

In terms of the length of time, I think that would be left up to the discretion of those officers. They are responsible. I know what they do in their day-to-day jobs is remarkable, and I—certainly, I hope that members opposite would certainly join with me and—in how—

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

Mr. Swan: Well, you know, the minister doesn't have to start getting defensive.

We agree with the idea of the bill, but I think it is reasonable to be able to ask questions about how much of an impact this particular section will have. If it's in the discretion of the security officers and someone does not agree, is there any method to appeal or to challenge the decision of a security official who may tell someone they're simply not able to enter the court building?

*(15:20)

Mrs. Stefanson: Certainly, I hope the member opposite is not inferring that security officers would, in any way, shape or form, take advantage of the situation that they have and the powers that they have to be able to ensure the safety of all of those within the courtroom. So I hope that that's not what the member opposite is suggesting.

Mr. Swan: No, the member opposite is actually doing his job in trying to get an answer from the minister to his question. If someone is unhappy and there may be, in the view of the security officer, valid reasons for removing somebody or for denying them entry, an objective person may agree with that. But, if the person is not happy with that, is the minister saying that there is no opportunity for that person to challenge or to appeal that decision, and that person can then be indefinitely prevented from going to a courthouse, which is, in normal cases, open to the public?

Mrs. Stefanson: Certainly, it's—the important thing about this is to ensure the safety and security of all those in the courthouses, and we believe that the security officers do a great job. But they just don't quite have all the tools that they need in order to evict people from the courtroom and take away prohibited items and weapons and so on, so we wanted to be able to give them the tools that they need to be able to do their job.

I certainly respect the work that they do, and we—and I hope the member opposite would agree with us.

Mr. Swan: Well, I certainly do respect the work that our sheriff's officers and our security officers do. That's why I'll be voting against a bill, which is going to freeze their wages for two years and give them only small increases for two years after that without even having the courage to sit down and negotiate with them.

But the question is this: Our courthouses are generally public buildings. They're places of public access. It may well be that security officers have a

valid reason—a good, objective reason to bar someone from that courthouse. The question I'm asking the minister is: Is there any means for someone who has been barred to have somebody other than that security officer to have an independent look and determine whether or not it is appropriate that they be unable—

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

Mrs. Stefanson: You know, I thank the member for the question. I think it's important here to have respect for those in the front line who are concerned about the safety of Manitobans, concerned about the safety of those in our courtrooms, and I respect the work that they do. But right now they don't have all the tools that they need in order to be able to do their job in the most efficient and effective way.

And so that's why we're bringing forward this legislation. We think this is important that they have the tools that they need, and we have a tremendous amount of respect for all of the work that they do in ensuring our safety and security in our courtrooms.

Mr. Swan: Well, I also have a great deal of respect for security officials, but having respect for those people does not mean having disrespect for other Manitobans. So I take it from the minister's refusal to answer the question that it's her intention that there be no other objective look or appeal process or any other means that somebody who disagrees with the decision of a security officer can take to get access to a building that is otherwise open to the public. The minister just confirmed that today.

Mrs. Stefanson: Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if he respects the work that those security officers and the sheriff officers do in their duties on a regular basis, then he would trust that they are going to be able to be given the tools to do their jobs in a more efficient and effective way to ensure the safety and security of all of those in our courthouse. So I hope that the member opposite is not questioning the work—the hard work of our sheriff officers and our security officers to protect Manitobans who are visiting our courthouses.

Mr. Swan: Well, you know, the minister seems to misunderstand the nature of questions. I do absolutely respect the work of security officers.

I don't expect I would ever be a person that would be refused entry. I happen to be white. I happen to be male. I happen to have received a law degree and, indeed, I happen to know all of those

people. I'm not Aboriginal. I'm not a new Canadian. As far as I know, I don't have a mental health issue. These are people who are more likely to be removed or to be prevented entry to our courthouses. And I am disappointed this minister is conflating the idea of security with the ability to simply prevent someone from being able to be there.

And all I've asked—

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

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I don't believe I had a—there was a question there, but certainly I will just make a brief comment.

I certainly have a tremendous amount of respect for those in our front line in our justice system, especially those sheriff officers that stand up for the safety and security of all of those that visit our courthouses and, certainly, if you go beyond that into our correctional facilities, the correctional officers and the tremendous work that they do. So I think this is a time to give the tools to those sheriff officers, to those security officers, so that they can do the job of securing them, the courthouses, and securing those offices for the betterment of the safety and security for all Manitobans who are visiting those courthouses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any further questions?

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): My quick question would be whether there are plans to fully arm with guns those security officers under this act.

Mrs. Stefanson: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, if I could just get the member to repeat his question. There was just some issues with the clock, I think, so we were just—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park, if you'll repeat your question to the minister.

Mr. Marcelino: Yes. Will there be arms, meaning firearms, that will be given to those security officers as a plan in this bill?

Mrs. Stefanson: This—certainly, I respect—thank the member for the question and, you know, it's an important one.

Of course, the—these—the safety officers will not be given those arms as of yet, but certainly we will be determining that, as well as we're looking at other legislation here, as well, with respect to those public safety officers who—with another piece of legislation

that's coming forward that I'm sure we'll have the ability to talk about in the Legislature, and that's The Legislative Security Act.

Mr. Marcelino: Can the minister please tell us if there are any lockdown procedures that will be in place once this bill is passed?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I think it's important—and again, I want to thank the member for the question—but I think it's important that once this bill is passed that sheriff officers and the safety officers will have the ability to confiscate prohibited items in the courthouse, as well as weapons, and those are something that in all cases they can't do right now. So this is giving them the authority to provide for further measures which provide greater security for all Manitobans who are entering the courthouse.

So that's the purpose of the bill and that's what we're doing, and I hope the member opposite will support us on this.

Mr. Marcelino: Will the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) please tell us if the authority of the security officers extend beyond the confines of the premises of the courts and the buildings adjacent thereto, or is it just within the gates of the courthouse?

* (15:30)

Mrs. Stefanson: You know, certainly, this bill is about the safety and security of all Manitobans who enter our courthouses. This is giving the sheriff officers, the safety officers the tools that they need in order to further protect Manitobans in the event of, you know, unlikely incidences, but incidences that could take place within our court systems. And so, certainly, we hope that members opposite will support us in our endeavours to provide further safety and security for Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time for question period has expired. So, now, is there any speakers to speak on Bill 17?

Debate

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It's a pleasure to rise and put some words on the record about Bill 17.

With your indulgence, just before I do that, I would like to speak about somebody for a minute who spent a lot of time in our courthouses. That's a Winnipeg lawyer named Darren Sawchuk. Darren lost his battle with cancer this past weekend at the age of 51. Darren was actually a couple of years

ahead of me through law school at the University of Manitoba. He was a successful criminal lawyer who appeared in all levels of court, up to and including the Supreme Court of Canada.

