

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, the beginning of April marks the start of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Manitoba, an increasingly important and relevant initiative in a province that continues to see heartbreaking numbers of sexual assaults occurring each year. What's also troubling is that many of our survivors don't ever report to police or receive counselling in the aftermath of assault or rape.

As a survivor of sexual violence myself, I know first-hand why so many of us never report to police and don't reach out for support. It is because we believe that we are somehow to blame, that we are at fault because we shouldn't have gone to that party or that bar, that we shouldn't have worn that dress or that top or that colour of lipstick, that we shouldn't have talked to that boy or associated with that man. So many of us live with that shame and guilt and self-loathing for years.

But, Madam Speaker, on this day, the beginning of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and every day throughout the year, I implore all of us to challenge the culture that allows these mistruths about rape to permeate and that keeps our survivors in silence and in the darkness of their own shame. Let's build a society where survivors are supported and believed and not blamed for the horrendous trauma of rape.

Let's all work together to make sure everyone believes that no one deserves or asks to be raped, assaulted, molested, harassed—ever.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to say to all survivors: you are not alone. To all the girls and women, boys and men who have ever been violated in this most horrific way, please know that there is help out there. Call a sexual assault crisis line, talk to a counsellor or reach out to a friend.

Shame dissipates in the light, and I want all survivors to stand with me and say to the world, and mostly ourselves, that we are not at fault.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): In honour of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, I take this opportunity to reiterate that we stand with survivors of sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. There is no room for said behaviours both within public and private spheres and automatically demands swift and definitive action to condemn and punish perpetrators while seeking to make victims whole.

As I've previously stated in this House, we are in the midst of a revolution via the hashtag #MeToo and Time's Up movements in respect of the right of women and girls to be safe in the workplace or on our streets or in our homes.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, this is an all too common daily occurrence for women and girls.

Only last week, Madam Speaker, a young woman that I've been mentoring for some time reached out in despair to share with me that she had been sexually assaulted in Portage Place mall while in line to get a drink.

Madam Speaker, it enrages me that some men believe it is their right to violate women's space and their bodies for their own perverse intentions. To this young woman, I say: I am so sorry you had to go through this and know that I will always be there to support you however you may need and that you are loved and valued.

I want to take a moment to say miigwech and to acknowledge the Winnipeg Police Service's chief of police, Danny Smyth, who always takes my calls

and helps in creating the safest, most culturally appropriate ways of taking statements from women who I advocate for—more often than not, indigenous women.

I also want to acknowledge the Winnipeg Police Service Sex Crimes Unit, who work so hard on incredibly difficult files.

Finally, Madam Speaker, during the Sexual Assault Awareness Month I acknowledge all the brave women, girls and men who, by courageously sharing their stories, have carried us on this new journey of revolution. Make no mistake, it is their powerful testimony that will lead our collective society to redemption and healing, and to them I say, *miigwech*.

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

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, Manitoba continues to have the highest rates of sexual assaults in the country, and I am truly hopeful that this is a statistic that will change.

It is remarkable and inspiring how we have so many strong, competent people and groups here in Manitoba, both inside and outside these Chambers, who are officially done with allowing this—for this to be the status quo.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to tear down the walls that have protected abusers for too long and we are going to continue working together to stand up against sexual assault across the world.

We have a strong minister who has made great progress on this file and we are here to support the work being done by our Status of Women office and to change the world for future generations.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the MLA for The Pas—

Madam Speaker: Are you rising on a ministerial statement?

Ms. Lathlin: Oh, no.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

The Pas Huskies Pee wee Hockey Team

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): As the MLA for The Pas, it is great honour that I rise to recognize and congratulate The Pas Huskies pee wee hockey team on winning the 2018 Chevrolet Good Deeds Cup challenge.

Last December, our community answered the call of Oscar's Place homeless shelter as they were seeking assistance to provide meals for our folks at the shelter. The Pas Huskies pee wee hockey team took on a leadership role and came together to provide and serve meals for our homeless community. They took their service another step forward by entering the Chevrolet Good Deeds Cup challenge with the goal to raise money for Oscar's Place homeless shelter.

In January, our team's video entry became one of the top 10 semi-finalists in the country. Despite being the smallest community in the contest, our team became one of the top three videos in the country. Our team's good deed was recognized and went on to win the national challenge and became the 2018 Chevrolet Good Deeds Cup Champions, winning the grand prize of \$15,000 for our homeless shelter. The good deed that was recognized is the team's service and compassion to others and the community effort they displayed when it was truly needed.

It makes me very proud to be your MLA. You demonstrated true compassion and reminded us that you can make a difference, no matter how old you are.

Our homeless shelter was named after my dad, the late Oscar Lathlin. If he was here today, he would be very proud of our team, our hometown and our very worthy cause. We are indeed a small town with a big heart.

I would like to recognize Missinippi Airways for sponsoring our team to fly out from The Pas and making it possible for them to join us here today.

Please join me in recognizing The Pas Huskies and their coaches, Andre Murphy, Brad Barr and Jerome Conaty, all here at the Manitoba Legislative Assembly today.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas.

Ms. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, I ask leave to add the names of team players and coaches to Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to have the names of the team players and coaches added to Hansard? *[Agreed]*

The Pas Peewee A Huskies, players: Matt Baker, Jace Barr, Riel Chartrand, Ethan Conaty, A.J. Constant, Amie Hawley, Jess Lagimodiere, Logan Marr, Terrell Martin, Aidan Mayer, Jaydin Muswagon, Alex Nabess, Franklin Scott, Landon Stevens. Coaches and families: Andre Murphy, head coach; Brad Barr, assistant coach; Jerome Conaty, assistant coach; Maddex Conaty; Mikaela Conaty.

* (13:40)

Louis Tanguay

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and congratulate Louis Tanguay of the City of Winkler for his role in the Viterra men's curling championship on January 31st to February the 4th.

Thousands of fans fly to the Winkler arena to watch 32 curling teams compete for the chance to be named the best team in the province and receive a berth to the 2018 Tim Hortons Brier national championship.

Today, Louis, the chief architect and administrator of this year's Viterra, is with us in the gallery. Louis's a long-time resident of Winkler whose diligent volunteer efforts have led to his success on a number of high-profile events.

He served as event chair and had a dedicated team consisting of 24 vice-chairs, 10 diamond sponsors and over 300 volunteers from all over southern Manitoba.

It's the second time in three years that Winkler has hosted the provincial curling championship. It was 2015 when Winkler hosted the Manitoba Scotties Tournament of Hearts. Louis was co-chair for the 2015 Scotties. For those efforts, he was named the Curl Manitoba's Volunteer of the Year in 2015 and the Winkler Community Foundation volunteer of the year.

Louis has had many roles: co-chair of the finance committee for the 2014 Manitoba games, board member for Winkler Curling Club, Winkler chamber of commerce board member, church board member, coach of local sports teams.

Madam Speaker, the Viterra men's curling championship truly bought out the best in the Winkler and southern Manitoba community. It brought in people from across the province to cherish a sport that we love and enjoy time together as citizens of this great province.

I congratulate Louis and all of his volunteers on a job well done and recognize the efforts he has given to Winkler and the community over the years. We wish you and Elaine well tonight at the Rod Stewart concert and hope that that concert would come close to your enjoyable experience today in the Manitoba Legislature.

Thank you, Louis.

Wetland Protection

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, today I ask the Legislative Assembly to recognize the crucial importance of wetlands to Manitoba's environment. I am very disappointed that the official opposition decided not to support this resolution calling on all of us here in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to acknowledge the need to protect wetlands.

Madam Speaker, wetlands play an important role in Manitoba's ecosystems. They contribute to safer water supplies for shallow and deep wells. They also act as carbon sinks. Wetlands in Manitoba alone store approximately 67 million tons of carbon.

They also act as important habitats for species such as boreal woodland caribou, a species at risk. Sadly, Madam Speaker, these habitats are at risk of being lost. Southern Manitoba has lost over 70 per cent of our wetlands.

Our government was proud to introduce the Growing Outcomes in Watersheds program, a made-in-Manitoba ecological goods and services initiative. This program is based on the Alternative Land Use Services or ALUS model. The model is being used in collaboration with landowners, municipal and federal governments and non-governmental institutions. Through the GROW program, our government is acting to reduce flooding, improve water quality and manage the nutrients in our waterways.

Replacing damaged or lost wetlands are a part of our government's plan to protect Manitoba's environment for the future. That's why Budget 2018 announced a \$102-million conservation trust that

will enhance green infrastructure in the province for generations to come.

We had the opportunity today in the Legislative Assembly to send a strong signal to our partners in wetland management and continue improving the health of Manitoba's ecosystems for the future. This has larger implications than our political affiliations in this House. Madam Speaker, we are here to serve Manitobans and this province. We should work to ensure that it remains a prosperous and healthy province for all.

Thank you.

World Autism Awareness Day

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Yesterday was World Autism Awareness Day, and the main objective of this day is to gain awareness and educate people about autism.

Classic autism was first recognized in 1942 as a medical disorder. However, there are historical accounts indicating that autism existed long before the 20th century.

Over the years, there have been many theories and speculation in the hopes of understanding the causes of autism. Today's research is focusing on genetics, differences in biological brain function, pre- and postnatal brain development, environmental factors, viral infections and immune responses and deficiencies. As you can see, we still have a lot to learn.

Madam Speaker, autism touches all of us. That is why today I wear blue in representation of yesterday, World Autism Awareness Day.

In closing, I would like to share just a few lines from a poem that was written by an Autism Speaks staffer, Kerry Magro, who is also a motivational speaker and best-selling author who happens to be on the autism spectrum.

Here are a few lines: If you knew me, / You would know I was nonverbal at two and a half, / You would know I got kicked out of two preschools, / You would know I spent hundreds of hours a year in therapy to get to where I am, / But if you also knew me, / You would know I received a masters degree, / You would know I live independently, / You would know I consult to help parents who have children with autism, / No matter what autism means or doesn't mean I'm being the best me I can be.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank the Autism Society of Manitoba and everyone who works in the field with those on the autism spectrum.

Thank you from all of us here at the Legislature.

Barkman Concrete

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to recognize an iconic Steinbach company that has become successful well beyond our city and our province.

