

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs

Sixth Report

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on November 7, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 14)** – *The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public*

Committee Membership

- Mr. ALLUM
- Mr. BINDLE
- Hon. Mrs. COX
- Hon. Mr. FRIESEN
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. LAMOUREUX
- Ms. MARCELINO (Logan)
- Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park)
- Hon. Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Ms. SQUIRES
- Mr. WHARTON

Your Committee elected Mr. WHARTON as the Vice-Chairperson

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following presentation on Bill (No. 14) – The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public:

Scott Gillingham, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 14)** – *The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mrs. Guillemard: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Wharton), that the report of the committee be received. *[interjection]* Oh, sorry.

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

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister of Aboriginal and Municipal Relations, I would indicate that the required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations please proceed with her statement.

National Aboriginal Veterans Day

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): During this very special week, Canadians everywhere pause to honour and to respect tremendous sacrifices that were made on our behalf by the brave men and women of our Armed Forces.

Today is Aboriginal Veterans Day in Manitoba. It's estimated that more than 12,000 Aboriginal and

First Nation peoples served in the First and Second World Wars, as well, the Korean War.

On this very special day, I would like to highlight an extraordinary Canadian, an extraordinary Manitoban and an extraordinary Aboriginal soldier who served in both the Second World War and Korea. He is Sergeant Tommy Prince of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Born in Scantbury, Manitoba, Tommy Prince became one of the most decorated First Nation veterans in the history of our nation, serving in both Second World War and 'Korean' war. He received the Military Medal from King George VI as well as the American government's Silver Star for his courageous efforts. He is only one of three—he is one of only three World War II soldiers to receive both of these medals. Tommy Prince also received nine service medals for serving in Europe and Korea. His inventiveness, bravery and courage during his service was nothing short of legendary.

I am proud to report that we have members of Tommy Prince's family with us this afternoon, along with members of the Aboriginal veterans association under the direction of Joseph Meconse, and Lieutenant General Ray Crabbe, retired, of the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry.

Today, I am pleased to announce that we will be installing a plaque honouring Sergeant Tommy Prince in the Legislative Building Hall of Honour. The plaque is currently on display in the rotunda and will soon be permanently installed.

Remembrance Week marks an opportunity for all Manitobans to recognize the incredible sacrifices of our veterans, and that includes the many extraordinary sacrifices of our First Nations veterans and armed service members.

Thank you. Miigwech.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): November 8th is National Aboriginal Veterans Day, a day to honour the bravery and dedication of indigenous veterans.

There are countless, unheard stories of indigenous soldiers bravely fighting or sacrificing for our freedoms. As I've shared, my own grandfather, Henry Charles Fontaine, attended residential school and immediately enlisted with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders at the age of 17 and soon thereafter was captured by the Nazis.

A sad and often untold part of Canadian history lies in the treatment of indigenous veterans upon

returning home. More often than not, indigenous veterans did not receive the benefits afforded or promised to them. In many respects, indigenous veterans remained second-class citizens in the very country they fought for without the right to vote, the right to organize or even the right to leave one's First Nation without permission.

Indigenous veterans played instrumental roles in providing leadership in their communities while working to improve the rights and freedoms of the people. Veterans such as Sergeant Tommy Prince of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, one of the most decorated First Nation soldiers in Canadian history—Prince devoted his time to working with government to improve the conditions for our people and ensure that our youth enjoyed the freedoms he fought so bravely for.

I want to pay tribute to our guests today, including members of Sergeant Prince's family, alongside members of Tommy Prince Cadet Corps, the Aboriginal veterans association and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Today of all days, I honour and recognize the myriad of sacrifices made by indigenous veterans, not only for our indigenous community, but for all of Canada.

Miigwech.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask for leave to speak to the ministerial statement.

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

Ms. Klassen: I am proud to celebrate National Aboriginal Veterans Day, and I—we'll work towards their request to have a parade in their honour, and we'll be glad to champion that issue.

I would also like to take a moment to honour all past and present Aboriginal veterans who served our country. It is estimated that well over 12,000 Aboriginal Canadians served in the First and Second World Wars as well as the Korean War and countless others. Aboriginal people have been a valuable contribution to the military going back to the founding of Canada.

These brave men and women were not required to serve in Canada's military. In fact, in the initial stage of World War I, Aboriginal people were

actively discouraged from enlisting, yet many felt it was their duty to do so regardless.

Their contributions were many. Traditional skills of hunting, tracking, scouting and navigating applied easily to warfare. One very important role some Aboriginal Canadians would play in the Second World War would be as code talkers. This strategy has been epitomized in the movie *Windtalkers*, and my own very famous cousin Adam Beach stars in that movie. I encourage everyone to watch it.