I remember him from law school as a talented musician. I only found out reading his obituary that he actually taught himself to play guitar during law school; I'm not sure when he had the time, but he was a truly talented musician and also a truly talented lawyer.

He practised for about 25 years, working for the Winnipeg firm of Phillips Aiello, and he did believe in the good of each of his clients, no matter what they might have been charged or ultimately convicted with and he was a strong advocate for improving the system. He was very involved with Criminal Defence Lawyers Association. I had the chance to work with him when I was the Justice Minister, and he will truly be missed.

Many members of this Chamber may know that he opened a company called Vinyl Revival after his diagnosis, when he was no longer able to practise law. Vinyl Revival became a record store, but also a place for talented—and perhaps even not-so-talented—musicians to come by and perform. He leaves behind his partner, Loralie, and two children, and certainly we mourn the loss of a really good Manitoba lawyer and a great person.

With respect to Bill 17, of course, we support measures to make those involved in our criminal justice system safer. That includes, of course, not just the judges and the lawyers, but also parties to litigation, witnesses, jurors and people who find themselves in the courthouse for whatever reason. So, certainly, we support measures to make our courthouses safer for Manitobans.

Very few people aside from, perhaps, the lawyers are ever happy to find themselves in a courtroom, and we want to make sure that their entry to, their exit from and their attendance there is safe. And we know that, unfortunately, there are individuals who may try to influence individuals, to try and intimidate individuals or to threaten other individuals in the courthouse. There may be those who choose to bring along potential weapons or intoxicants into our courthouses. And we do support measures to enhance some of those measures to try and make our courthouses safe.

Of course, in Manitoba, we have one very large court, the downtown Law Courts in Winnipeg, where

the majority of cases are heard. But we also have courts across the province, including a circuit court points, which may be nothing more than a town hall or a meeting place for courts to take place. So, in general, we support this.

There were a few areas that I did ask the minister about, and I'm going to be put a few words on the record about that. We may have people at committee who want to talk about this and we may have amendments in general. Although the minister can talk about safety and security, that is important and we don't take anything away from that. So, too, are our courts a place the public and the media are entitled to attend, in order they can see how the justice system works, report on how the justice system works and assist us in our efforts to try and build a better justice system.

And, you know, I note the comments that the minister decided to make in her opening comments. I can tell her that many people in the justice system—judges, defence lawyers, Crown attorneys, correctional officers, sheriffs say they've never seen a justice minister less interested in improving the justice system than the current Justice Minister we have and that's a shame. But I know she was given a mandate letter from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this province that didn't contain a single word about making Manitoba's streets safer, about making communities safer or making the justice system work more effectively, or finding better ways to prevent crime or to assist those who offend. So she's, I guess, playing the cards that she's been dealt.

But I hope, as we go forward, she will lift up her head, take a look at what's going on because, frankly, as we look at the increases in criminal activity in the city of Winnipeg, which is going to be mirrored in the larger report that will come out later on this year, it's going to be mirrored by the report the Brandon Police Service is going to put out and it's going to be mirrored by the information that comes forward from the RCMP. Unfortunately, under her watch, crime is going up by rates that, frankly, we have not seen in this province probably for decades. And I hope that the minister will get through some of the bills that she has decided are priorities and actually turn her mind to making our communities safer.

I did ask a question about 'prohibited' items, and I asked this only because it's going to be a larger discussion we're going to have. I asked the minister about cannabis. When cannabis is legalized—if, in fact, that's where the federal government goes—I

think it's entirely reasonable to tell people they cannot bring that into a courthouse, just as they cannot bring alcohol or other intoxicants unless, of course, they require that, the cannabis, for medical purposes. And perhaps you might say, well, if someone's just coming down for a case conference or somebody's only entering the courthouse for an hour or two hours, why would this be an issue? There may be jurors who may be spending days sequestered in the Law Courts building, and I think it is a decent question to ask. And I'm hoping the minister, before we get to committee, will be able to provide a better answer. Perhaps we can work on enhancing that section of the bill. I think it is also a precursor of the discussion we're going to have to have as the federal government moves ahead. I know there's another bill before this House that we'll be talking about more. We want to make sure that the protection of those people who use cannabis for medicinal purposes for their own health will be protected and not discriminated against without there being some valid reasons. So I hope we'll be able to clarify that as we go.

The other area where I spent most of my time was talking about the ability of a security officer to refuse someone entry or to remove someone from the courthouse. Of course, we agree that if somebody is threatening someone, if somebody appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, if somebody perhaps is wearing gang paraphernalia or is otherwise identifying themselves as someone who may pose a threat, absolutely, as security officers do, but we don't mind enhancing in this law their ability to refuse that person entry or to remove them. That is not an absolute power though. And I know that the minister's put on the record that she is prepared to simply give security officers discretion. Well, in most cases that might be appropriate. I think we need to do a little bit more thinking about this. We need to do a little bit more work on this bill to make sure that someone who is refused entry or is removed from the courthouse does have some other measure to plead their case, to try and enjoy the usual right that Manitobans have to have access to Winnipeg's Law Courts building and other courthouses across the province.

In my question I wasn't meaning to be frivolous or light. The chances of me being refused entry to a courthouse—I would hope—are quite slim. But, again, I'm not a new Canadian that may have difficulty expressing myself. I am not Aboriginal. I'm not an indigenous person who, unfortunately, may come

into contact and be frustrated with the way that our system works. I think we want to make sure there's protections in place, although most cases will be clear and any reasonable person would say it's not unreasonable to restrict that person or to remove them from the courthouse. We need to just make sure that if that is going to be a permanent or a long-term issue, or even a short-term issue that may impact someone's personal right to be there, there should be some ability of that person to have that decision reconsidered and I don't see anything in the bill that would do that. So I think we need to think about that a little bit more.

As well, I know that the minister kept trying to say this is a matter of respect. Asking questions about someone's right to enter a court building—which, of course, we agree—can be subject to limits. But suggesting that we should talk about that does not mean disrespect for security officers, for sheriff's officers who do that important work and have that job of keeping us all safe. And I hope this won't be a pattern that decent questions that are asked on behalf of Manitobans are turned aside by this minister as somehow implying that those who ask the questions don't have respect for the people who do that work in our system.

* (15:40)

And, as I pointed out in my question, if you want to disrespect somebody who works in the system, you disrespect them by bringing in a law which dictates what their pay is going to be the next four years that they enter into a collective agreement; that is certainly a way to disrespect them.

When it comes to sheriff's officers, who this minister now wants to say are her new best friends—of course, it was this minister who postponed training of sheriff's officers. We know that, despite a great increase in the number of people in the courts system since she became the Justice Minister, there have been no additional full-time sheriff's officers added into the justice system. And we know, as well, from her comments the last time I asked her the question, there are no new full-time correctional officers that have been added to the system.

So we certainly do respect these individuals. I hope the Justice Minister will also respect the work that these people do and make sure that they have safe and adequate working conditions.