Barkman Concrete was recognized as one of Canada's Best Managed Companies this year. Barkman was founded by three brothers, Peter, Arnold and Edwin Barkman, in 1948, starting out as a plumbing and heating company. Through the precasting of some septic tanks, the company moved into the concrete business and the rest, as we like to say, is history.

In 1996, Peter Barkman stepped down as president of the company. An incredibly respected Manitoban, Peter has left an indelible mark on the company, Steinbach and our province. I will always remember his humour, insight and interest into politics.

His son Alan has taken over the company and has taken it to the next level in both in products and reputation.

Today the company manufactures concrete products for residential, commercial, agricultural applications in a variety of customers—or to a variety of customers across the continent. They produce a wide range of hardscapes, site furnishings, do-it-yourself kits, trenching, agricultural and custom products.

It has solidified its reputation as a company that values its customers, the communities it serves and the more than 250 employees in its three locations.

Barkman has also embraced the latest in concrete technology, becoming a leader in innovation. Most importantly, Madam Speaker, for all of its change, Barkman has maintained the values and the culture in which it was founded so many years ago. It is a company that is not just in the community, but truly a part of the company.

God has blessed the Barkman company and Barkman family, and they have returned that blessing to others. This is a true Manitoba success

story and deserving of recognition as one of Canada's best managed companies.

I'd like to recognize Alan Barkman, the president and CEO of Barkman Concrete; Tessa Masi, part of the ownership group; and Wayne Patram, the product development manager. They were here a couple of weeks ago and this statement wasn't able to be read, but they had a wonderful meeting with the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that I know they appreciated. I know all of us would wish them well, Madam Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Hydro Meeting with New Board

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I want to take a second to acknowledge a few stalwart NDP MLAs who left us over the past few days.

There's Saul Cherniack who is the predecessor to our colleague from St. Johns, who was 101 years old. He was a high-ranking Cabinet minister during the Schreyer government and will be dearly missed.

There's also Clarence Pettersen, who was a long-time community booster and also an MLA for Flin Flon.

Now, both of these MLAs—former MLAs, have family members in my constituency. So at this time I would like to offer my condolences to the families of Saul Cherniack and Clarence Pettersen, and I would like to ask all my colleagues here in the House today to applaud their service to our province, Manitoba.

On another note, Madam Speaker, we know that the Premier's mismanagement of Manitoba Hydro has put it in a unique position in its history and that the No. 1 issue that Manitobans think about when it comes to hydro, our low rates, are now at risk.

And so I'd like to ask the Premier: Has he met with the new board of Manitoba Hydro yet, and if not, will he do so at his earliest opportunity?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, I'd like to wish every member of this House and all of our staff here a happy Easter and a happy—and/or happy Passover.

* (13:50)

I'd like to add to the comments respecting Mr. Cherniack by saying that I believe that many within the NDP and elsewhere will say that he was the best premier that we ever didn't have. He

was respected, well liked within his caucus. He was a man of great integrity. Our condolences, of course, go to his family, all his many friends.

Clarence Pettersen and I attended university together. He—we studied to teach together and we student-taught at the same school, and my relationship with Ace, as we liked to call him, goes back a long way. Obviously, we departed on certain political leanings, but then, again, he departed on political leanings with others as well. He was a man who thought freely and expressed himself freely and I know he'll be deeply missed by his family. He was very loved.

In respect to the assertions of the member, I think the wonderful thing, Madam Speaker, about—the only wonderful thing about the dilemma we face in respect of Hydro in this province is that everyone apart from, apparently, the Opposition Leader understands that it was the NDP that created the problem. Where they got it wrong, we'll fix it.

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

Crown Corporations Standing Committee Meeting

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): And I still insist it's not my fault that the Premier didn't meet with the old board of Hydro for over a year.

So for that same amount of time the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations has not met to discuss the future of Hydro. This would give the opportunity for MLAs here to hear directly from the head of Hydro as well as from the board chair.

Now, this group would meet to discuss the critical issues of finance and governance, the very same issues that the outgoing board chair cited that this Premier refused to engage with him on. So it seems to me that, in the name of transparency, it would be a good move to call this committee so that we could, of course, get to the bottom of the mismanagement that has been brought in under this current Premier.

Now, given the chaos that the Premier has caused with Manitoba Hydro, will he call for a meeting of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, today?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, the word chaos is actually an accurate word to describe the situation this government inherited with

Manitoba Hydro. Part of the reason, of course, is the incredible profligate spending that was allowed to be encouraged, actually, by the previous administration there.

Investments in the efforts that the NDP made to Americanize Manitoba Hydro are understood—were understood, at the time, by most to be misguided at best and deeply damaging in reality, and so, Madam Speaker, what the member opposite hasn't learned from the past he apparently wants to repeat.

The NDP treated Manitoba Hydro as a personal plaything, when it belongs to all Manitobans. Now the member says he's going to address the problem by cutting a cheque for \$70 million to the Manitoba Metis Federation to—on a proposal he has yet to read, Madam Speaker.

So I don't see how he's going to solve the problem at Manitoba Hydro by repeating the mistakes of his predecessors, Madam Speaker, but let him explain that to the people of Manitoba.

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

Municipal Road Repair Federal Funding Available

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, it's not just the chair of the board of Manitoba Hydro that can't get a meeting with the Premier. We heard today that the mayor of Winnipeg is also not able to sit down face to face with the Premier. In fact, he shared that it's been easier to get a meeting with Canada's Prime Minister than it is with his provincial partner.

Now, we've been asking for months if the Premier would endorse the mayor's plan to fix our streets here in the city of Winnipeg by accessing federal dollars to do that. All he would have to do—the Premier—is write a letter.

Well, Manitobans got their answer. The Premier refused to act by March 31st, and so, I guess, that's a no. That means worse roads for everyone who lives or does business in the city of Winnipeg.

The Premier can't meet with his own hand-picked board for Manitoba Hydro. He can't meet with the mayor of Winnipeg.

Who exactly is he prepared to work with and what has he been doing that's so important that he can't find time to write a letter to fix our streets?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, where to begin, Madam Speaker.

In terms of the fixing of our finances, in terms of the repairing of our services, in terms of rebuilding our economy we were left with some monumental challenges, but we are focussed and engaged on doing exactly those three things.

Let's give an example. This morning our Health Minister announced to the people of Manitoba that their ambulance fees would be 35 per cent lower than they were under the NDP.

Manitoba Hydro is a precious jewel—was, Madam Speaker, a jewel that needs to be repolished and we're repolishing it, but the member should not confuse throwing money at a problem with solving it. He should not make that error in judgment. We are very concerned about protecting the best interests of Manitoba Hydro ratepayers. He, on the other hand, is ready to write a cheque for \$70 million on a proposal he has yet to see.

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

Health-Care Services Orthotics Program

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want rates to be low. The Premier's never said that; it's very simple.

Now we know when the Premier talks about health care and uses the word alignment, that that is actually managerial talk for cuts—more cuts coming to the health-care system.

Now the Premier's racing to the bottom in every direction: for students, for patients, for the families who support them. We know that the tuition fees are going up by the maximum amount, at some of the biggest post-secondaries in our province, that they're starving teachers of the resources that they need to help our young people achieve success, but we've also learned now that the Premier has decided that Manitobans will have to pay more for orthotics in this province.

Now, again, these are the medically required devices that, in some cases, people need in order to walk, and if they can't walk, then perhaps work and school will suffer as a result.

Why is the Premier forcing Manitoba patients and families to pay more for the health-care services that they need?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, there were—Manitobans were paying more and getting less under the NDP year after year after year, and while the NDP threw more money at the problem, the problems got worse and worse. We descended under the previous government to 10th out of 10 on rankings—most indicators of health care, and the member talks about caring and compassion. But he only talks about it; he doesn't have the record to demonstrate it.

Now the fact remains that lower rates on Manitoba Hydro do matter to us and the member claims they matter to him. Yet the way he demonstrates that lower rates matter is to promise to spend \$70 million and raise rates—to promise to spend \$70 million to the Manitoba Metis Federation on an agreement he hasn't even read.

Who else wouldn't he pay, Madam Speaker? What other cheques would he cut to buy favour with the people of Manitoba? What other money would he spend? While, on the one hand, saying he cares about lower rates, he proposes to sign cheques on the future of our province that are only cashable based on the rates Manitobans pay. If he cared about lower rates for Manitobans, he wouldn't be making such empty commitments and empty gestures on the backs of Manitoba ratepayers.

What they got wrong, we're going to correct, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: I think the Premier's lost. Talking about Hydro for the whole question period, that was last week. Now we're talking about health care.

Now, again—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —the question was about orthotics and the fact that Manitoba families will no longer have access to the best orthotics program in the country.

So, again, this is a situation where Manitoba's ranking is falling compared to other jurisdictions, and it's a result of the decisions being made by the Premier, as we have previously established in this House.

Now, when vulnerable patients need these orthotic devices, it is a serious impact to their health. It can reduce their mobility. But we also know that it will create greater expenses in the health-care system

down the road. If people need repeat hospitalizations, repeat surgeries, all of this will lead to a greater impact on their quality of life, but also a greater burden on the health-care system.

Will the Premier reverse his cut to the orthotics program?

Mr. Pallister: The member speaks about vulnerabilities and, of course, the people who were paying double the national average for ambulance fees felt very vulnerable in that fact. I had correspondence from seniors in our province who walked to the emergency room, and that breaks my heart to tell you, Madam Speaker. But the fact is that vulnerable people are in abundance in our province because ambulance fees have been far, far too high, and a commitment to lower them by 35 per cent and to actually lower them by 35 per cent means this is a government of integrity that makes its promises, takes them seriously, and keeps our word, exactly the opposite of what we inherited from the NDP.

* (14:00)

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

Mr. Kinew: The Premier dangles with one hand, but takes away with the other. We know that this is a multi-million-dollar cut to the orthotics program and that this Premier's cut to orthotics is short-sighted. It will cost us all more in the long run.

Again, these are medically necessary devices to assist people with skeletal or musculoskeletal conditions. And without them, they may not be able to walk, they may not be able to live independently. So potentially you could have people suffering from acute pain as a result of this misguided decision to cut a medically necessary health-care service. Others, potentially, would lose the ability to live independently—again, because of an unnecessary and short-sighted cut to this orthotics program.