We need to recognize and respect the contributions of Aboriginal veterans. In addition to giving their lives, many gave up their status rights, and many are still struggling with that very fact today. In some cases, indigenous veterans were denied their services and support offered to non-Aboriginals including land and educational benefits. In others, they lost the benefits to those similar-to Aboriginals living on reserves.

I would also like to honour Joseph Meconse, a well-respected Aboriginal veteran who made headlines in February for getting kicked out of the Portage Place mall. Mr. Meconse used that opportunity to create a positive change in the community. I hope we can appreciate his wisdom and his action.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

17 Wing Winnipeg

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, this week is Remembrance Day week at the Manitoba Legislature, and I want to start off by thanking the veterans who were in yesterday and who we'll thank all week and, in reality, we should thank for the rest of our lives for the freedom we have.

As Special Envoy for Military Affairs for our new PC government, I want to start an annual tradition by recognizing our veterans and our active military personnel each day of the week leading into Remembrance Day.

*(13:40)

Today, I rise in the House to honour the service branch of the Royal Canadian Air Force and most notably those in the RCAF who serve at 17 Wing Winnipeg. 17 Wing is made up of squadrons, training schools and command elements. The Wing supports 113 units from Thunder Bay to the Saskatchewan-Alberta border and from the

49th parallel to the high Arctic. The 17 Wing base in Winnipeg has become Canada's largest air force base, employing over 3,600 people, of whom are 2,900 military personnel.

The first RCAF station to officially open in Manitoba was in 1925 and was one of the first air force bases to open in Canada and, in 1932, the 402 Squadron was formed.

During World War II, the RCAF station Winnipeg became a major air force base as a part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, helping train 130,000 personnel, which included pilots, navigators, observers and wireless operators across Canada.

Following the war, the RCAF station Winnipeg became an integral training centre for over 5,000 crews from all over the world.

On April 1st, 1993, Canadian Forces Base Winnipeg became, once again, home to 17 Wing.

I have been fortunate enough to meet with members of the RCAF, including Major General Christian Drouin, Brigadier-General Dave Cochrane and Colonel Andy Cook, to name a few, who presented the Special Envoy for Military Affairs Office with their Ensign Flag.

Madam Speaker, the members of this House and I would like to thank those from the RCAF in attendance today. On behalf of all members of the Manitoba Legislature, we salute you and thank you for your continued service.

Go, Jets. Go.

Canadian Forces and Mental Health

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, Canadians are commemorating Veterans' Week with ceremonies across our country. Manitoba has always had a strong connection to the Canadian Forces, including serving as the Canadian home to NORAD, one of the largest Canadian Armed Forces bases at Shilo, and historically high participation of Manitobans in service of our country.

As we take the time to recognize and remember the brave women and men who have served this country, it's also an opportunity to remember that, for many veterans, the conflict did not end when they returned home.

Many former and current service members return from combat with complex needs, including post-traumatic stress disorder. Those diagnosed with

PTSD can suffer from uncontrollable flashbacks, suffer depression and emotional outbursts. This affects entire families and communities.

There is truly a mental health crisis facing Canadian Forces members, with one in 10 veterans of the war in Afghanistan suffering mental health issues and at least 54 soldiers and veterans who have taken their own lives after returning from service in Afghanistan.

We owe our soldiers and veterans an enormous debt of gratitude, and the very least we can do is to make sure they have easily accessible front-line services in their own communities. It is essential that we invest as much in these brave Canadians when they come home as we do before they're deployed.

Madam Speaker, in this Veterans' Week, I ask all Manitobans not only to remember those who have sacrificed so much for Canada, but to urge our federal government to address this mental health crisis in the Canadian Forces and make necessary investments in front-line services for our veterans. Thank you.

Mr. Jon Reyes: St. Norbert): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to submit the names of the members in the House for Hansard recording.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to include the names in Hansard from his private members' statement? [*Agreed*]

Brigadier-General David Cochrane, Captain Brian Noel, Major Apollo Edmilao, Captain Erica Valardo, Master Warrant Officer Meena Piir.

Primary Reserve Veterans

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I rise today to bring attention to the Canadian Armed Forces Reserve and the many veterans who draw from their ranks. This includes the many indigenous Canadian reservist veterans who I call brother and have worked with.

Currently, there are over 20,000 Canadians that are members of the Canadian Armed Forces Reserve, with the majority of the Primary Reserve members in the land force or army. Since the year 2000, over 4,000 Primary Reserve soldiers have served outside of Canada on UN or NATO operations, in places like Bosnia, Haiti, Afghanistan and many other theatres of operation. Reservists play critical roles on operation by filling out battle groups and front-line soldier positions, working as civilian-military co-operators, and training local militaries and helping to rebuild war-torn nations. Many Primary

Reserve members serve full-time contracts and, like me, work as support staff and instructors on training bases.