So we are prepared to have this bill go forward to committee. I think the bill is important. I think it

will provide additional protections. I think that if the minister's prepared to listen to what members of the opposition have to say and, if she goes to that committee meeting prepared to listen to what other Manitobans have to say, we can come out of this with an even better bill.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak about this bill, and I look forward to moving it to committee and making it even stronger before we return to pass this bill this session. Thank you.

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): I'm glad to have the opportunity to put some words on the record on this, Bill 17, the court security act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité dans les tribunaux.

As the minister had stated, and I just want to repeat on behalf of my colleagues here at the Manitoba Legislature and all Manitobans, to take the time to thank the sheriffs and security personnel for what they do in our courts to keep us safe. They are the on the front lines, and I also truly want to commend them for what they do every day.

I look at this bill and the proposed amendments associated with it and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 17 protects us and all stakeholders, including members of the general public, judiciary, Crown counsel, court clerks, court staff and inmates.

The reason why I got into politics and to serve the great people of St. Norbert and Manitoba, like my colleagues, was to make a difference, to make the positive changes to improve our province. Our government is always re-evaluating what can be done better for the best 'interents' of Manitobans; in this case, safety.

The Court Security Act currently has no clear authority for Sheriffs Services or security officers to evict a person who has made a threat or causes disturbance in a court area or to screen for prohibited items such as drugs and alcohol, which sheriff's officers frequently come across.

Well, you want to ensure clarity and make things as black and white as can be. Speaking of black and white, I have a deep respect for sports officials. As referees, they have to be fair and call the game how it is played. I, myself, am a football official, because I have a passion for the game of football. And I can't wait for the football season to begin.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like every sport, there are rules that must be reviewed, from time to time, to

ensure the fairness of the game and safety of the players. In this case, with respect to Bill 17, this is about keeping our front-line workers, including judiciary, Crown counsel, court clerks, court staff and the public, safe.

So our government has reviewed this current act, and that is why the necessary amendments must be made to ensure the safety of people entering court—amendments to give Sheriffs Services and peace officers the authority to be proactive and reactive in dealing with aggressive individuals attending the courthouses, reducing the likelihood of significant incidences.

When court proceedings are being conducted, no one wants a disturbance and that is why we must allow for these amendments to be approved—in order to allow authority for security officers to evict individuals who cause disturbances, to also allow for the ability to screen for weapons and to screen for prohibited items and to refuse entry if a person refused to be screened or is in a possession of a prohibited item. It would also allow security officers the authority to seize and dispose of weapons or prohibited items.

This legislation is necessary here in Manitoba. There are seven jurisdictions across the country who have similar legislation, which leads me to believe it is, indeed, necessary.

Who would not want this act to be amended? Who would not want individuals entering a courthouse to be safe? I'm always puzzled that after 17 years under the rule of the previous government that it took our present government to come up with this—these proposed amendments for The Court Security Act. But then again we know the importance of teamwork. We value the strength of knowledge of our team on this side of the House.

L'opposition parle toujours de la façon dont ils représentent la diversité, les minorités et les pauvres. Mais regardez leur histoire. Le taux de pauvreté des enfants le plus élevé, un énorme arriéré de demandes dans le programme Candidats du Manitoba. Ils sont divisés. Ils ne sont pas une équipe. Ils devraient être embarrassés par ce que le dernier gouvernement a fait au peuple du Manitoba.

De ce côté, nous sommes une vraie équipe, avec beaucoup de diversité.

Translation

The opposition is always talking about how they represent diversity, minorities and the poor. But look at their history. The highest rate of child poverty, a huge backlog of applications in the Provincial Nominee Program. They are divided. They are not a team. They should be embarrassed by what the last government did to the people of Manitoba.

On this side, we are a real team, with a great deal of diversity

English

We value the diverse backgrounds in the fields and past occupations we represent: a lawyer; a farmer; business owners; teachers; homemaker; civil servants; financial planners; people who are—who have served our country in the military, including myself and the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry); people who have served our country in Ottawa, including our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the honourable member from Assiniboia; people who served on municipalities like the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding), the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke) and the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson); people who have immigrated to this country like our House leader, people who have been involved with non-profit organizations, like the honourable member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard).

Madam Speaker in the Chair

We cover a broad spectrum with this team with the unique backgrounds and skill sets we have on this side of the House. We have a wealth of knowledge, knowledge we want to share to strengthen our province. I am proud to be part of this team.

We inherited a mess from the previous government, but every day we work hard and we are continuing to do that and we're getting Manitobas on track. Better services and sustainable services and that in this case keeping the public safe is a mandatory service. We should all agree on why this act, without question, should be amended.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'd like to start off by thanking the minister for bringing forward the bill. You know, the safety of Manitobans is, and I believe—or should be and I believe is all of our priorities, and a healthy discussion on the safety of Manitobans is always a good thing.

During the question-and-answer period, I notice that the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), as well as myself, we were asking questions and we weren't receiving tangible answers. It would have been nice to receive the answers before heading to committee, but I'm optimistic that there will be some thorough discussion, some people brought in where we can discuss it in details.

A couple of concerns that I do have is will—where did the bill derive from? And the privacy of Manitobans, as the bill would provide security officers the ability to conduct searches on individuals, I'm concerned that the level of intensity in which officers will conduct their searches and seizures could make people feel uncomfortable.

It was just—once again clarification would be nice, and, hopefully, we can discuss it further in committee.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 15—The Department of Justice Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: We will now move on to Bill 15, The Department of Justice Amendment Act.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 15, The Department of Justice Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Justice, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: I want to thank the Manitoba Association of Crown Attorneys, and all the Crown attorneys in Manitoba for the incredible work that they do, and thank them for bringing this issue forward to us.

We think that it's important to protect our Crown attorneys, and this is a bill that will allow further protection from—for them.

* (15:50)

Madam Speaker, individuals who have been the subject of a prosecution currently have the ability to personally name a specific Crown attorney or other identified person acting in the role of a Crown attorney in a civil lawsuit. The bill to amend The Department of Justice Act removes the ability for an individual Crown attorney or person acting under the Crown attorney act to be personally named in an action by a person who was a subject of the prosecution. The bill requires that the Attorney General, instead, be the named defendant where an action is brought.

Lawsuits against Crown attorneys can sometimes be frivolous and without foundation, and those claims may, ultimately, be dismissed but not before many, many months have passed. And, in the interim, the Crown attorney's name appears on a lawsuit alleging professional misconduct. That can impact the Crown attorney on a very personal and professional level by having their names associated with this allegation.

It can also have an impact in circumstances such as credit reporting of lawsuits, which may be required when seeking credit cards or loans.

The bill addresses those concerns by requiring civil claims to name the Attorney General as the defendant rather than the individual Crown attorney or other identified individuals.