Now, we know that this is a short-sighted issue and it will cost us all more in the long run, so will the Premier reverse his decision and cancel this plan to cut money from the orthotics program?

Mr. Pallister: Finally, a preamble on something the member is expert on: costing us more in the long run, Madam Speaker.

What happens when a government spends close to \$1 billion more in one year than it brings in with some of the country's highest taxes? Long-run costs go up, Madam Speaker. What happens when a

government like the NDP doubles our provincial debt in just six years? Long-run costs go up. What happens when a previous premier goes up to The Pas and offers to give them jobs at Hydro if they'll vote for him? Long-run costs, a sacrifice of integrity.

Madam Speaker, this guy on the opposite side is promising to sign a cheque for \$70 million on a proposal he hasn't read, and he's repeating the mistakes of the past. What won't they buy—what cheque won't they cash—well, they can't cash any, they'll just sign them, I suppose—but what cheque will they not sign on the accounts of others, those in the future who have to pay the price of short-term views?

We take a long-term view. We want health care that works better. That's why we're repairing it, Madam Speaker, where they broke it.

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries Social Responsibility Budget

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Manitobans continue to tell us about the importance of dealing with addictions, yet we now know that in the last year Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries cancelled a program that provided \$1 million each year for research and underspent \$2.1 million from its social responsibility budget, intended to help Manitobans with addictions.

Did the minister responsible for MLCC direct these cuts, or is this another Crown corporation that can't seem to communicate with this government?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, we know that the issue of addictions is a significant one, both in Manitoba and across Canada, as every province deals with their own variation of challenges around addictions.

Madam Speaker, we've taken significant action in Manitoba. One of the early things that we did was to ensure that Suboxone was more available for those who needed it as a front-line treatment. I continue to hear from doctors and those who are working in addictions that this has been a significant step in terms of dealing with those who—having an opiate addiction. We know that there are other steps that need to be done.

I have received the VIRGO report as of last week, Madam Speaker. Our department is reviewing it. We'll release it in a month or so, after that review, and we look forward to looking at those recommendations.

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

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, surely the minister responsible for MLLC must be aware of concerns about problem gambling, the rise of opioid abuse, increased methamphetamine use in Manitoba, and in several months, as we know, cannabis will be legalized.

Yet, in addition to cancelling the Manitoba Gambling Research Program, MLLC underspent its social responsibility budget, established in law, by \$2.1 million. When the director of corporate responsibility at Liquor & Lotteries was asked about the failure to fund addictions treatment and research, she said: I think it's actually something to be proud of.

Is the minister also proud of this failure, or is this news to him today?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, there was one specifically good point that the member made in his comments: the concern about the legalization of marijuana and what that might do to our addictions file. That is one of the reasons this government—I would say a leader in Canada—has taken a strong stand to err on the side of safety to ensure that young people are protected so that they don't fall into a behaviour pattern of doing drugs.

That is why our Ministry of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), led by our Minister of Justice, has taken significant steps to ensure that that particular behaviour does not become normalized, particularly for young people, Madam Speaker. That is why we've put in place legislation, before the House now, to ensure that those young people are protected, that it is not widespread within our community.

I hope that the NDP will back up what the member said and move that legislation quickly, Madam Speaker, through the House.

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

Mr. Swan: I'm hoping, Madam Speaker, the Crowns minister and the Health Minister—I'm assuming they must know the best way to reduce harm to Manitoba families is by investing revenues into supports for addictions and research, and more than that they must know that it's law. There is social responsibility requirements for MLLC. Either this minister directed the cuts or he has no idea what's going on at

Liquor & Lotteries. I'd like to give him the benefit of the doubt and think he must know.

But if that's the case, why is the minister more concerned about raking in revenue from gambling and alcohol sales than he is about getting Manitobans the help that they need?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, every member of this government is concerned when it comes to addictions. I would say that there's not a member on this side of the House—and I would suspect in every side of the House—that hasn't in some way been touched by addictions either directly or through family members or through friends. So we certainly know that everyone is impacted by this.

My understanding is that the money that the member is referencing will carry over into the next fiscal year. So it'll still be there. In fact, we'll be in a better position having learned from some of the research by VIRGO, the consultant's report that we've now received and what—which we will release in a few weeks, in terms of how money should be invested in the system, Madam Speaker.

So not only is the money there, it will be used more appropriately.

Post-Secondary Education Tuition and Fee Increases

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Pallister government cut its supports to universities and colleges this year by \$5 million. Dr. Janice Ristok of the University of Manitoba calls this reduction in their operating grant a serious challenge.

The result is predictable: tuition is going up significantly. At the University of Manitoba it's slated to go up 6.6 per cent this year.

Pallister government is making it harder for parents and students to pay their tuition and his cuts will discourage students from pursuing a post-secondary education that helps them get good jobs.

I ask the minister: Why is he focused solely on his own bottom line without regard for the needs of students?

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

We are focused on the needs of students; that's why we listened to them when they said they wanted their support up front, not way down the road as was the previous case.

So we have improved the Manitoba scholarships and bursary program in Manitoba from a mere \$4 million to \$20 million a year, a substantial improvement, and that went up front to the students right away.

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

Mr. Wiebe: The Pallister government cut \$5 million for universities and colleges. A news release from Brandon University described it as, quote, a budget squeeze, which means that the university will face, quote, challenges providing services to the levels that some students require.

Just to tread water the university of Brandon is proposing a 6.6 per cent increase in tuition this year. At this rate, in just a few years a \$1,000 scholarship won't keep up with the growing tuition, let alone the inflation and rising student fees.

Why is this minister solely focused on his own bottom line without a thought for the needs of a growing student population?

Mr. Wishart: Thank the member for the question.

We are pleased to work with the post-secondary institutions across Manitoba, which is why we had a colleges report done, something the previous government, frankly, never got around to doing in the last 10 years. And we have been focused on working with post-secondary institutions to build a nicely integrated system that meets the needs of students not only now, but into the future.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, it's clear that the Pallister government has the wrong priorities.

In just a few years, students will be paying more and scholarships will be eaten up by their rising tuition.

Yet in the midst of all of these cuts the Pallister government is focused on their own salaries. They took a 20 per cent raise. Their own caucus member, in fact, reported that this was the only significant discussion that had happened in their caucus for nearly a year, and now they've—*[interjection]*

* (14:10)

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —again tabled legislation to protect—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —their own salaries in the years ahead.

I ask the minister: Why is he so focused on his own bottom line? Why isn't he focused on the students in this province?

Mr. Wishart: I wish the member opposite had had a focus on the students when they were in government.

During their period of time in government, we went to dead last in terms of outcomes in the K-to-12 system. We also went from middle of the pack in terms of percentage of our population that had a post-secondary education to dead last—10 percentage points off the average.

Clearly, their focus wasn't working.

Education System Inclusion Supports

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Despite an outcry from parents that last summer, this government is yet again planning to put the inclusion support program at risk.

Yesterday, I had the honour to attend the world autism event here, held at the Legislative Building, where families were asking for this government to provide more supports to their children that have a range of abilities so that they could succeed. In fact, this year, they're spending over \$1 million less in this budget on inclusive supports. This could be a de facto cut for the most vulnerable children.

Why has this minister abandoned children who need the most support?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Autism is something that our government takes very seriously. That's why recently, with the federal government, we just announced over \$10 million of supports for a dual-support system that's going to help at-risk and higher needs children. That includes autism.

That's something that's going to help over 700 children in the system here today. That's what I call support.

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

Mrs. Smith: The provincial budget claimed to add more money for inclusion supports, but this looks like more smoke and mirrors than real action.

Documents obtained through freedom of information show that this government has spent more in 2016 and '17 than they budgeted this year. This year's budget for inclusive supports is a cut from what was spent in the two previous years. There are more and more children using inclusive support programs, but this government is not committing the funds that they need.

Will the minister commit to funding kids that need the amount—or, funding kids the amount that they actually need?

Mr. Fielding: Sometimes learning about the future is best by looking at the past.

What the NDP government did while they were in office, in fact, did not provide the funding, the budgetary sources, for the inclusion support. In fact, since 2012 alone, the funding for the inclusion support was very much underfunded. That's why we committed over \$10.6 million to help children with autism. That's a partnership with the federal government.

We announced that, a part of a \$47-million commitment to child care and supports for children that need extra resources.

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

Mrs. Smith: The minister knows that the pressures on the inclusion support program are growing.

When the program was created in 2006, there were more than 1,400 children enrolled. Now there's over 1,600 children. This is a growing need that deserves a realistic budget. The budget that this minister presented won't meet the demands. It wouldn't even meet the demands in 2016, and they're cutting another million dollars from it.

Kids could not have the supports they need because of this minister's budget. Will the minister ensure that every kid who needs inclusive support gets it?

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

I don't know how much more clear we can get. We just announced \$47 million. A part of that is a \$10.6-million commitment to a dual stream. That's helping children with special needs as well as children with autism. Details on this will be announced very soon. That was a part of the federal government and provincial government commitment in terms of a \$47-million commitment.

I would suggest that a \$10.6-million commitment to this area is a substantial amount of money, and it's a step forward from what we saw from the NDP when we took government.

Manitoba Pharmacare Program Government Position

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, Ontario is now looking at allowing seniors 65 plus to be part of a pharmacare program.

Given this news, would the Premier (Mr. Pallister) agree to have an all-party committee, a committee to study how the Province would be able to implement a pharmacare program that would enable individuals 65 and older to receive free prescribed medication?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I don't think we're going to strike a committee to talk about a Pharmacare program that Manitoba already has. We have a Pharmacare program, we've had it for decades.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: I am disappointed that the Premier does not see the value of Manitoba moving forward on the important issue of pharmacare. A national pharmacare system is achievable, but, failing that, our province is fully capable and needs to go alone to have a strong pharmacare program.

Will the Premier acknowledge that he is at least aware of what other jurisdictions are doing, such as the province of Ontario, to better the accessibility of health care?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, Manitoba's looked at as a leader when it comes to the Pharmacare program. We have one of the most comprehensive pharmacare programs in all of Canada.