When I joined the reserve infantry in 2006, many of my reservist instructors had recently returned from service outside of Canada, namely Afghanistan. The sergeants and corporals, who taught me drill, discipline and how to fire a rifle, were citizen-soldiers with full-time careers and veterans. Reserve Force veterans are all around us in society. They are teachers, civil servants, paramedics, linemen, postal workers, farmers, nurses, and many reservist veterans are also members of the Winnipeg police.

I'd also like to congratulate our new Winnipeg Police Chief, my North End neighbour, Danny Smyth, who was sworn in today. He has served with distinction in the Winnipeg Police Service for 30 years, and we know he will do a great job as our new police chief.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I would just like to ask for clarification from the honourable member from St. Norbert. Which names in particular did he want included in Hansard?

Mr. Reyes: Madam Speaker, all the names that were on that sheet who are here in the House today.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. It will be the names of the guests that we have here in the Speaker's Gallery today that will be included in Hansard.

Recognizing Canadian Veterans

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I, too, am very pleased to rise today. I'd like to take a moment to recognize our Canadian veterans and specifically veterans through Anavets Assiniboia.

We know with Remembrance Day just around the corner, and today being Aboriginal Veterans Day, I think it's important to recognize and reflect on the past, which is so important, and show a great amount appreciation for the many sacrifices our Canadian veterans and their families have made and continue to make to this day.

The Canadian Forces very much ingrained in my area of town in terms of the Kirkfield Park area and Canadian Forces 17 Wing, which is on the outskirts of our constituency, as well as Anavets Assiniboia.

During my career on city council, I did represent the area of 17 Wing, and I had the fortune of being

able to attend many events where I met a number of military personnel, their families as well as veterans. I also had the privilege to go to the Arctic and observe the reservists, as the previous member had talked about, in operation Arctic Ram. And it truly was an eye-opening experience to know what veterans do on an everyday basis, in terms of what they contribute, as well as what their families sacrifice for having them away for so often.

I personally will be attending the Remembrance Day ceremony in Anavets Unit 283, at 3584 Portage Ave. Strongly encourage everyone in the Chamber to attend Remembrance Day ceremonies across the city and across the province.

Dr. Michael Eskin

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, each August in southern Manitoba, fields of yellow extend from one horizon to the other. These canola fields resulted from the development of low erucic-acid rapeseed varieties, work lead by Dr. Baldur Stefansson in Manitoba and Dr. Keith Downey in Saskatchewan.

But the success of canola would not have happened without the scientific work to demonstrate canola oil's nutritional benefits. Today, I pay a tribute to Dr. Michael Eskin, a key player in this effort, who this year will receive the Order of Canada.

Dr. Eskin worked at the University of Manitoba with a team, including Dr. Bruce McDonald, Dr. Vivian Bruce and Dr. Marion Vaisey-Genser. Together, they played a critical role in enabling canola to achieve the success that it has.

Dr. Eskin is also a cantor and he uses his musical talents to teach. Here is an example: Without cholesterol, where would we be? / When the sun shines, you make vitamin D. / Without it, we would all suffer from rickets, / bow-legged and chirping, like a bunch of crickets.

Dr. Eskin was a pioneer in the development, understanding of functional foods, foods with distinct health benefits. In many ways, this is the leading edge and the future of agricultural products. Canola, when analyzed and tested by Dr. Eskin and others, was found to have excellent qualities for enhancing heart health. The American Heart Association identified canola as the best oil in the world for heart health, and this played a major role in its dramatically expanded market.

So, as we consider canola and the wonderful contribution that its development has made to our economy and to our health, we need to remember Dr. Michael Eskin and his team.

Thank you, Dr. Eskin.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today members from the Royal Canadian Air Force, including Brigadier-General David Cochrane, Captain Brian Noel, Major Apollo Edmilao, Captain Erica Valardo and Master Warrant Officer Meena Piir, who are the guests of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes).

On behalf of all honourable members here, we would like to welcome you to our Legislature.

* (13:50)

ORAL QUESTIONS

**University of Manitoba Contract
Collective Bargaining Negotiations**

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): It is unprecedented for a government to intervene in negotiations after a salary offer has been put on the table. The Conservative government should have made its intentions clear to the 'iversity' of Manitoba well before a salary offer was made. I repeat: it is unprecedented for a government to intervene after a salary offer has been made. The Premier blames universities, so I'm asking the Premier to clear up this issue.

Will the Premier release his government's correspondence to the university, and did his instructions happen before or after a salary offer was made?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Thank you very much to my colleague, Madam Speaker, but, if I may, I would like to begin by just adding a word of thank you to our veterans—military veterans and present serving members of our armed forces who are here with us today and say that we thank you. We thank you for your service present; we thank you for your service past; we thank you for your courage; we thank you for your patriotism; we thank you for your leadership example. We, on this side of the House, most certainly, and I believe, on all sides of the House, are fortified by your inspirational example. We thank you.