The bill does not change the ability of those who have been a subject of a prosecution to bring lawsuits regarding behaviour they may believe is actionable. It does not expand or reduce the type of actions that can be brought by the litigant.

The bill specifies those individuals who cannot be personally named in a lawsuit by reference to those who are identified in The Crown Attorneys Act. That includes Crown attorneys, articling students and those who are appointed to the—to act as Crown attorneys or act in the role of prosecutors.

The bill identifies that the Attorney General may bring action or seek indemnification from the individuals whose names have been protected by this legislation—by the legislation.

The bill also clarifies and provides interpretation of language in The Proceedings Against the Crown Act and The Financial Administration Act by indicating that language that refers to the Crown or

government should be read as indicating the Attorney General.

So, for these reasons, Madam Speaker, we think it's very important to bring forward this legislation. We, certainly, have a tremendous amount of respect for our Crown attorneys. We thank them for all the work that they do in our criminal justice system.

And, with that, I will turn the floor over for questions from members opposite.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: First question by the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties, subsequent questions asked by each independent member, remaining questions asked by any opposition members, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, although I looked closely at the minister's comments at first reading and now listen at second reading, there were comments the media attributed to the minister suggesting that every action against a Crown attorney was frivolous.

Was the minister misquoted on that, or is that something that she believes?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): No, what we're suggesting is that sometimes we'll find, in the end, that the—they can be accused of these things. There's lawsuits that are launched against the Crown attorneys that sometimes go on for months and months. In the interim, until that lawsuit is concluded, which, in many of the cases, sometimes they are not, you know, they conclude in favour of the other Crown attorneys and we're—maybe shouldn't be something that was brought forward in the first place. But, certainly, we don't believe that the Crown attorney should be any way personally—you know, have personal issues with respect to this that affects their financial situations and so on. And I'll look forward to more questions from the member.

Mr. Swan: Yes, if a civil proceeding is begun, a lawsuit, generally, it's up to the person suing to decide who they wish to examine, for discovery, in the discovery process. I am presuming the minister

does not want to or thinks she should be the one examined for discovery.

Can the minister just put on the record that the plaintiff would be able to determine which Crown attorney they would then be able to examine, for discovery, in any civil case that went forward?

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

Of course, this—the purpose of this legislation is to ensure the protection of Crown attorneys. Often what has happened—these lawsuits are often dismissed, and they can cause considerable distress to the individual. We have heard of cases where such lawsuits have resulted in Crown attorneys having credit rating problems and being—and making it very difficult for them to be able to borrow money, to apply for credit cards and so on, because it affects their credit rating.

So that's the purpose of this bill. That's the main purpose of this bill. And so we believe that this is important to protect those Crown attorneys against such actions.

Mr. Swan: The question I asked of the minister deals with those civil cases brought by Manitobans who may believe that they have been treated improperly.

And my question is this. I just want the minister to confirm that someone who now would bring a case against the Attorney General will still have the right to examine the Crown attorney who had conduct of the file, and that there's nothing in this bill that would prevent that right to a Manitoba litigant.

Mrs. Stefanson: There are no changes with respect to that. This is specific to the—with—just in order to protect Crown attorneys from something that is happening right now that is having a negative impact on many of them in their personal lives. And so that's the purpose for this bill.

Mr. Swan: Well, there is a change. I mean, if someone is named as a defendant in a lawsuit, generally speaking, the person suing who says they've been wronged has the right to examine that person for discovery. This will change under this bill, which is a reasonable thing to do.

I just want the minister to put on the record that that won't affect the ability of a Manitoban who is now suing the Attorney General to be able to examine the Crown attorney for discovery as they

should be entitled to under a lawsuit. Can the minister do that today?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, again, I believe I just answered that question, Madam Speaker. It doesn't change the regular procedures that would take place. It simply just changes who would be named in the lawsuit. In this case, it would be changed from the personal name of the Crown attorney to the Attorney General.

Mr. Swan: So, then, can the minister—I think she's almost there—but can she simply confirm on the record that a plaintiff who is suing the Attorney General because of the actions of a Crown attorney has the right to choose which Crown attorney they wish to examine for discovery in the civil case?

Mrs. Stefanson: Again, I will answer the question the way I have before, Madam Speaker, that those changes will remain in—or, those rules as they exist today will remain in place. This simply just replaces the individual name of the Crown attorney with the Attorney General.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Debate

Madam Speaker: If there are no further questions, debate is open.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm pleased to speak to Bill 15 this afternoon, The Department of Justice Amendment Act, a bill which we think is reasonable. Effectively, what this will do is that it'll mean that a Manitoban who believes they have a lawsuit or a cause of action against a Crown attorney will now, instead of naming that Crown attorney, they will only be able to name the Attorney General as the defendant in that case.

And, of course, I respect the work that our Crown attorneys here in Manitoba do. They work very hard to make sure that justice is done. And, of course, Crown attorneys have a very high onus put upon them: they have to represent the interests of the state, they have to represent the victims in the cases and they need to be very, very complete when it comes to disclosure, when it comes to being open with the defence counsel, in bringing those cases forward.

And we know that sometimes people may be unhappy with the Crown attorney that prosecutes them—generally, the Crown attorney that successfully prosecutes them, but there can be other circumstances. And I agree with the

Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) that it can be very upsetting for a Crown attorney to be named personally in a lawsuit. And we agree with the change to provide that they would not be personally named.

I, as Attorney General, had that experience, which I actually shared with the current Minister of Justice, when an individual tried to make a filing under the property registrar to tie up all of my personal property and put a lien against all—everything that my wife and I owned. It was necessary, then, for Civil Legal Services to figure out how to remove that, which took, actually, quite a bit longer than one might have expected. And had I been trying to buy a home at that time, if I had been looking for financing at that time, it would have been a problem. So I do have a fair amount of sympathy for Crown attorneys who may find themselves in this situation.

*(16:00)

I did want to just clarify a couple of things. And, again, it wasn't contained in the speech in this House—or, either speech in the House by the minister—but I know the perception was left out there by the minister that every action against a Crown attorney was frivolous, or was unnecessary. And I think the history in Manitoba has been that a majority of them have been found by the court to have no merit. We also have to remember that in Manitoba there have been individuals that have been wrongfully convicted. James Driskell would be an example; there are other cases. And I don't want to suggest for a minute that somebody who has been wrongfully convicted, or somebody who's been the victim of an unfair prosecution, is frivolous if they want to go and bring that case forward.

The questions that I asked the minister about the proceedings are not just speculation, they're not just arcane. They're actually very important as we try to get the minister to explain on the record exactly how this bill is going to work. Queen's Bench rule 31 provides that if you sue a corporation, if you are the plaintiff—the person who's suing—you generally have the right to choose which person in an organization you want to be able to examine for discovery.