Now, I know that the member opposite is asking these questions with all the right intentions. She's doing it, I know, on behalf of her constituents, but she needs to go to her constituents, whether that's at McDonald's or wherever she wants to meet with them, to tell them, Madam Speaker, that Manitoba already has one of the best pharmacare programs in all of Canada and she should be proud of that, because we're certainly proud of that.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: You know, the Health Minister's correct; this is what I'm hearing from my constituents. And from what I've experienced in bringing my pharmacare petition door knocking with me, the people of Manitoba—all political stripes—want better and more accessible and affordable health care.

Will the Premier specifically—not through another generic response, because we know he voted for it in 2007—tell us why he is not prepared to have a pharmacare program for the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, when the member is door knocking and speaking to her constituents, she might want to remind them that even this morning, the doctors in Ontario held a press conference about how awful it was under the Ontario Liberal government to be a doctor over the last many years.

Now, she might want to hand out that press release but she doesn't want to just be negative, because we're Manitobans, so we want to be positive. So she should also take the press release that says that ambulance fees are going down from \$500 to \$340. She should tell her constituents that, Madam Speaker, when she's talking about affordability in health care.

Highway Safety Measures South Perimeter and Highways 2 and 3

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): There's been considerable growth in many of the communities I represent along the south Perimeter. I hear regularly about the infrastructure challenges related to that growth and the need for enhanced safety.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure share our government's plans related to improved safety in the Oak Bluff area and beyond?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Last month our government announced a review on safety measures on the south Perimeter Highway and highways 2 and through-3. The roundabout announced for highways 2 and 3 is the first of its kind on a provincial highway and is strongly supported by the citizens impacted.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the member for Morris and all the surrounding MLAs for their advocacy for safety on the south Perimeter Highway and highways 2 and 3.

**Northern Manitoba Communities
Communities Economic Development Fund**

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Over 1,300 people have a job in northern Manitoba thanks in part to the good work that the Communities Economic Development Fund does.

* (14:20)

Now, the fund has helped important industries like tourism, forestry, construction and fishing, yet the Pallister government just cut funding for the fund by over 30 per cent.

Why is this government continuing to damage northern Manitoba?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Speaking of damage, he must have been talking about the NDP party and what it did to northern Manitoba over the last 17 years.

But we're doing an economic development review. The North is very much part of that economic development review and when we bring out our plan, which I encourage all Manitobans to speak with Dave Angus and Barb Gamey when they do the—pardon me—when they do their public consultations to make sure that they have their input, and that includes people of the North, because everyone deserves a strong economic development plan.

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

Mr. Lindsey: According to the fund's annual report, the fund is the major funder of the recently announced Northern Economic Development Strategy. This government wrote media releases about this. They held press conferences. They sent minister on junkets around the province.

But when push came to shove, this government has abandoned even their pretense of support. A 30 per cent cut; it's a betrayal. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: Why did this government promise solutions and then just deliver a cut? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pedersen: I guess one of those junkets that the member was talking about was when the premier went to The Pas to try—buy votes for his leadership

campaign at the expense of Manitoba Hydro—everyone who uses Manitoba Hydro.

The previous premier tried to buy votes and—at the public expense, using Manitoba Hydro money. We do not do that, and we will never do that.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for—*[interjection]*

Order. Order.

The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Lindsey: So back to the Communities Economic Development Fund.

The Pallister government estimates that over 1,500 jobs will be lost in the North over the next two or three years. Mines are closing, grain shipping through the port has ended, the rail line is being held hostage and the fishing industry has been thrown into disarray by this government.

The minister went on junkets around the province to reassure the public that the Pallister government had a plan. Turns out, there is no plan. Instead, they're just focused on their bottom line, regardless of the crisis in the North.

Will they finally admit that and step up with a real plan for jobs in the North?

Mr. Pedersen: The member from Flin Flon, last fall, stood in this House and railed against the Fraser Institute and their terrible, right-wing thinking, how bad they were. And then, just mere weeks ago, the same member from Flin Flon stood up in the House and praised the Fraser Institute for their thoughtful, methodical work.

Obviously, the member is a little confused. He doesn't realize how many good things are really happening in the North and will continue to happen because a Progressive Conservative government listens to the people of the North. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

**Mental Health and Addictions
Federal Funding Available**

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Pallister government has abandoned its legal responsibility to support addictions research and treatment options.

The government refuses to put dedicated federal dollars into mental health and addictions, instead, Madam Speaker, hiding it in general revenue. This

funding is desperately needed by our communities and by Manitobans struggling with addictions. Myself and the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) hosted a town hall this past Thursday where we heard how this crisis is devastating individuals, families and community.

Why is the minister failing to invest in mental health and addictions?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the fact the member opposite did hold a community forum regarding methamphetamines. I think that that is important.

Several years ago, before there was any literature in Manitoba on methamphetamines, I did the same in my own community and around Manitoba where I got information from the United States because there was none available in Manitoba under the former government, and I distributed it around Manitoba to provide information.

So this is obviously a challenge that has existed for many years. We are taking it seriously. The consultations report that we received back from VIRGO consulting on mental health and addictions is being reviewed by our department, and we will take action on their recommendations, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Fontaine: I myself understand the pain that families are going through right now all too well. I've shared many times that my own mother struggled with heroin addiction and ultimately lost her life in an overdose at the age of 42.

Too many people are being ignored by the Pallister government. The reality is that they cannot fight addiction on their own. Without funding and a total commitment to increasing treatment options, Manitobans will continue to feel this very tragic loss.

Will the minister step up and put that addictions funding back where it belongs, with the people of Manitoba who desperately need it?

Mr. Goertzen: I do appreciate, Madam Speaker, the member sharing her personal reflections on addiction. I've shared in this House in the past my own father's addiction. He passed away when I was 11 years old as a result of that addiction. And I don't think that there is a member of this House—one single member—who hasn't been touched in some way by

the issue of addictions, whether that is an immediate family member, whether that's friends, whether that's a neighbour.

And there's no doubt that it will take a community effort, as it is in other places in Canada, to address the idea of addictions or the challenge of addictions. It also is no doubt that it will require change. It will require change to addictions in terms of how we're providing services now.

It isn't just about putting more money into a system that's not working, it is about improving the system, and that is what the report will guide us in, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The lack of treatment options for Manitobans with addictions, particularly those who are low income, is staggering, Madam Speaker. Long-term-treatment beds and detox facilities are desperately needed. Community support for safe consumption sites and harm reduction initiatives is growing. The government has taken small steps by building crisis beds for youth, but we need—we know that much more needs to be done, Madam Speaker.

A \$40-million injection of federal funding was meant to help Manitoba head off this crisis, but the money is nowhere to be seen.

Will the minister admit to the House money has not flowed to mental health and addictions supports, and what will he do to rectify this immediate situation?

Mr. Goertzen: No, Madam Speaker, I'll admit no such thing.

Manitoba's Strategy for Growth Deloitte Report Recommendations

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): When our PC government won a historic provincial election in 2016 we only had an idea of the mess we would need to clean up from the NDP. This is particularly true when it came to their lack of co-ordinated economic development strategies and programs.

Can the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade update the Assembly on his efforts to modernize Manitoba's strategy for growth?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I thank the member for Dauphin for that great question.

With the release of the Deloitte framework for economic growth—alignment and growth, which was publicly released, it will do three things—or, we found three things: expand current review and—to all economic programs; it confirmed the economic development goals and objectives, which was a province-wide strategy; and it considers establishing a dedicated, arm's-length economic development agency.

I encourage all Manitobans to speak with Dave Angus and Barb Gamey when they do their public consultations coming up this month.

And with the input of the business and industry leaders all across the province, we will get it right. Where the NDP failed, the Progressive Conservative government will fix it and get it right.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

* (14:30)

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: And I have a ruling for the House.

I—excuse me. I would just indicate to the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) that when the Speaker is standing to do a ruling that members are not to leave the Chamber. That is a rule of our House.

Following petitions on Monday, March 12th, 2018, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) raised a matter of privilege regarding comments made by the honourable First Minister during oral questions. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition contended these comments were intimidating and violated the privileges of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) and also the privilege of any member seeking to end misconduct, harassment or bullying in the workplace.

The honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. Squires) also offered advice to the Chair, indicating that aspersions have been cast against all males in the House by comments made by the honourable member for St. Johns. Following the comments of the honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition moved, and I quote, that this matter be referred to the Legislative Affairs Committee. End quote.

I then took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity? And second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House?

Regarding the first condition of whether the matter was raised at the earliest opportunity, given that rule 28(5) indicates that points of order and matters of privilege cannot be raised during oral questions, the earliest opportunity to raise a matter of privilege would have been immediately after oral questions and not after petitions. I am therefore saying this matter of privilege is out of order—I will read that part over again.

Regarding the first condition of whether the matter was raised at the earliest opportunity, given that rule 28(5) indicates that points of order and matters of privilege cannot be raised during oral questions, the earliest opportunity to raise the matter of privilege would have been immediately after oral questions and not after petitions. I am not saying this matter of privilege is out of order because it was not raised at the earliest opportunity; I am simply noting that it would have been possible to raise the matter of privilege immediately after oral questions was concluded.

Turning to the second condition regarding establishment of a prima facie case of a breach of privilege, there are several considerations to be taken into account. First and foremost, I would like to advise the House, as did Speaker Reid on April 26th, 2012, that when dealing with privilege, a Speaker is limited to dealing with the procedural aspects of the case and not the substance of the issue. Speaker Fox also stated in a 1972 privilege ruling that the Speaker deals only with the technical and procedural aspects of the matter and not in any way with the merits of the situation or the allegations. Therefore, when a Speaker makes a ruling on the prima facie aspects of a matter of privilege, the Speaker is neither condemning nor condoning any aspects of the matter raised.

In looking at the comments made by the Leader of the Official Opposition in raising the matter of privilege, he asserted that comments made by the First Minister were seeking to intimidate the honourable member for St. Johns, and that in doing

this, in his eyes, the First Minister breached the privileges both of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) and of other members.

What is challenging for the Speaker is that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) did not discuss what specific privileges were breached or how the member for St. Johns was impeded in the performance of her parliamentary functions.