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

Ms. Marcelino: My question was really simple, but it was not answered, so I repeat it: The Premier should be accountable to Manitobans. Did the Premier and did his government provide new instructions to the University of Manitoba before or after a salary offer was made?

Mr. Pallister: I know that the members opposite are struggling with the adaptation that they have to endure, Madam Speaker, but the people of Manitoba gave us a mandate six months ago, a mandate for change, a mandate after a decade of accelerated debt and tax increases that was hurting everyone in the province, frankly, without exception.

To fix the finances of our province, we've accepted that mandate gracefully and, I think, gratefully, and we will pursue that mandate with the encouragement and support of the people of Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Marcelino: The people of Manitoba also gave us a mandate to be Her Majesty's loyal opposition to keep this government accountable.

Madam Speaker, the Premier is not being straight with Manitobans. It is unprecedented for a government to intervene in negotiations after a salary offer has been made. It undermines negotiations. The Premier can clear this up by producing one shred of evidence.

Will the Premier release his government's correspondence to the university, and did it happen before or after a salary offer was made?

Mr. Pallister: I agree with the member that the members on the opposite side were given a mandate by the people of Manitoba to oppose, but it would be implicit in that mandate they be responsible in exercising those new responsibilities they must now learn.

One aspect of this acceptance would be to understand it would be unprecedented and unhelpful to enter into the foray in the middle of negotiations and certainly that is not what we did, Madam Speaker. We'll continue to do everything we can to assist all parties insofar as reaching conciliatory

approaches that reach resolution that will benefit the people of Manitoba.

I would also emphasize to members opposite to understand and be respectful in their understanding of the fact that they, as government, also endured strikes at post-secondary institutions. And I would also remind them, Madam Speaker, that, at that time, those were deeply hurtful, as are the actions that are currently under way hurtful to the students at the University of Manitoba.

University of Manitoba Contract Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): The University of Manitoba Faculty Association has filed an unfair labour practice complaint to the Manitoba Labour Board. The Premier's interference after the U of M put a salary deal on the table is bizarre. And the government's assault on labour now impacts students.

Students signed up for courses, not to be caught in the middle of an ideological battle of the Premier's choosing.

Will the Premier set the record straight for students and table the correspondence his government sent to the U of M directing the institution to have a wage freeze?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): This is becoming increasingly frequent with that member's preamble, as they demonstrate a very great lack of willingness to do research. I recognize that research may be challenging for the member opposite, but I recognize he should do that research before he makes unfair and wrong allegations.

In respect of the Manitoba Labour Board, there are unfair labour practices—charges announced recently, and that is quite correct. But, in context, let's understand, Madam Speaker, that during the mandate of the previous NDP administration, there were also unfair labour management and labour practice allegations made, in fact, more than 900 of them.

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

Mr. Kinew: The strike continues at Fort Garry and Bannatyne campuses today. And, with the latest offer from the university rejected, students really have no idea about when they might be going back to classes, when they can write their mid-terms and when they can hand in their 'mid-tern'—mid-term assignments.

Now, we've heard from many students and many parents about the stress that this is causing, and the Premier has helped to bring this about with his unnecessary and unusual political interference which came after the U of M had already put an offer on the table.

When will he table the correspondence that interfered with the U of M's negotiations with the U of M faculty association?

Mr. Pallister: Having seen the premise upon which the member makes his false allegation totally eroded away, the member chooses to repeat the question, Madam Speaker.

Now, the fact of the matter is that the allegation, that in any way, shape or form an unfair labour practice being filed is evidence of any wrongdoing by a government, should be given the lie and accepted by members opposite, who saw over 900 of such allegations made during their time in office—over 900, Madam Speaker. The premise of the member's question is totally wrong, and, therefore, the question which follows is based upon a false premise.

Madam Speaker, we'll do everything we can to help in order to reach resolution of this labour dispute, but let's not kid ourselves here and let not the members kid themselves. Labour disputes happen. They're never fun to watch. But placing blame, as the previous administration is choosing to do now, without any justification whatsoever, is hardly helpful to achieving resolution.

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

Mr. Kinew: The premise of my questions is this: Students at the U of M enrolled this year expecting to set themselves up for good careers. Instead, they're getting a crash course on the finer points of labour law.

The administration's last offer has been rejected. The UMFA has filed an unfair labour practice claim against the university, and the timeline is clear: an offer was put on the table; the Province interfered after that offer was made.