Examination for discovery is a very important part of a civil suit. It allows, first of all, a production of documents, but also it allows to ask somebody questions under oath about your case. And it's a little bit unclear because it is unclear whether proceedings against attorney—the Attorney General

are proceedings against a corporation or not. And I just wanted the minister to confirm, on the record, that even though the Attorney General will be the defendant, nothing is taken away from the plaintiff in their ability to actually have the Crown attorney who is involved in the prosecution—or the Crown attorneys involved in the prosecution—the ones who best know the facts of the case to be the ones examined for discovery.

And I'm a little bit surprised that, even today, the minister clearly still isn't able to answer this question. I expect I'll have to be asking the question again in committee and, if the minister's unable to provide any clarity, I expect on behalf of Manitobans I will bring forward an amendment just to clarify something which should have been crystal clear when this bill was introduced in the House.

Again, that is not to take away at all from the fine work of our Crowns in Manitoba, but it is certainly necessary to make it clear that if something does go very wrong, no rights are being taken away from Manitobans. And I know that, indeed, the Manitoba Association of Crown Attorneys—or MACA—they are in support of this, and we certainly respect the work they do on behalf of their members. They are a union, which members of the opposite side may be surprised to know.

And it is interesting, of course, that I presume the minister finished her consultations with the MACA union before MACA—like all other unions in the public service—were told that this government would now be declaring the terms of their next collective agreement—for the next four years in their new collective agreement. And, on behalf of Crown attorneys in Manitoba, I want to take their side, to say they do very difficult work, and challenging work, and I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that a good Crown attorney makes a lot less money than a good defence lawyer, who may make two or three times what our Crown attorneys make.

And I do have friends who left their work with the Crown because they decided to step out and try working private practice. Sometimes there are individuals in private practice that choose to work for the Crown. Those things can happen all the time. And, frankly, it's healthy to have people moving in and out of the system. But I know that there is a problem attracting and retaining Crown attorneys in Manitoba, and I am absolutely certain that imposing wage freezes without negotiation on Crown attorneys is not going to help this minister retain and attract the

best and the brightest to be our Crown attorneys here in Manitoba.

I know for a fact that there's serious problems with vacancies across Manitoba. I know that, right now, in the city of Thompson, there is a tremendous shortage of Crown attorneys. This minister stands in the House and wants to talk about trying to speed up the process and trying to make the court system more effective. Well, at the best of times, it's difficult to find lawyers, most of whom are having to travel quite a ways to go and take a job in the city of Thompson. I'm not sure how she thinks that imposing wage freezes on those Crown attorneys is going to make it any easier to find individuals to go up there and do very, very important work in a community that requires Crown attorneys to travel around the North, to get in small planes with the judges and the defence lawyers and the court party and really do very, very hard, difficult work in the interest of justice in Manitoba.

So that's not—that is just another consideration for the minister as we move forward. We do want to see this bill go to committee. I do have a very specific concern that I think should have been clarified already, but we'll work on clarifying at committee. And, again, we'll do our work of making this bill even better.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): You know, my comments are very, very short, but it's still nice to get a few words put on record.

I agree with the premise that Crown attorneys are acting under the direction of the Attorney General and should not, therefore, be prosecuted for decisions made from above. It's good to recognize that Crown attorneys and the Attorney Generals do incredibly difficult work, Madam Speaker, and I'm enjoying and I'm learning quite a lot from the question-and-answer periods that are happening here during second reading, and I'm looking forward to further 'discushing'—discussion and further learning inside the committee. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 15, The Department of Justice Amendment Act.

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

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 7—The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended)

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, we will now move to debate on Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended), standing in the name of the honourable member for Minto who has nine minutes remaining.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yes, well, thank you very much.

As I was saying, Madam Speaker, when this bill was last before the House, I'm very proud to be part of a new democratic team which has always been interested in good trade agreements to help Manitoba businesses export their products, to make sure we have a fair flow of people across this country, because we know—well, we knew that we're able to attract people to Manitoba. I'm not sure now, with the new, mean face of the Manitoba government, that we're going to have much luck in attracting people to come here. But hope springs eternal, and we'll continue to work on those things.

What really is the most concerning about this act is the amount of time that this government has put into trying to promote and to justify and find reasons for joining the New West Partnership, while, at the same time, apparently turning their back on the national trade agreement, which has been very advanced, which we're hoping is going to pay dividends in the very, very near future.

And, as we're learning, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and this government tend to have very, very few friends across this country. And even the people they thought were friends wind up to be very, very different, I guess after spending more time in a room with this Premier. And I guess I can understand how that could be the case.

Of course, I mentioned just briefly the curious case of Brad Wall, the Premier of Saskatchewan. Of course, until very recently, Brad Wall was the poster boy for everything that this Premier and his government wanted to be. Tell us what's going on in Saskatchewan.

And, of course, we know what Brad Wall did with the New West Partnership. We knew that when

he realized he had run out of any reasons, any incentives, any justification for Manitoba joining the New West Partnership, what did Brad Wall do? He decided that a carrot wasn't working, so he was going to pull out a stick. And what did Brad Wall do? He said that if Manitoba did not join the New West Partnership, they were going to change the procurement practices of their Crown corporations and their businesses, and they were going to shut out Manitoba businesses.

Let me just make it abundantly clear what Brad Wall was prepared to do. If there was a Manitoba company who could do the job for less, who—or could supply the goods for less, Brad Wall, that great free trader, said, we are not going to save the people of Saskatchewan money. We are not going to let this company in Manitoba have this contract or supply these goods. Why? Because I am going to do my best to convince the people in Manitoba that they must join the New West Partnership.

*(16:10)

Well, we didn't fall for that. Who is falling for it? Well, the Premier of this province and his government. And there's Brad Wall—there's his buddy Brad Wall, who he backed up, and there's the Premier (Mr. Pallister) talking tough about health care. And, as he's telling us how he's part of this pan-Canadian approach to deal with the federal government, there's Brad Wall in the back room signing on to a deal with the federal government on health care.

Brad Wall has now secured money for the people of Saskatchewan, and this Premier is still standing there without a deal. Who knows? It's budget day in Ottawa. Maybe the Manitoba people have lost \$40 million or more because of this Premier's inability to play nicely with others.

And what else did Brad Wall do? Brad Wall was very concerned when it came to the purchase of a potash business in the province of Saskatchewan. The big employer. Big, important company in Saskatchewan. And, of course, Brad Wall would like to tell us he's the big free trader. He's all about open investment. And Brad Wall went before the competition branch and Brad Wall said: No, federal government, you have to stop this deal. You can't let this business fall into the hands of people from outside of the province of Saskatchewan.

And you know what? The federal government agreed, and the Competition Bureau prevented the

sale of that potash corporation from happening. Yet what did this Pallister government do when Bell Canada sought to buy MTS? They were not—not only did they sit on their hands, they clapped and they cheered to have one less head office here in the province of Manitoba. Brad Wall is laughing every day at this government.

And what has Brad Wall just done, for the information of all members of this House? Brad Wall just raised the provincial sales tax in Saskatchewan. Wow.