According to the third edition of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, it is necessary to demonstrate that intimidation and obstruction took place. Instead, both the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Ms. Squires), in speaking to this matter, offered commentary indicating opposing views of the same set of circumstances.

I hesitate to call this a dispute over the facts as I do not want the House to think I am trivializing this issue, but it appears what we are facing is a situation where comments made by members are being interpreted in different ways.

In addition, complaints about language would be a matter of order, not privilege, according to page 254 of the second edition of Parliamentary Privilege in Canada by Joseph Maingot.

In speaking about past injustices, the honourable member for St. Johns made general references to male MLAs and a number of members took exception to this. In making reference to these actions by the honourable member for St. Johns, the honourable First Minister made comments which some members believe were an attempt to intimidate.

Colleagues, in parsing this issue I suspect we all in our hearts would accept that this is truly not a breach of parliamentary privileges, but is instead a case of different viewpoints and perceptions. I believe it is very important to explore this further, as we are truly at a watershed moment in society. Many things that in the past would have remained secret and would not have been raised are now coming forward with the confidence of being believed without having credibility attacked.

While this may create a sense of freedom and openness, it has also created a climate where there is uncertainty about interactions and unintended messages. More than ever, this is requiring all of us to be mindful of our actions and to treat each other with more civility and respect so that we can move forward as the role models society expects us to be.

This Chamber is a place where strong and differing views are expressed and that will not change. What is incumbent on all of us is to moderate our behaviours and to remember to treat each other as we would want to be treated. Our constituents and our friends and family would expect no less from us.

With the greatest of respect to all members, I rule there is no prima facie case of a breach of privilege, but I would ask all members to think about my comments and to be mindful about how we treat each other in this Chamber.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): First of all, pursuant to rule 33(7), I am announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Johnston). The title of the resolution is Eye See Eye Learn.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable government House Leader that—pursuant to rule 33(7), I am announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. James. The title of the resolution is Eye See Eye Learn.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, would you call Bill 15, followed by Bill 3 and Bill 20.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will now consider second readings of bills 15, 3 and 20 this afternoon.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 15—The Film and Video Classification and Distribution Act

Madam Speaker: Proceeding, then, with second reading of Bill 15, The Film and Video Classification and Distribution Act, recommended by His Honour the Administrator.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 15, The Film and Video Classification and Distribution Act, be now read a

second time and be referred to the committee of this House.

His Honour the Administrator has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox), seconded by the honourable Minister of Education, that Bill 15, The Film and Video Classification and Distribution Act, be read now a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Administrator has been advised of the bill, and the message is tabled.

* (14:40)

Mrs. Cox: I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce the second reading of Bill 15, The Film and Video Classification and Distribution Act.

Bill 15 will replace the duplication of classification services for films and video games in the province of Manitoba. The Manitoba Film Classification Board has served this province well, but it's time to rethink the idea of having the same work done in multiple jurisdictions. We need to be more efficient with our resources and give industry a single point of contact for classification services.

Discussions are already underway by the current Manitoba Film Classification Board chair to negotiate an agreement with Consumer Protection British Columbia to provide classification services for Manitoba. Saskatchewan has already partnered with CPBC, or the Consumer Protection British Columbia, to provide these services, giving distributors one contact for classification.

Moving Manitoba in line with that process will create efficiency and reduce red tape, Madam Speaker. This is consistent with our position to the New West Partnership and how our government will look at ways in which services could be shared, and reduce duplication for sectors of the economy.

Under the new legislation and regulations, film festivals will be permitted to classify their own films or use classifications provided by other jurisdictions, and movie or video game retailers will no longer require a licence to operate. Importantly, the Manitoba government will maintain the authority to inspect and ensure proper classification of all film and video games in the province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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 members, remaining questions asked by any opposition members, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I would like to ask the minister: Who she consulted with before dissolving the board?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): We've had many discussions with the chair of the board who is an individual that was appointed by the members opposite, and in those discussions she's indicated to us that she firmly believes this is the right move, Madam Speaker. She is in favour of this move, to dissolve the board and to move to a new and different way of having our films classified here in Manitoba.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Can the minister share with us how or if she already appointed a director for the purpose of this act?

Mrs. Cox: I appreciate that question. We have not yet identified an individual who will be a director. We have not appointed anyone yet. That cannot actually take place until we've dissolved the board.

However, it will not be a new position, Madam Speaker. It will be an individual who is currently within the department, someone who has knowledge about the details about how the Manitoba Film Classification Board did operate previously. So there will not be a necessity to hire a new person to fill that position as a director.

Ms. Marcelino: I would like to ask the minister: How will these changes—or the dissolving of the board—benefit the Manitoba film industry?

Mrs. Cox: Thanks to the member opposite for that question. In fact, when a distributor now comes to have a film classified, they will no longer actually have to go to three different provinces to have that done. We are partnering with the Consumer Protection of British Columbia, and they will be able to go to just BC to actually have that film classified, because province of Saskatchewan also utilizes the BC Consumer Protection to classify their films.

So there will not be requirement for them to actually have to go to three different places now to have the film classified. It'll be a very simpler, more easier, more transparent way to have their films classified here in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and also BC.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I wonder if the minister can tell me her top five films that have been filmed in Manitoba and why they are her favourite. Five.

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

I've had the opportunity, actually, to watch many of the Manitoba films that were filmed here in Manitoba, and I would have to say that, probably by far, *A Dog's Purpose* is one of my favourites. I know that it was filmed—I believe it was out in Portage la Prairie, and they actually did a wonderful job of using the landscape there for Portage la Prairie as the backdrop for that movie. I know that it's a movie that was well respected and really, a movie that was appreciated by most individuals not only in Manitoba, but across Canada, the United States, and it's a real success.

Ms. Marcelino: Would like to ask the minister, how much money will be saved because of this bill—over this action?

Mrs. Cox: This is really not about saving money, although, you know, the Film Classification Board, it did cost government money to operate year after year. We've looked at those figures for the last five years. Each and every year, they did, in fact, run a deficit. But what it's going to do is really reduce government's footprint; it's going to reduce red tape, and it's going to ensure that, you know, organizations, film distributors, things like that, have less regulations that they have to follow when it comes to having films classified. So it's not really about savings, although there will be a saving year after year that we will see.

Ms. Marcelino: I thank the minister for the answer. I would like to ask the minister if she had discussed the CPBC system with the Saskatchewan government to ensure Manitoba standards will be protected.

Mrs. Cox: I thank the member opposite for that question. I have not personally had that discussion with the Saskatchewan government; however, I know that the current chair of Manitoba Film Classification Board has had discussions. There's

been ongoing discussions, and they've had a lot of talk about the successes that—and the work that has been done by BC. And Saskatchewan is very pleased with the way that the films are classified. They believe that it's a step in the right direction. And so, as a matter of fact, yes, there's been many discussions with the chair. However, I have personally not had that discussion with Saskatchewan.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Ms. Marcelino: I move, seconded by the member from the—no questions.

Madam Speaker: There's no further questions.

The floor is now open for debate.

Ms. Marcelino: I move, seconded by the member from The Pas, that the debate on this bill now be adjourned.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino), seconded by the honourable member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin), that debate be now adjourned. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I'm hearing a no.

The honourable member—oh.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of debate being adjourned, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Recorded vote, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The one hour provided for ringing the bells—division bells—has expired. I am therefore directing the division bells to be turned off and the House proceed with the vote.

The motion before us: Shall the debate for Bill 15 be adjourned?

* (15:50)

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Fielding, Fletcher, Fontaine, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Gerrard, Klassen, Lamoureux.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 40, Nays 3.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now we'll go into bill—the second reading of Bill 3.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 3, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, and seconded by the Minister of Crown Services, that Bill 3, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, be read for the second—be now read for the second time and referred to the committee as this—in this House.

Mr. Pedersen: I am pleased to speak to the House today about Bill 3, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act. As of July 1st, 2017, the Canadian Free Trade Agreement came into force, replacing the previous Agreement on Internal Trade. This new agreement is much

more comprehensive than the Agreement on Internal Trade by covering almost all areas of the Canadian economy. Our government has worked to ensure and maintain access to markets across Canada for our goods, services, investment and workers.

The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act assists in implementing the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement and allows for any further domestic trade agreement that Manitoba joins to be added by regulation.

These amendments ensure that all labour mobility obligations of all domestic trade agreements to which Manitoba is a signatory are covered under these acts, including both the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. The existing labour mobility obligations in the Agreement on Internal Trade were directly incorporated into the Canadian Free Trade Agreement without any substantial changes.

The labour mobility obligations, which have been effective since 2010, ensure that any worker certified for an occupation by a regulatory authority of one party is recognized for that occupation by all other parties to the agreement. Our approach to implementing this legislation streamlines the process for Manitoba to adhere to new domestic trade agreements without requiring further legislative amendments.

Similarly, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act already made a similar amendment to the Proceedings Against the Crown Act. The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act is consistent with key government priorities to—for red tape reduction, while ensuring that the government of Manitoba fulfills its labour mobility obligations under domestic trade agreements.

With the introduction of this bill, Manitoba is demonstrating its leadership on internal trade by implementing these obligations under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. We are doing our part to ensure compliance with our trade agreement obligations and expect all other parties will be doing the same.

The amendments we are proposing here today will benefit all Manitoba business, workers and consumers. This is important legislation and I look forward to the opportunity to hear from Manitobans on these changes during committee.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

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

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Can the minister tell us how the government will ensure the workers are protected under this new trade agreement?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Workers will have the same rights and privileges that they had under the Agreement on Internal Trade, which means labour mobility across the provinces and they will be recognized with their trades across provinces. It's very similar to the Agreement on Internal Trade, which previous government was a signatory to.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister can tell us if the sole-source contract that was recently announced, and of quite a bit of controversy, would be in the spirit or acceptable under this legislation and/or is it acceptable under current legislation? Is there true free trade, or can the government sole source and not let other bidders know about government contract opportunities?

Mr. Pedersen: There has been free trade across the provinces and this bill strengthens it even more because this is the final approval of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Lindsey: I guess I'll ask the same question as the member from Assiniboia just asked, because we didn't really hear an answer. Is there anything in these agreements that prevent sole-source contracting?