This is the Premier's unprecedented interference in negotiation. He restricted the bargaining by directing there be a wage freeze. Political interference this late in the process has simply never happened before. That's why students deserve to see the proof—

Madam Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, the students at the University of Manitoba deserve better than peacocking by the member opposite.

The member is—the member tries to place blame and is taking sides in a labour dispute. This is most unhelpful. This doesn't do anything to get anyone any progress in the negotiations.

* (14:00)

In fact, it's the type of behaviour that demonstrates a misunderstanding of the fundamental nature of collective bargaining itself.

You know, the members opposite were in government when over 900 unfair labour practice allegations were made—more than 900, Madam Speaker. This is often a part of collective bargaining; one side or another files an unfair labour practice accusation in an effort to bolster their side of the argument.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: By the member's own words, he is choosing, again, Madam Speaker, in this House, to take sides in a labour dispute, which is counter-productive to the resolution of the dispute, and it's not in any way in the best interests of the students of the University of Manitoba.

Shoal Lake 40 First Nation Tenders for Freedom Road

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): It's been a long journey for Shoal Lake 40, and many in the community, including Chief Redsky, have dedicated their lives to fight for their treaty and human rights. They have successfully lobbied the federal government, garnered international media attention and contributed to the United Nations global campaign for human rights.

Shoal Lake's success can be chalked up to their enduring humility, patience and willingness for collaboration in the journey to reconciliation. Their dedication has meant that the federal government finally made a meaningful commitment to their share of Freedom Road.

Can the Premier (Mr. Pallister) advise whether any contracts have been tendered for construction on Freedom Road?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I thank the member for that

question, because, as I stated before, accessibility is something that—to our communities is something that many of us take for granted.

But one only has to look at the previous government and this member's previous government—is the East Side Road Authority. And this government now has had to go and work with those First Nations, rebuilding the trust, rebuilding the respect.

The Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke), the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen) and myself have met with all these bands. I've recently met with Chief Redsky. The first thing we had to do was rebuild the trust and respect of these people.

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

Community Benefit Agreement

Ms. Fontaine: The Premier is claiming shovels will be in the ground by February, yet won't confirm any community benefit agreements with Shoal Lake 40.

Under the tripartite agreement made with Shoal Lake 40 more than 25 years ago, it is the Province's responsibility to create economic development in the First Nation.

As part of his legal obligation to uphold that agreement, will the Premier negotiate a community benefit agreement with Shoal Lake 40?

Mr. Pedersen: Again, I thank the member for that question, because it highlights what the previous NDP government was all about, and it was photo ops and putting up signs.

They had 17 years to build a road. They did not do it. We continue to work to get the engineering, the consultations done. This government will get the road built.

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

Freedom Road Construction Provincial Funding Commitment

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Premier refuses to clearly state his position on funding and is mincing words in the media. We should be perfectly clear; a third is a third is a third.

The Premier should fund 33 per cent, no matter what the total cost. The Premier is refusing to pay his fair share of Freedom Road.

Will the Premier set aside jurisdictional squabbles, stop arguing with the federal government and commit today to upholding his obligation and build Freedom Road?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Let's be clear, Madam Speaker; we're extremely excited on this side of the House to be partners in getting something done that wasn't even started after 17 years of NDP mismanagement.

Let's also get something else really, really clear for the members opposite, Madam Speaker. Five hundred million dollars committed to doing a road on the east side by the previous administration and 50 miles finished. That's classic evidence of talking about doing something and not getting it done.

We'll get it done. They didn't get it done, Madam Speaker.

Sherriff's Officers Positions Government Intention

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): We know this Cabinet's already shown it's more prepared to listen to their ideological cousins in Saskatchewan than to listen to Manitobans.

The Saskatchewan government just cut 16 sheriff's officer positions in four court centres in that province. Just like in Manitoba, these officers provide perimeter security at courthouses and security within courtrooms.

Is this an example of the kind of cuts to front-line services we can expect from this government?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the member for the question.

It gives us an excellent opportunity to stand and praise all the incredible work that our sheriffs do in the province of Manitoba, correctional officers, all those that work in the justice system and who are doing a tremendous job despite a decade of debt, decay and decline under the previous government. We were elected by Manitobans to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild our economy. We will work with those front-line workers to ensure that we rebuild our justice system to the best that it can be.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Speaker, this minister only restored the training for sheriff's officers that she'd postponed indefinitely after the media raised it and

after we raised it in this House. And my New Democratic team will keep fighting to protect front-line services in the province of Manitoba.

The minister has not answered the question. Will she confirm today that she will not—that she will reject Saskatchewan's path of cutting vital sheriff's officers?