So, you know—and here we go. So now I don't know whether we're going to see this bill suddenly being withdrawn by members opposite, because the Premier's best buddy, Brad Wall, has done him in not once, not twice, not three times, but four times and counting.

So Brad Wall, who's taken one of the wealthiest provinces that had developed its potash resources, developed its oil resources under the NDP government in Saskatchewan, has now managed to drive his province onto rocky shoals. And this afternoon he has raised the PST in his budget. And I'll be fascinated to hear what the Premier's going to say about that. And I'll be fascinated to hear what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) is going to say about that, because they are now launching—tying our canoe to the province of Saskatchewan and the other western provinces. Of course, one of which has an NDP government now, another of which, as of May 9th, is going to have an NDP government. And, come the next election in Saskatchewan, I'm going to tell you, there's going to be an NDP government there. So, you know, maybe even as I speak, maybe we're more in support of this bill than we were before.

In all seriousness, I know how much this is cutting to the quick for members opposite. Their best buddy, Brad Wall, has done them in. And, you know, maybe this time when Labour Day comes around, they won't have the watermelons on their heads. Maybe they'll be cheering for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers on Labour Day, and when they come back here for the Banjo Bowl. But maybe, in all seriousness, members opposite—maybe members opposite will take a look at the big picture.

If we truly want to build our province, if we truly want to support businesses, if we truly want to support workers in this province, you don't do it by only facing one way. You do it by looking at the entire world. And, certainly, when it comes to

being on the edge of being able to have a national, comprehensive trade deal in place, which the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) himself acknowledged is five times longer than the western trade deal, maybe members opposite can put some of that passion and some of that interest, take some of their time and support Manitoba as part of a stronger national trade partnership.

So, with those few words to conclude my time on this bill, I look forward to moving ahead. I look forward to a provincial government that will truly support trade in all directions, and not just beyond our western border.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amendment—Amended).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Recorded Vote

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

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

* (16:20)

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended).

Division

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

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cullen, Eichler, Fielding, Fletcher, Gerrard, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield,

Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Reyes, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

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

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 33, Nays 11.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

SECOND READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 6—The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, the House will now consider second reading of Bill 6, The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 6, The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Pedersen: Bill 6, the East Side Road Authority repeal act—the East Side Road Authority—pardon me—is—can be described as a poster child of NDP deceit, incompetence, misuse of funds, and the political downfall of the NDP. And I was being very kind by saying that.

Madam Speaker, the NDP used the east-side communities for their own political gain by creating a myth—a myth of helping people and trying to sell Manitobans on the idea that they were actually doing some good. They invented the community benefits agreements—the NDP invented the community benefits agreements, which is a misnomer. There's no sense of community; there was no benefits to the people, and there certainly was no agreement by the communities with this NDP government.

So their failed legacy of the East Side Road Authority is \$500 million spent and they managed to get 50 miles of road built. They inflated the cost of everything. A few weeks ago I was on the winter roads in northern Manitoba. I was shown an Acrow bridge that was built by Manitoba Infrastructure at a cost of about two and a half million dollars. That

same bridge, at a different site, built by the East Side Road Authority, was \$5 million.

The East Side Road Authority inflated the costs on everything. They're now doing environmental studies on projects that the East Side Road Authority themselves projected that they wouldn't be building that road for 20 years, and yet they're doing environmental studies now which will mean nothing whenever the road does get built out there.

They forced communities—the East Side Road Authority, the NDP, forced communities to set up shell companies for ESRA to funnel money through. Their accounting system was non-existent. When you talk about accounting systems and you talk about receipts being in a shoebox, a shoebox accounting system would be better than the East Side Road Authority's because there is absolutely no records when we try to look back to see where the money disappeared to.

Their training programs lack direction, lack follow-up, lack employment opportunities. There was no maintenance plan for the equipment that the east-side roads—that the First Nations shell companies purchased. They had machinery that was not able to run. There was no maintenance program on them. It was a toxic work environment at the East Side Road Authority's office. The East Side Road Authority bought trucks and snowmobiles and other equipment. Not needed; it's sitting there. It's still sitting there in a parking lot. It was never used.

But I think the lowest point of the NDP's ESRA came from the way they treated the people on the east-side communities, and the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke), the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen) and myself met with these communities after we announced that we were going to disband East Side Road Authority. And, when those people came into our office and they talked about how they were treated by this NDP government, they used—let me—they used words like kept in the dark, told to sign community benefit agreements or else. They used words like bullying. They were afraid of government. They talked about the former premier and Eric Robinson flying into the community and telling them, either sign this or you'll get cut off of any benefits.

That's not a way to treat Manitobans. But this is how the NDP operated and that's how they operated East Side Road Authority.

So this government has—my fellow ministers and myself have started to rebuild the relationships with the east-side communities. We're building that on trust, we're building it on respect, and it's going very well. The East Side Road Authority was just one of the reasons that Manitobans booted out the NDP, and those east-side communities will never forget how they were treated by the NDP through the East Side Road Authority. That is why we are repealing the East Side Road Authority act.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members, and no question or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'd like to ask the minister and inquire with the minister as to what concrete investments will this government make in Manitoba's First Nations communities.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): We continue to work with the east-side communities, building communities and helping them to build, and we'll continue to do that based on a relationship that's based on trust and respect.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the minister to give us an update on the status of Freedom Road.

* (16:30)

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, one of the—another one of the things that we had to fix was building a relationship with the Shoal Lake 40—on the road to Shoal Lake 40, and we're doing that, and there are tenders that have gone out on the aggregate crushing, and we'll continue to work together. The environmental studies are happening, and the engineering continues on that road.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the member: How does cutting important infrastructure projects that would benefit First Nations communities make Manitoba competitive?

Mr. Pedersen: By getting rid of ESRA.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the member: What plans does the government have in place to create

any new job opportunities for Manitobans in northern communities?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, I'll just use the same answer: By getting rid of ESRA, we'll continue to build our relations with the east-side communities and with northern communities.

Mr. Maloway: I don't think some of those are very good answers to the questions, but I'd like to ask the minister about the job situation. How many jobs have been lost up there? And how many of the former workers have been rehired by this government?

Mr. Pedersen: I'm not sure what the member means by up there. Perhaps he can expand a little bit.

Mr. Maloway: Clearly, the minister doesn't plan to answer these—the questions that I have here.

Also, in terms of the community benefit agreements, you know, as the government, we were very supportive of those; this government is not supportive of this concept at all.

It's pointless to proceed any further with asking this minister or this government any questions because as hard as we try we cannot get any answers to any of our questions. So I'm prepared to proceed with the debate.

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, I heard a question in there, so I would love to answer that.

That's the reason why we're bringing forward Bill 6 to get rid of East Side Road Authority and the waste and mismanagement that this NDP government did over seven, eight years that they had; \$500 million disappeared and 50 miles of road got built.