* (16:00)

Mr. Pedersen: Yes, well, I guess there is experience from the previous government about sole-source contracts. And it was apparently under the AIT, the Agreement on Internal Trade, sole-source contracts were allowed, so I'm not quite sure why the members would be so adamant about making sure there is sole-source contracts.

Mr. Lindsey: I guess dancing around, not really going to answer that question about—

What protections do Manitoba workers have under these free trade agreements? Things like sole-source contracts sometimes are necessary to protect Manitoba workers, particularly people in the North, indigenous communities, things like that.

So are there any protections built into this, or will everything just be contracted out to the lowest bidder?

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this reminds me a bit of the Fraser Institute's answer I gave to the member earlier today. He seems to be on both sides. Now he's advocating for sole-source contracts, whereas before he didn't seem to be too sure, so—workers are always—our protection of workers are always paramount to Manitoba, and that's—when we talk about protection of workers, we're talking about safety and concerns like that and we're dealing with—we're looking after Manitoba's best interests in terms of getting the best prices on contracts.

Mr. Lindsey: I hear the minister consult with the former minister to come up with some kind of answer.

The question still remains: What is this government doing to protect Manitoba workers so that employment opportunities will remain in this province, and what are they doing to ensure that particularly indigenous workers or new Canadians in—new Manitobans in particular, have access to employment opportunities here?

Mr. Pedersen: Many of the contracts, particularly from government, have an indigenous component to the contracts and that will remain in place. We have done that; Infrastructure does that for their contracts, and government will continue to do that.

I'm not—I'm not sure where the member is coming from. He seems to want to shut down the borders of Manitoba to competition. The whole idea of a Canadian free trade agreement is that trade will flow across all provinces.

Mr. Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, what is it? Is it free trade or is it sole-source contracting? The minister can't have it both ways. He hasn't answered my original question. He's dodged the other questions. Does he even know the answer? Are sole-source contracts allowed? Yes or no?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Oh. Before I answer the question, is there leave that will allow the member for Assiniboia to ask a second question? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to look after the best interests of Manitoba. If that means putting a contract out, we will do that, unlike the previous government that relied on sole-source contracts and—*[interjection]*

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable member from Assiniboia has a point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: If the critic of the opposition designates anyone to be the questioner, they are able to do so and that is exactly what happened in the previous question.

Therefore, unanimous consent or leave was not necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That's not a point of—on that point of order, it's not a point of order because the fact is when I said the question period had up to 15 minutes, I indicated that it started with the opposition critic, and then every independent has—each has one question.

Under government bills for question period, under—okay, the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher).

Mr. Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, I think if you looked in—took a closer look, what was actually stated by yourself was that the opposition critic or their designate could ask a question.

Therefore there was no need to ask for leave just a moment ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The designate means that it has to be the member from the same party.

That's what the rules are. Okay?

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So continue with the honourable member—the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a united opposition was trying to figure out where they were, I guess I've kind of lost track of what the question was.

So I'll have to let them ask it again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for the—from the House to have the member for Assiniboia re-ask the question? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Fletcher: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the answer yes or no?

Under these agreements, are sole-source contracting allowed, just as was done by the Infrastructure Minister just a few weeks ago? Yes or no?

Is it allowed or not? Free trade or no free trade? Which is it?

Just choose. Make it up if you have to, but say yes or no.

Mr. Pedersen: It's always good when the united opposition can agree on things. The free—Canadian Free Trade Agreement, as was the case in the Agreement on Internal Trade, does not specifically mention anything about sole-source contracts or requirement for sole-source contracts, or the requirement for not.

So the member can take from that whatever he decipher.

Mr. Lindsey: Took us a while to get there, but the question has now been answered.

What consultations occurred to determine which aspect of the economy should or should not be protected under these agreements?

Mr. Pedersen: I know the concept may be foreign to the member opposite, but the idea of a Canadian free trade agreement, is that you allow as much as possible to be included under a free trade agreement rather than trying to restrict trade, this opens up trade.

I know that they're not agreeable to trade, they don't like trade, they voted against NAFTA back in the '90s. Gary Doer was very much adamant against NAFTA. They continue to have the same position.

We are for free trade across Canada—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: —as much as possible.

Mr. Lindsey: As much as possible or when they choose to, I guess, is the correct answer.

We talked about labour mobility, so are all jurisdictions requirements for standards, for labour, for things like apprenticeships, are they equal across all jurisdictions or will we be lowering some standards to allow for workers from elsewhere to come to Manitoba?

Mr. Pedersen: Just to make it clear, they're the same as they were in the Agreement on Internal Trade. Nothing has changed in terms of standards for labour mobility.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, I would like to take the minister at his word, and, hopefully, workers' rights will be protected in the fact that apprenticeships and trade requirements are going to remain as they presently are, or get stronger in this province.

Could you explain to us, did the Premier (Mr. Pallister) consult with Manitoba Hydro before bringing this bill forward?

Mr. Pedersen: This—the Premier worked with the other premiers and the federal government on this agreement to—it was agreed to by all provinces, and Manitobans were consulted on this as the negotiations went on. We made sure Manitoba's—Manitobans rights and privileges were protected, as well as working with other provinces to make sure we have the free flow of goods across Canada, something that the NDP does not seem to care for.

* (16:10)

Mr. Lindsey: It seems to me that other jurisdictions have certain carve-outs in their signing onto the Canadian-wide trade agreement to protect certain things, so are there any carve-outs to protect things like Manitoba Hydro in the Manitoba signing off on this free trade agreement?

Mr. Pedersen: The member is wrong. There are no carve-outs unless all provinces agree to it. Again, I'll repeat: no carve-outs unless all provinces agree to it. The member is wrong in his assertion.

Mr. Lindsey: Okay, well, we'll do some more research on that and find the answer because we believe that other provinces do have carve-outs which would then, by the minister's comments, indicate that they've agreed to other provinces' carve-outs but didn't expressly request any of their own. But we'll check on that before I proceed with that.

So we've talked a little bit about consultation and trying to protect Manitoba workers. We haven't really got a good answer to what protections will be in place so that our jobs aren't merely contracted out to the lowest bidder in the name of the business making more money—

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

Mr. Pedersen: You know, I—it's really amazing the NDP is so scared of competition. But this does give Manitoba workers the right to go into other provinces with their credentials and have their credentials recognized. Why is the member so afraid that Manitoba can't compete? We can compete. We've proven it, and we'll prove it again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it leave to ask that the member from Assiniboia can ask a third question? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives believe in free trade. They feel that open contract, open tenders, are fundamental. The minister has said that sole-source contracting, as what happened a few days ago—or a few weeks ago is okay, and then he says it's not okay. Which is it? How would it be if Saskatchewan did the same thing with their contracts as Manitoba did with theirs? It doesn't work. Free trade or not, are you for it or are you against it, yes or no?

Mr. Pedersen: You know, we wouldn't have been in favour of free trade if we hadn't signed—the reason we are in favour is because we've signed the Canadian Free Trade Agreement with every other province and territory in Canada. Canadians believe in free trade between the provinces. We're reducing the barriers between provinces. I don't know what the member has against free trade, but that's his problem, not mine.

Mr. Lindsey: We certainly have nothing against fair trade to make sure that Manitobans and Manitoba workers are protected. We need to make sure that what's good for business is also good for workers in the province.

So we have not heard yet anything that says that anything in this province will have any kind of protection so that workers won't have to go somewhere else to have their job. So is there anything in any part of this agreement that protects Manitoba workers and allows them to work in their home province, or will everything merely go to the lowest bidder?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, I'm glad the member from Flin Flon cleared that up now. He's not in favour of free trade. He just finished saying that he does not like free trade. Trade helps workers. Workers are employed when it's—we have free trade. Unfortunately, the NDP is against free trade. That's very unfortunate.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for question period has expired. The debate is—the floor is open for debate.

Any speakers?

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The minister stands up and rails on about how people are against free trade when, in fact, that's not true. We are, in fact, in favour of fair trade that makes sure that Manitobans—and not just the business elite of Manitoba, but all Manitobans—get a fair shake when it comes to employment, when it comes to making sure that they have equal access to those employment opportunities.

You know, if this government's—*[interjection]*—oh, I see there's some catcalls about sole-source contracts out there that this government is apparently all in favour of. They weren't when they were in opposition and now, apparently, they are, while apparently they're only in favour of it if they do it. Somewhat of a bit of an anomaly there, but so be it. I mean, that's their choice, I guess, to flip and flop.

I want to make sure that there's things in this agreement that do actually protect some things in this province, Manitoba Hydro being one of them. We see that provinces such as Ontario have privatized Manitoba—or, privatized their hydro, and the rates have risen astronomically, and now we see this government and the board of Hydro doing some peculiar things that nobody's ever seen anywhere before, where the board resigns and there's rumours that the government hopes to create the panic that then will sell off part or whole Manitoba Hydro.

We want to make sure that, you know, there are some protections for things like Crown corporations that allow them to be the best for the citizens of Manitoba. And right now, Manitoba Hydro is that. We've seen this in the past where things got sold off, such as Manitoba telephones, which now are not in the best interest of Manitobans.

So we're obviously not opposed to reducing trade barriers when it makes sense for Manitoba's interests. Because after all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should not the government of Manitoba have the best interest of all Manitobans at heart? Not just a select few, not just the ones that make the contributions to certain political parties, but they should really make sure that they have the best interests of all Manitobans at heart. And just carte 'blanc' free trade doesn't necessarily do that. There needs to be protections so that sole-source contracts that

recognize the uniqueness of some of our northern communities that need to have that access to those employment opportunities for things like winter road building.

Now, under the completely hands-off free trade approach that this government seems to be espousing, those contracts won't be allowed to be given to the First Nations communities that depend on those roads for more than just transportation. They also depend on them for opportunity for education and training so that they can compete somewhere else at some point in time on an equal footing.

If, for example, winter road building and maintaining now will be contracted out to the lowest bidder, the lowest bidder may very well come from a different jurisdiction. Now, one less economic opportunity—one less future opportunity for northern communities, which—this government likes to talk about how they're looking north. And, unfortunately, they're looking north now while they're going to send business not just south, but east and west out of the North.