Mrs. Stefanson: Again, we respect the work that the sheriffs do in our province, and we will work with them to ensure that we rebuild a system that, under the member opposite, provided a decade of debt, decay and decline within the justice system. So we will work with those front-line services to ensure that we provide those services to Manitobans that they need, want and deserve.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, the minister's partly right; there was a decade of decline, which was declining crime rates across this entire province, which this minister has managed to undo in just six months on the job. We know there were 16 vacancies in sheriff's officer positions in Manitoba. One in six jobs were vacant under this minister's watch. I've already explained to this minister that a shortage of sheriff's officers—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —is going to result in overworking existing officers or a—result in backlogs in our courts, increasing pressure in our jails.

Why won't this minister simply confirm today that she will reject the Saskatchewan plan to cut sheriff's officers?

Mrs. Stefanson: What I reject is the accusations of the member opposite that we're looking at doing any such thing. We respect the work that our sheriffs do. We respect the work that correctional officers do. We respect the work that all those that work in the justice system do towards making our communities safer, and we will continue to work with those front-line workers to ensure the safety of all citizens in Manitoba.

Manitoba Hydro Minister's Comments

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): The Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) continues to do damage to the international reputation of Manitoba Hydro by claiming, wrongly, I might

add, that it's bankrupt. His own study—his own \$4.2-million, untendered study shows unequivocally that the case for Keeyask has improved since it went to the PUB some months ago.

So my question to the Premier is simply this: Did he reprimand the Minister of Crown Services for his intemperate comments? Did he tell him to cease and desist, and did he tell him to stop making those kinds of comments that is damaging the reputation of Manitoba Hydro?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): What's done damage to Manitoba Hydro is 17 years of the previous government trying to make it great for Americans and bad for Manitobans, Madam Speaker. That's what's happened to Manitoba Hydro. I encourage the member to read the report rather than citing erroneously from it or falsely pretending to cite from it when he hasn't read it, because it says right on page 4 that Keeyask was "an imprudent decision on the part of the previous government." Read the report before you try to write a preamble that doesn't contain any facts.

* (14:10)

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

Mr. Allum: You know, we would appreciate it if the Premier would stop treating question period like it's a three-ring circus. These are important questions of public policy, and the international reputation of Manitoba Hydro is at stake because of the intemperate, dangerous, delusional, distorted—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: —views given by the Minister of Crown Services.

So I ask the Premier again—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: Did he reprimand his Minister of Crown Services for making such terrible comments about Manitoba Hydro? And will he tell him to get out there, start selling Manitoba Hydro and keep rates low for all of Manitoba?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: It's clear the member's comments were inspired by the Donald, and it's clear who he's cheering for tonight in the US election. That kind of politics was rejected. The previous administration tried to practise that kind of politics increasingly in the latter days of their administration.

A serious issue, Manitoba Hydro's decay, its decade of debt under the previous government; a serious issue addressed by a serious study misrepresented by the member in two preambles.

Now, Madam Speaker, on page 4, it says quite clearly in the report, if the member would choose to read it and substitute research for hyperbole, it says: Our analysis determined the accelerated commencement of construction of Keeyask to be an imprudent decision on the part of the provincial government.

That's what it says in the report. The member wants to dodge that fact. But the fact is Manitobans can't dodge it, because they're enduring the higher rate increases that the previous government sent their way.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, it just goes to show, the reaction there, Madam Speaker, is that they do have a plan to privatize Manitoba Hydro.

The distorted, disturbing, disingenuous views of the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) need to be corrected on the public record, right now, today.

So I ask the Minister of Crown Services: Will he retract those statements, come clean with the people of Manitoba and start working on behalf of the real shareholders of Manitoba Hydro—the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: The people of Manitoba are the owners of Manitoba Hydro, but they weren't given an opportunity under the previous administration for a full and complete disclosure and discussion around the decisions that that government made without their permission or their inclusion. That previous government even took away their right to vote when they jacked up taxes, Madam Speaker. So we don't need a lecture on respecting the people of Manitoba from the member opposite.

The report that the member has obviously failed to read clearly states that the bipole east was the lowest cost option to address the long-standing reliability risk. But the previous government directed Hydro not to consider it. That was a billion-dollar

mistake. It also goes on to say that the construction of Keeyask was an imprudent decision. That's what the report says.

Manitobans will be paying the price for these mistakes and this mismanagement for generations to come, and the member ought not to try to deny it was the consequence of the decisions made by the previous administration.

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Budget Projection Concerns

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, recently, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority reported that it expects to have a budget which is \$93 million overspent this year.

Let us put this in perspective. The Conservative government, which was elected on April the 19th, has been responsible for managing the budget in health care for all but a few days at the beginning of this fiscal year.