Madam Speaker: Any further questions?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I'm—wonder if the minister could provide an update on the status of the construction plans for this fiscal year for the east-side road and what will be built and where it's going to be and so on.

Mr. Pedersen: There—Madam Speaker, there are projects that are continuing the road to Berens River—continues and is expected to be finished by this fall, connecting Bloodvein and Berens River with an all-season road.

Madam Speaker: If there are no further questions, debate is open.

Debate

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Very pleased to speak to Bill 6, Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act. This bill repeals the Manitoba east-side authority act and transfers the authority's property rights and liabilities to the government.

Our NDP team, Madam Speaker, is focused on families, creating opportunities for our kids here in Manitoba. This bill is about settling old political debts rather than building for the future. It's not what Manitobans need now, and, as such, we oppose this legislation.

The fact of the matter is that the community benefits agreements had way more in—to them than what this minister has been portraying. These agreements were to develop capacity with the people in that area and to promote activity in those communities because we want to make sure those communities stay intact over long term.

We share the concern of Manitoba First Nations and northern Manitobans that climate change is shortening the driving season of our winter roads and making them more dangerous. Manitoba's remote communities deserve reliable, all-year access to the rest of Manitoba, and by building a year-round economic corridor, we help add to Manitoba's labour force and the economy, creating new job opportunities for north—Manitoba's North.

We made steady progress. We were investing in our core infrastructure to create jobs and grow the economy, including, Madam Speaker, \$1 billion last year. We need to take advantage of our location in the heart of the continent. Our province has an opportunity to become a trade and transportation hub.

ESRA's mandate was to involve indigenous communities directly and make substantial investments. And we're concerned about this new government's lack of commitment to investing in the North or working with indigenous communities through community benefits agreements.

The—we had announced the next phase of our 3 billion—now, this is far as the record on the east side is concerned, we'd announced the next phase of our 3-billion, thousand-kilometre road. We had already moved over 600 kilometres of road from on top of lakes and rivers to land in order to increase safety and save lives, while allowing more trucks to travel over a longer period of time.

We signed community benefits agreements with all of the local First Nations to ensure that they're able to take advantage of the good construction jobs that come from this project, as opposed to the past, Madam Speaker, historically, in not only this province but other provinces, where projects like this are completed by southern construction companies where the company and the labour are all brought up there and the projects are completed and the long-term benefit at the end of the day leaves no newly trained, skilled workers up in those communities. That's what we were trying to do with this approach.

We installed a bridge over Red Sucker River and we had begun installing bridges over Mainland River and Stevenson River. These bridges will keep the winter road system open longer and to fit into the all-weather road when it's ready.

The government talks about, you know, the cost involved and the amount of kilometres finished. What they leave out is—the fact of the matter is that the total, the money spent here, included bridges. And so it's fine for the minister to say, well, you spent X amount of dollars to do so many kilometres, but you have to calculate the cost of the bridges as well.

The east-side First Nations were seeing the results. Chief Roland Hamilton of Bloodvein First Nation evidently had a good experience with ESRA. The community won a tendered contract to do work on their own land. Over 60 people were employed from his community: 18 people were trained as heavy equipment operators, one was trained as an environmental safety officer, many participated in an introduction to construction classes and received CPR and first-aid training. The community, as a result, Madam Speaker, gained equipment and gained knowledge.

First Nations communities were seeing benefits of ESRA. Pauingassi First Nation saw 19 local residents get training, including 11 graduates from introduction to heavy construction, eight graduates from heavy equipment operator training. And of these 19 residents, 12 local residents, or 63 per cent, had been provided employment opportunities on all of the seasonal roads.

Berens River First Nation saw 72 local residents receive training, including 15 graduates from introduction to heavy construction, five graduates from skilled labour training, 12 graduates from introduction to construction, 21 from first-aid

chainsaw safety training, 19 graduates from heavy equipment training. And of these 72 residents, 33 local residents have been provided employment opportunities on the all-season project road.

This is not the approach the Conservative government ever took in the past when they were in government. It's not one they're going to take in the future. That's the difference between them and us, where we try to develop local capacity, train people. They—it may cost a little more in the short run, but in the long term it's an investment for the betterment of the province. And we're going to see the results of their approach over the short period of time that they're going to remain in government, which won't be as long as they think, I don't believe, Madam Speaker.

* (16:40)

In terms of our record on infrastructure, Madam Speaker, we weathered two major floods and a global recession. Our NDP \$10-billion infrastructure plan included extending the CentrePort Canada Way to increase trade with Saskatchewan and grow our transportation industry, protecting Highway 75 from Winnipeg to the United States border to interstate flood-protection standards, and the government's going to soon find that with the potential for floods and so on this summer that it's very, very important to upgrade highways like Highway 75 to get these interstate flood-protection standards, because, as the member should know, Manitoba has, I believe, a \$62-billion economy, and sometimes those, in the last few years when there was a flood situation, that road was shut down for, like, a month. And, if you do the calculations, that's a huge economic cost to the province.

Rebuilding the intersection of Lagimodiere and Perimeter Highway was a major interchange with no traffic lights and building an active transportation corridor, and that's going to be, you know, completed under this current government, and it will be something of benefit to the residents of Manitoba, but a project that was started by us.

Also, there's going to be a rebuilding of the Trans-Canada Highway—

An Honourable Member: Louise Bridge.

Mr. Maloway: Well, the member wants to talk about the Louise Bridge, and I have—I had a lot of time for the Louise Bridge, and if I have any time remaining before the end of my speech, I think we could probably get into that in a major way.

Madam Speaker, rebuilding the Trans-Canada Highway from Ontario to Saskatchewan to higher standards, upgrading Westman's major US trade route, the PTH 10, to help increase trade and tourism in Brandon, these are just a few of the things that we were doing as a government, projects that are probably not going to see and come to fruition under this particular government.

Reconstructing south Perimeter Highway, including new diamond interchanges to replace traffic lights, what's going to happen with that? All gone. Not going to be completed. We'll—we could be here a hundred years and they will never finish that project. And, Madam Speaker, you know that, because that's—part of your constituency is affected by this.

Upgrading PTH 9 from Winnipeg to Winnipeg Beach, rebuilding Highway 6, Winnipeg's connection to the North, and continuing our work on the east-side road network to connect remote communities. Our infrastructure plan would have created 58,000 jobs, boosted the economy by \$6.3 billion, a plan that the Conservatives didn't support and won't implement. Investing in core infrastructure creates good jobs; it grows the economy.

Now, in terms of the current Premier's (Mr. Pallister) record on infrastructure—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —the—Madam Speaker, that is very true. I find it very hard to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —hear myself. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: There is so much noise in this Chamber. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

We do have a member that is making the best effort to speak on debate, and I would encourage all members to show the courtesy by listening to his comments.