There needs to be certain things that are recognized as being unique in every province. And I'd—I'm under the understanding that other provinces have done that where we have not. There's no procurement exemptions, there's no protections for energy Crown corporations here—at least, not that we've seen certainly put forward to the minister being able to show us where, in fact, nobody else has put any protections in place for some of the things that they feel are important.

* (16:20)

We're somewhat concerned that just—this minister rails on about, wow, the NDP is against free trade, the NDP is against a lot of things, and, you know, I hear the minister talking about, well, same as the Fraser Institute—*[interjection]* Apparently, the minister misses out on sarcasm. He doesn't grasp that concept, which is unfortunate, but here we are, talking about unfettered free trade, in this government's opinion. What should that mean? Well, only means that sometimes, unless it's, you know, somebody that they want to get ahead, then they do the sole-source contract, which may not be the best news for all Manitobans either. Sometimes sole-source contracts are the best news for Manitobans, and that's a decision that has to be made. Sometimes there's emergencies that come up

that you don't have time to go through the whole process.

So, while we're not opposed to freer trade, we are opposed to trading away Manitobans' future, which this government seems to be more than happy to do. They seem to be more than happy to ensure that there's nothing protected in this province to provide a future for Manitobans, and, again, we're not opposed to free trade. I'll say that again so that the minister hears it, because he seems to have a different interpretation of we are not opposed to free trade. He stands up and says something completely different every time he says what he thinks he heard us say when he didn't, in fact, hear us say that, but—so, hopefully, that's beginning to sink in, that we on this side are not opposed to free trade, but we want to make sure that certain things within the realm of Manitoba are here in the future for Manitobans. So things like Manitoba Hydro, we've talked about that, that needs to be there.

But let's talk about the Premier's (Mr. Pallister)—well, not just the Premier, but clearly this government's ideological approach to most things that we deal with. I mean, already we're seeing it in health care, for example, that this government wants to just make cuts which leave people with less access to health care. Now, they'll say, well, that's in the best interest of Manitobans. Well, I'd beg to differ. Certainly, it's not in the best interest of northern Manitobans who no longer have a doctor to go to because they keep quitting and leaving and won't stay and the constant parade of medical professionals that this government seems unable or unwilling to address, and perhaps that's part of the problem.

You know, they seem to be pretty heavily focused on what takes place in Nova Scotia, and they follow Nova Scotia's example for a lot of things, even as far as signing on to a lawsuit in Manitoba and spending Manitoba resources to try and undermine workers in another province which, they hope, will undermine workers in this province as well. But what else does Nova Scotia seem to have in common with Manitoba at present? Well, bad government, yes. They don't seem to be able to attract doctors. Doctors are leaving. Doctors—I guess that's part of free trade is that the professionals will go wherever they can get paid the most. There'll be no protection for anybody in Manitoba to ensure that there's a doctor here in the future, as long as, you know, the doctor has the right to go wherever he can make the most money, which is the same for a labourer, that they're going to go somewhere else or

they're going to come here because we will not be able to provide the same level because maybe the cost of living in a province is lower than ours. So the bidding process—or maybe just the employer there comes in to undercut the local contractor, the local workers, with the sole idea of eventually they'll up the price and next bid they put in will be higher and they will have cut the Manitoba workers out of the picture.

So this government talks a lot about reducing red tape, and that's all part of their attempt to sell free trade and everything else as being the motherhood and apple pie things for Manitobans, when, in fact, some of those things are very specifically here to protect the people of Manitoba which this government does not seem to be overly concerned about—protecting Manitobans.

Manitoba businessmen, they seem to be kind of in favour of protecting them at the expense of the rest of us because what's good for a Manitoba business isn't always good for a Manitoba worker. But generally what's good for a Manitoba worker, means that the Manitoba business is doing good. So we need to make sure that this government takes into account all aspects, and listens to all workers, listens to all Manitobans not just a select few, which is clearly what they've done here.

They've—right from the beginning of their mandate, they've attacked working people, they've attacked unions, they've attacked workers' rights to organize. They've attacked workers' rights to decide which union they belong to. They've attacked workers' rights to negotiate fair collective agreements. They've attacked, attacked, attacked.

And then we look to Nova Scotia, it seems to be that's the latest one that they worship; they've done the same thing. Other jurisdictions have tried it; previous BC government tried some of these same tricks and lost. Previous Saskatchewan government, or present Saskatchewan government, they're not previous yet but they will be next election, have tried to attack some workers' rights, and they've also lost in courts.

So now this government sees their saving grace as siding with Nova Scotia as they attack workers' rights hoping that maybe somehow magically that will help a Supreme Court rule that their attack on workers' rights in this province is the right thing to do. And that, all tied in with free trade—or at least this government's vision of free trade, where working people across the country will not have any rights—

that working people across the country will be subject to merely the lowest bidder.

I mean, we talk about labour mobility which will allow Manitoba workers to leave their homes to go and work somewhere else because someone will be here doing their jobs for a lower price. Of course they won't be here paying taxes because their home base will be somewhere else. They'll be paying taxes somewhere else and as workers—

An Honourable Member: They'll work somewhere else but their residence remains here.

Mr. Lindsey: So the minister has just clarified really that he wants them to live here, he just doesn't want them to work here. Which is kind of a shame that the minister would have such an attitude that he wants to collect their tax dollars for living here while they go and work somewhere else, and that's quite frankly a shameful statement.

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

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Radisson, on a point of order. Rossmere, sorry—Rossmere.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would appear, and I must correct the record that I think there is a discrepancy between perhaps what may have been heard around the Chamber and what is being put on record by the member opposite, which, I believe, is an inaccurate representation of comments that may or may not have been around the Chamber.

I wouldn't want that to go unchecked on Hansard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, on the same point of order.

* (16:30)

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): First of all, the member isn't pointing out any breach of any rule or any provision. I do know there has been a lot of heckling from the government members, and it would be appreciated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they would allow my colleague, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), to continue to putting his comments on record without these kinds of interruptions and problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On this—on that point of order, there—it's not a point of order. The dispute was over facts, not—it's not a point of order. Some order would be appreciated.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So the honourable member for Flin Flon, if you could continue.

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

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Rossmere, on a—same point of order or another point of order?

Mr. Micklefield: New point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I do believe my friend, the member for Minto, referred to the Minister for Growth and—Flin Flon referred to the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade by his last name, which, I do believe, is a breach of the rules.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on the same point of order.

Mr. Lindsey: Just to the member from Rossmere, I don't believe I referred to the minister by his name, but, if I did, I certainly apologize for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Well, the thing is, I understand that I haven't heard the last name either, so I apologize, but the thing is—so it's not a point of order, but if we can just make sure that we associate everybody by the constituency name or the portfolio.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So we'll continue with the honourable member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Lindsey: I will endeavour to ensure that I address the minister as the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade and not by his name.

So let's—where was I now? Oh, yes, talking about fair trade for workers, which—a lot of workers, not just in Manitoba, but a lot of workers in a lot of jurisdictions are very concerned about free trade agreements and what it means for them as working people. And whether it's things like NAFTA or other free trade agreements that come out, again, what's good for businessmen aren't always good for workers, because they can some—businesses can sometimes make more money by outsourcing the

work. Outsourcing that work doesn't improve the Manitoba economy. It may improve someone else's economy, and it may very well improve the business's bottom line, but what it doesn't do is provide employment opportunities or a future for Manitoba workers.

So, when we talk about labour mobility, that's really what we're talking about, is the work going to the lowest bidder, the work going to the lowest common denominator when it comes to regulations, standards, codes. And this government is very clear in its intention to reduce red tape and make those codes, standards, not necessarily as strong as they are. Listen, nobody's opposed to reviewing regulations, codes and standards every now and again to make sure they're current. But to just wholesale make cuts just because you think you have to reduce two regulations is not the right answer, and looking at other jurisdictions that may not have as robust of protections for health and safety, for example.

Personally, I'd like to think that our current health-and-safety regulations are some of the best in the country if not some of the best in the world, based on years of experience, based on, really, some cutting-edge stuff that went into ensuring that those regulations were properly reviewed on an ongoing basis.

And, you know, there were—some really good things came out of that. I sat on some of those committees that looked at some of those regulations. And, really, it'd be nice to think that I got everything I wanted every time I said something at those 'tripartate' committees, but that's not true. Neither did any of the other three—or the other two parties get everything they wanted, but we were able to come to consensus on what those regulations should look like. We were able to come to consensus on what those acts should look like.

So some of those committees that were in place that this present government believes are just red tape provided a valuable service to people in Manitoba and kept people in Manitoba safe, but now, in the spirit of reducing red tape, this government has done away with some of those committees. They've done away with the minister's advisory committee on workplace health and safety and in the process killed the standing committee for the review of mine regulation, which did a lot of really good work and a lot of hard work in ensuring that Manitoba workers had the best protection possible, that really took into

account the concerns of employers, the concerns of workers, the concerns of regulators and ensured that we came up with good regulations that were enforceable, that were also not a hindrance to business.

Now this government has come in and said: We're going to do away with that, we're going to change that, we're going to lessen that, because somebody else may have a less regulation, a less strict regime of regulations. So we need to change that.

We've seen a little bit of that I guess already with some changes with the trucking industry that allow different tire weights and things of that nature, which on the surface of it sounds relatively benign, but it allows higher weights now on our roads that weren't necessarily constructed to those standards. So we'll start to see degradation of those public assets so that the corporation can make more money.

So sometimes things are in place for a reason, and just cutting them doesn't necessarily make sense in what's in the best interest for Manitobans. My apologies to the Hansard people for just dragging my paper across that mic.

So this government has been attacking health care, I suppose, because maybe we need to make sure that it's as bad as it is somewhere else as opposed to being a leader of the pack. I mean, I look at what's happening in northern Manitoba, where the government mandated \$7 million had to be cut out of the NHRA budget without any concept of what that budget entails and how it affects people in the North. So will that make us more competitive with some other jurisdiction, or will it at the end of the day make us less competitive? Those are the questions that I would hope this government asked and tried to find real answers to, because I believe that, at the end of the day, these cuts to health care—and I focus on cuts in the North, but certainly there's been cuts in the rest of the province as well—will actually make us less competitive, will make it more expensive, will make it harder for businesses to function in the North. Because if they have to provide their own medical services because the public medical services aren't there anymore—when I look at mining companies and some of the heavy industry that we traditionally see in the North, that if you want to attract working people to the North, you need to ensure that the services are there. So those services aren't going to be there.