I ask the Minister of Health: Why, under his watch, is the WRHA projecting that it will overspend its budget by \$93 million this year?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Certainly, we have said from the first day that we assumed office that we are concerned about the financial sustainability when it comes to health care. We have heard the analysis that if spending continues to go, in the next 15 years—to 2030, in health care, that there would be two departments left in government, Finance and Health. And that is concerning, Madam Speaker. Every health minister across the country is dealing with the issue of sustainability. We are concerned about that.

I was glad to see today that we have new and robust boards on the RHAs, who are going to have an impact, I think, in dealing with the issue.

In terms of the specifics about the amount of the deficit, I don't expect it to be that high, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, it is true that the budget last year was to be—expected to be overspent by \$60 million around this same time of year but came in much closer to budget by the end of the year.

What it points out is that this government is just like the NDP, with lots of spending in the first half of

the year and then lots of cuts expected in the second half of the year. This roller-coaster style of NDP and Conservative fiscal management is a poor way to run the province.

Why is this government doing what the NDP did in having poor, roller-coaster planning and execution of its budget?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, I've heard a lot of insults in this House, but I—if that's not unparliamentary, it certainly should be added to the list of unparliamentary language, to compare us to the NDP.

I would say, Madam Speaker, that we know that every day we have to work to get the cost constraints in line for health care. We know that it's not sustainable to continue to go forward. That is why we are bringing changes. That is why we're going to bring goal lists, why we're going to have expectations that those goals are going to be met.

And yes, it's going to be difficult on the fiscal side. And I can tell you, budgets don't balance themselves, unlike this member's leader in Ottawa thinks, Madam Speaker.

Health-Care System Quarterly Financial Report

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): One way to improve financial tracking is to have quarterly financial reports which come out on time. This year, the Conservative government took 92 days after the end of the first quarter, until September 29th, to produce its first quarterly financial report.

The Auditor General some time ago reviewed the NDP practice of much delayed quarterly financial reports and said it was not acceptable and that we should have quarterly financial reports coming out in a much more timely fashion.

Is the Conservative government going to continue the NDP practice of slow quarterly financial reporting, or is the government planning to improve the financial 'reporting' as the Auditor General recommended?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, this is a government that brought in a budget only within a few weeks—and a Throne Speech—of being elected, and has been working with consultations around the province with Manitobans.

In the health-care department alone, in the first six months, we had an innovation sustainability

review launched. We've renewed the regional health authority boards. We had a sod-turning on the Flin Flon emergency room. We opened a nursing station in Grand Rapids. We helped bring blood on board for STARS. We launched a newborn hearing screening program. We've rolled out Oculys into the different Winnipeg hospitals. We have a research partnership with Israel and St. Boniface. We're reducing ambulance fees.

Madam Speaker, we're just getting started.

* (14:20)

Canada Pension Plan Reform Manitoba's Recommendations

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Madam Speaker, our government is showing real leadership by calling on the finance ministers from federal, provincial and territorial governments to accept our proposal for modifications to the Canada Pension Plan. Our common sense of—changes will help our seniors today instead of only helping them decades from now.

Can the Minister of Finance please inform the House why these changes are good for seniors?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Manitoba's new government believes that CPP is a key pillar of Canada's retirement system, and we have successfully advocated for further research and analysis to be conducted on a number of modifications to make sure that changes to CP make it not just bigger but better. We note that very recently the Manitoba proposals received unanimous support from Canada's premiers at the Council of the Federation.

Madam Speaker, our new government has just launched public consultations here in the province of Manitoba to ensure that we're listening to Manitobans and responding to the situations that Canadians are raising. They are the ones who contribute to the plan. We must make sure the plan works for them. This is the work that we are doing. We're inviting Manitobans to be part of making CPP not just bigger, but also better for all of us.

Manitoba's Economy Employment Rates

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): According to multiple independent private sector validators, such as the BMO, CIBC, the RBC, says that this government inherited one of the fastest growing economies with one of the lowest unemployment

rates in the nation. But six months in, we see a different trend forming with over 11,000 full-time job losses and counting.

Will the minister admit that either their plan is not working or they simply don't have one?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well, Madam Speaker, the member is wrong. We're—we have a plan, and we're making the economy stronger—actually rebuilding the economy after years and years of debt and decay and deterioration in our finances.

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to talk about the fact that by raising a basic personal exemption in this province, we are taking over 2,700 Manitobans off of the tax rolls—changes that are making a real difference in the lives of Manitobans.

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

Civil Service Positions Government Intention

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Six months and over 11,000 full-time jobs, Madam Speaker, and, for some reason, that still wasn't enough for the Finance Minister. So he decided to cut an additional 112 public service jobs as well.

So I ask the Finance Minister: Which public service job does he think is unnecessary? Is it the resource co-ordinator for Manitoba's home-care program? Is it the patient care co-ordinator from Health Sciences Centre? Is it the community safety worker up in Thompson, working hard to make his community safe and a great place to live for northerners?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well, Madam Speaker, I'm looking at a document here. It comes from 1999. This document outlines plans that that new government was making to actually look at the civil service and to entertain initiatives to rightsize it, to make sure that they could continue to provide services.