Mr. Maloway: I'm just getting around to speak about the Premier's record on infrastructure. The infrastructure mess left by this Premier and the Filmon government took a long time to fix. During the election, the Premier announced he's going to cut infrastructure spending by \$1.95 billion between now to '21-22, killing good jobs, putting people out of

work. And now that he's Premier, he is making good on the promise.

You know, this is just a rerun of the Sterling Lyon government, you know? Sterling Lyon comes into power, shuts down all the projects. There's nothing new—there's nothing new—about this minister. Well, this minister's been asleep at the switch. I mean, the things have been happening all around him for the last year and he's probably not even aware of it, but they're shutting down his department. I mean, he should start checking this—checking things out, but as he—every time of day he comes into the office, there's, like, one less project that he's responsible for.

Over time, he's going to be like the Maytag repairman; he's going to be sitting in his office—sitting in his office—nothing going on. The staff are going to committees, going to ask the staff, well, what's going on in my department today? They're going to say, nothing—nothing—because your whole department's been shut down. And he thinks that's good; he thinks that's funny.

Madam Speaker, so he's going to cancel plans. He's cancelling plans for smart, strategic infrastructure investments and critical flood-protection projects, roads, bridges, highways. Louise Bridge is just another example of a project that he's going to be, I'm sure, not proceeding with.

In terms of investing for jobs for indigenous and northern Manitobans, we created the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund to support Manitoba's First Nation business proposals are economically viable. This provides opportunities for new entrepreneurs to create new jobs across Manitoba.

We started a Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy to help key indigenous organizations in Winnipeg focus on indigenous capacity building that helps them train the next generation of workers for the good jobs of tomorrow.

I mean, does the minister—probably hoping that everybody leaves the North, you know. Then he—his job is totally done.

The downtown renewal—inner-city resiliency that ensures downtown Winnipeg grows with economic opportunities for everyone. Student mentorship and indigenous role model tutorship, which uses the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre to keep our young people focused on teams and sports and out of gangs, getting them ready for good jobs in our

growing economy. The 200-megawatt Wuskwatim Generating Station was the first 'genering' station to be built in Manitoba in nearly two decades—the first generating station to be built in North America in partnership with First Nations people, making Hydro a world leader in sustainable community economic development. We ensured that indigenous communities and people benefit from our Hydro projects; Hydro's increased their Aboriginal employment rates to 18 per cent, corporate wide, and 46 per cent in the North.

Now, in terms of northern Manitoba, our NDP team has a vision for the North; smart, strategic investments in infrastructure, health care and education to create good jobs and make the North an even better place to live and raise a family. We made steady progress growing tourism, mineral exploration, Hydro development and thriving industry are contributing to good jobs so that young people can stay, work and raise families in the North.

Now, Madam Speaker, we want northern Manitobans to have access to training, to get the skills they need to take advantage of those economic opportunities. Investments in roads and bridges, and the building economy with good jobs is how we make life better for northern Manitobans. We support keeping the Port of Churchill open, working and providing jobs in hope of the people in the local communities. The port is strategically positioned to become an Arctic gateway, a shipping hub to the world markets—to markets such as India. The PCs refuse to offer support for this critical northern infrastructure. We provided training for hard-working northern Manitobans to upgrade skills and adapt new technologies.

Now, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), Madam Speaker, has called the east-side project wasteful, eliminated the East Side Road Authority and its community benefits agreements, and he does not see the benefit of the East Side Road Authority beyond road and bridge building when, in fact, they may help build partnerships between communities to develop skills for First Nations residents in the area. Clearly, they—the entire government here doesn't understand, doesn't understand any of this whatsoever. It's like talking to the wall.

The Conservatives have absolutely no interest in northern Manitoba. Their only agenda for the North is to attack and—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order. Order.

There are a lot of conversations going on in this House and it's making it very difficult for a number of us to hear the person that is standing on debate. So I would encourage—if people are having conversations, you might want to use the loges and we can then, more quickly, get through all of this.

Mr. Maloway: Very, very good advice, that we can quick—more quickly get through the process if the members opposite would actually listen.

You know, the—on my clock here I have another 14 minutes. I could easily finish my speech in only two or three minutes, if the members would listen. But, unfortunately, I might have to speak the full 14 minutes. And I'm sure they would not want that to happen.

Now, Madam Speaker, the Conservatives' failure to acknowledge the North does nothing to build strong and vibrant northern Manitoba economy with good jobs for northerners. The Premier, as I'd indicated, has eliminated the East Side Road Authority, which is connecting isolated communities with the rest of the province, bringing jobs and opportunities to remote communities. The Conservatives' extreme position against Hydro development means they'll kill 10,000 jobs and lose \$9 billion in revenue by cancelling Hydro projects and export deals, all to build gas plants in the south. And that's what Conservative governments had done before. Saskatchewan's a good example of that.

* (16:50)

Conservatives don't believe northerners and indigenous Manitobans deserve training opportunities. Their reckless cuts to infrastructure, health and education will mean fewer opportunities for indigenous and northern Manitobans to get good jobs and provide for their families and their communities.

Now, and see, Madam Speaker, there's the proof: the members are paying attention, the members are quiet and the speech is done 13 minutes earlier than planned.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I would like to just say a few words on the record about Bill 6.

From our Liberal perspective, there are certainly critical considerations. One is that the road construction continues and this road gets built. I asked the minister a question; he assured me that the

road is going to be continued to be built, that they will reach Berens River this fall. We will be watching very closely, I say, through Madam Speaker to the minister, that what is happening, because we are very concerned about what's happening.

We are also concerned that there are contracts which are going to indigenous people and indigenous countries—companies and that there are many, many indigenous people who are employed in the building of the road. And that, also, we are going to be watching very, very closely, because it's very important. The minister has been very critical about what happened before, and so, as the minister appreciates, having the capacity building in terms of skills and companies is critical.

I think that when we're looking at what's happening on the east-side road, the federal government has announced today that there's more funding for indigenous people in health care, in housing and in the area of skills and for students. And so that investment federally, combined with the continued building of the east-side road, is going to be really important for people along the east side of Lake Winnipeg. And so we'll be watching closely how these things come together, and, hopefully, it will be a good thing.

I note that the federal government also has announced funding in terms of child care, of innovation and skills and clean technologies, that there is funds—again, we're on the east side—for protecting Lake Winnipeg. There is an extra \$148-million transfer to Manitoba this year, up from last year—\$148 million more than last year. There is a lot of money for agriculture. And we know that there's an interest in agriculture on the east side in the future—but, of course, much of that will help communities in the south, as well—and that there is an effort which is very important to all of us to address gender-based violence at a federal level.

And so we're pleased with those initiatives. And we will be supporting this bill because we believe it's important to continue. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 6, The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I heard a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

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

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

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 6, The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Klassen, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Reyes, Schuler, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Kinew, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Saran, Swan, Wiebe.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 38, Nays 9

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 22, 2017

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