We don't know what they've mandated for a cut for the Northern Health Region this year. I'm told that the health region managed to cut \$7 million out of their budget for last year, and here we are listening to people that have concerns that they can't get a doctor, there is no doctor. The town of Snow Lake has no doctor at all anymore. How does that work in a free trade agreement? How does that make us more competitive with another jurisdiction that has actual doctors and nurses in their hospitals and has hospitals in some of their northern communities? What makes a business want to come and open a mine in the North when they know full well that they're going to have to pay more for services that traditionally have been there?

* (16:40)

So those are things that this government seems to be failing to take into account when they put their blinders on and talk about unfettered free trade. We need to ensure that a government of Manitoba is here for Manitobans. So we already see that that's not really what this government's agenda is. We already know that they don't really care—I shouldn't say we already know—it already appears that they don't really care that much about people in the North. We have a port in the North that could very well be providing a trade route for grain. We already know that this government has no interest in getting the rail line open, nor did they express any interest in keeping the port open when it first announced that it was closed.

So how can a government that talks about free trade shut down a major trade route? They didn't shut it down, I stand corrected. I'm sorry, I apologize for that. What they didn't do was do anything to try and keep it open or get it open again once it did go down.

You know, we talk Manitoba farmers—they're concerned because they can't move grain east and west where they used to have a third option of moving grain north which would allow them to continue to trade their product. But this government has really shut down that option for Manitoba farmers, as they have for Saskatchewan farmers, too, by refusing to really do anything to get the port open, by refusing to do anything to get the rail line up and running, by merely sitting on their hands and saying, well, it's not us. It's all the federal government; it's nothing to do with Manitobans.

Why should the Manitoba government want to do anything to help out Manitoba workers? Why

should the Manitoba government want to do anything to defend Manitobans? That should be just the federal government and—so, while they talk about free trade, they don't really do anything to support trade. Certainly, don't do anything to support trade going north—or coming south, for that matter. I mean, we've got the only deep water port in northern Canada sitting there, not being utilized when, in fact, it should be being utilized even more with things like global warming and things of that nature. The shipping season will become longer, which will allow more trade from Manitoba farmers, more trade from Manitoba industry. But no, no; they don't really want to do that. They just want to talk about free trade and talk about lessening workers' rights, not actually providing the opportunity for Manitoba business to access trade routes.

So, you know, this really is kind of a shame that—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —kind of a shame that the government has basically abandoned the North. I guess they want to trade east and west and just put up, maybe, a wall. I don't know. They just don't want to fix the railroad. Maybe the roads will be next so there'll be no trade going north, or no people being—going north, either. Hard to say just what this government may decide to do.

But let's just kind of summarize here that a government of a jurisdiction, whether it's a provincial government, a municipal government or a federal government, should really have the best interest of its citizens at heart. And, clearly, just having a free trade agreement without any protections for anything in the jurisdiction that that government is charged with looking after the best interests of is not the right answer. It does not provide an economic opportunity for the future of the citizens that they should be looking out for. Instead, they've ignored their duty, their responsibility for all Manitobans.

This free trade agreement is similar to so many others. I mean, that's why Manitoba didn't sign on to the new west trade agreement for so long, because it wasn't in the best interest of working Manitobans. And we can see that quite clearly in the disputes that go on now in the partners in the New West Partnership. Alberta's fighting with Saskatchewan. Alberta's fighting with BC. And they were the

original signatories of the New West Partnership, which is a shambles. I hope that these other free trade agreements that this government is so in favour of won't land up in a shambles the same as what that New West Partnership is, and I would really like to see this government reconsider to make sure that they built some protections in for things like our Crown jewel, Manitoba Hydro, to keep it public, to make sure it doesn't get privatized just because some business person thinks that's in its best interest.

We want to make sure that this government looks out for the citizens of this province. They look out for all the citizens of this province, not just their business friends, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, with that, I believe that I will sit down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

I have a statement to clarify in the House today.

Earlier this afternoon I, we had some confusion regarding who can ask questions regarding question period on second reading of government bills. To clarify, rule 137(5) indicates that question for government bills leads off with the official opposition critic or their designate which would be another member of the same official opposition caucus. Following that, each independent member is entitled to ask one question—or to ask a question—in the following that any other opposition members, including the independent members, may ask subsequent questions.

I am clarifying that this was an error earlier when I indicated that an independent make—could only ask one question during question period. That rule applies to questions during private members' statement business, not government bills.

So, in this case, when it comes to government bills, independents can ask more than one question.

Okay, so we clarified that. So moving on.

So is there any other speakers?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): This bill is actually very simple. It deals with what is to find—can we go to the bill? I'm going to read it out for the record. It defines a, what is called a—it amends section 16.1, and I'll just scroll down. I don't usually—I want to get this exactly right. Okay. The following definition applies in this section: Award, meaning an awards or order of costs or monetary award or

monetary penalty (a) made under the provisions of the domestic trade agreement or is not subject to review or appeal.

Now domestic trade agreement means the following: The agreement on internal trades signed in 1994 by the governments of Canada, provinces, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories—and I'm quoting from the act—include any amendments to the agreement; (b) the New West Partnership Trade Agreement entered into by the governments of BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan, on July 1st, 2010, and which Manitoba agreed to be a part on November 17th, 2016, includes any amendments to the agreement; and (c) a trade agreement prescribed by regulation under section 6 as a domestic trade agreement, including any amendments to such an agreement.

So let's go the internal trade agreement signed in 2004. And, Mr. Speaker, I only raise these issues in the time that I asked the previous question. And, if the minister did not know the answer that there's free trade, that's fine, but what was provided was not satisfactory at either level. And I'm going to go to the internal trade agreement signed in 1994, and what it covers.

* (16:50)

So this is for all Canadian suppliers, and what it cannot do is tender a contract that is not publicized electronically or in papers, and must be available publicly to all suppliers and vendors of Canada. Just not Manitoba—in Canada.

So, clearly, what happened earlier this year with the non-tendered contract by the Infrastructure Minister does not even mesh with the Agreement on Internal Trade, which is part of the guaranteed trade agreement, or—so this bill brings the government more into what was signed in 2016, which was good. The government was right to sign it. But they're wrong to prevent companies from bidding on what turned out to be a sole-source contract.

So why is the minister not answering the question? On one hand, he's for free trade, and then when it comes to sole-source contracts, he's for that; but those are inconsistent with the 1994 trade agreement and the new west trade agreement. So what is going on here?

Chapter 6 of the investment—internal investment, or, internal trade agreement signed in 1994 says the

purpose is to ensure—chapter 6—to ensure Canadian firms are able to make business decisions based on market conditions rather than discriminatory or investment-distorted government measures.

Obligations, among many things, prohibits the use of local content, local purchasing, and local sourcing requirements, except in a few cases which deal with regional development, not what has happened, and create a standardized recording method.

A code of conduct on incentives prevents a government from—quote, unquote—poaching, giving incentives to an enterprise located in its province or territory that would directly result in the relocation of that operation or harm the economic interests.

And this goes on, and I encourage the public to read it, that in annex 608.3, code of conduct on incentives is to affirm the principles of the agreement and to apply to incentives and to minimize the adverse effects of incentives offered by one province or territory on an economic interest over and above another territory. So then it goes through a bunch of obligations.

Mr. Speaker, free trade means exactly that and for—at a time when, you know, the Conservatives, you know, this was an agreement, you know, free trade was signed by a federal Conservative government. It was expanded on by a federal Liberal government, with NAFTA.

We are, at present, going through trade agreements and negotiations on NAFTA, and for there to be a lack of clarity or understanding of the terms of trade between the provinces might be acceptable for the average person. It's not acceptable for the minister who's responsible for implementing the act.

In the short time that I've had this afternoon, it is revealed in the act that there is a tort system of appeal. So tort is what you would go in if someone was claiming damages or libel or—any of those kind of issues would go to a tort legal system versus no fault, which we have in Manitoba for auto insurance. But it's more like what you would imagine happens in auto insurance say in Alberta and so on. So an aggrieved party can sue the government if the principles of the New West Partnership are not followed, or the internal trade act are not followed.

In other words, any sole-sourced contracts—and it doesn't matter, it's a non-partisan in this regard. The sole-source contract are not to be allowed. And aggrieved parties may take the issue to court. And perhaps that is why the minister is for sole-source contracting and claims to support the principle. He may be trying, and I'm now being the minister out here, he may be trying to avoid potential legal action, and that's fair I guess.

But why did it happen in the first place? The—this is not complicated, you just have to follow the acts and this act that we're talking about today, Bill 3, amends—can we go back to the—the Crown—actions against the crown act.

One moment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just before you begin, I just want to remind everybody that there's a lot of conversation going on, so it's hard to hear the person speaking. So if we can let the member continue.

Mr. Fletcher: I thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. It is noisy, and just for people's awareness, on the few occasions I do ask my caregiver to go to a certain page, if she can't hear me, I think that suggests that there is too much noise because she sits, I don't know, 18 inches away ear-to-ear.

Now let's go to the—can we scroll up to the top?

So the act today amends the preceding against the Crown Act, section 16.1, which brings us to jurisdictions and the Internal Trade Agreement and the New West Partnership.

Sole-source contracts by their very nature mean that people, other bidders, in Manitoba and across Canada, do not have the same access to those contracts. Now if you're not going to follow the agreement that's, I guess, the government's prerogative. But try, you can't have it both ways. And this is a serious issue within Canada just generally. It's easier to trade with the States than between provinces for historic reasons, and that's ridiculous.

However these agreements, the Internal Trade Agreement 1994, and the New West Partnership that this government signed on November 17th, 2016, and the preamble here is to decide so that there is free bidding, and that includes Manitoba companies in Saskatchewan, or Alberta and BC. It's actually—since those economies are of larger, with the

exception of Saskatchewan—it is in Manitoba's interest to have access to those markets. There's more opportunity for Manitoba companies outside of Manitoba than there are for outside companies in Manitoba. So the sole-sourced contracting—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

When the matter is before the House, the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) has 18 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

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