Madam Speaker, where they failed in this exercise, this government is going to succeed.

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

Premier's Enterprise Team Composition of Team

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, in 1999, it was a pretty good year for Manitobans. I think we all agree on this side of the House.

Hard-working Manitoba families are worried about this government's plan that leaves so many people out. Minimum wage earners have completely been ignored; lifelong public servants feel threatened; and northerners have been completely left out.

But the Premier still has a chance to listen. It's been 190 days; he hasn't formed his enterprise team yet.

Will he start listening by including these people as part of his enterprise team, Madam Speaker?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I've encouraged the members opposite, Madam Speaker, sincerely, to participate in the listening exercise, speaking of listening. The members of the Liberal caucus have participated, and we thank them for that. The member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) did participate, and we thank her for that.

I would encourage members when they speak of listening to actually demonstrate they're willing to listen, as we have on this side of the House. We've heard from over 20,000 Manitobans, just in the process so far, of developing our budget for the coming year through prebudget consultations. The members opposite refuse to listen.

Their inability to listen was clearly demonstrated, Madam Speaker, a couple of years ago last week, when their own members, their most experienced and respected members in some aspects of their caucus, I suppose, demonstrated that they themselves had stopped listening when they tried to fire the former leader from St. Boniface. They said they could no longer serve in a government that didn't demonstrate and deserve the respect of Manitobans.

And, Madam Speaker, the people of Manitoba agreed with them, and they have a new government now.

Collective Bargaining Rights Fiscal Management Options

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, the right to collective bargaining is an important right. It

is a constitutionally protected right. This government can't try to save money by sacrificing workers' rights.

Did this government investigate other means to control cash, costs in public bodies or engage in meaningful consultation with unions prior to issuing any mandates to public bodies regarding year-long wage freezes?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well, I thank the member for that question on consultation, and I want to assure him that this government cares very deeply about consultation of Manitobans on all kinds of issues.

As a matter of fact, as Finance Minister, I can relay to him again that we consulted with all Manitobans and continue to do so in advance of the 2017-18 budgetary process. We are pleased to go to the north, east, south and west and listen to Manitobans who gave us good information—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —on how to address this challenge that we all face in respect of fixing the finances in the Province of Manitoba.

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

Mr. Lindsey: The right to collective bargaining is an important right. It is a constitutionally protected right, but the recognition of a right needs to be put into practice.

Does this government believe it is illegal to pre-emptively undermine future processes of collective bargaining through the use of a funding mandate?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I assure this member that we believe in bargaining. As a matter of fact, I was a member of a union for 12 years in the public school system. I can also tell this member that in the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland all of those workers have the right to a secret ballot. We will bring that right here to Manitoba.

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

Labour Relations Act Withdrawal Request

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I guess that's the problem with consultation when you don't listen to what you're being told.

Madam Speaker, the right to collective bargaining is a constitutionally protected right. It's a right that comes from deep inequalities that the structure and relationship between employers and employees and the vulnerability of employees in this context. These are not just my views; these are the views of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Will the government respect this view? Will it show real respect to labour and end its arbitrary mandates and withdraw Bill 7?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the member indicated that it's very important in a consultative exercise to listen to what you're told.

Now I reflect on the fact that this government, in 2012 budget, chose to widen the RST, applying tax where no tax had been applied previously. They had a budget consultative exercise previous to the 2012 budget.

I wonder how many Manitobans gave them the message, at those consultative exercises, please go out and raise my taxes. The answer is none of them did. They did it anyways, and look where it got them.

Flooded Crops Support for Farmers

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Reports from farmers in and around Dauphin indicate many are still in their fields due to a challenging harvest season. Harvest has been delayed because of heavy rain, and there are concerns that crops may be stranded this season.

Will this government commit to helping farmers whose crops are presently stranded in the field?

* (14:30)

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): Of course, I thank the member for the question.

Any time we have an opportunity to talk about agriculture certainly makes us very proud. We know that there is hardship in the Dauphin area, in The Pas area as well. We have a 163 per cent rain increase over the normal levels.

Of course, those trying to take their crop off in Dauphin and Saskatchewan, we know that farmers help farmers, and we get together in order to make sure that we get the crop off. We know that the water is flowing on a very rapid pace, trying to get it out of there. And, of course, farmers make sure that they look after each other.

We know that these programs are in place; insurance is in place to make sure that if they don't get their crop off, they'll have something to fall back on.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'd like to call for debate on concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Elections Amendment Act.

DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 4—The Elections Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Elections Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Minto, who has 27 minutes remaining.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It is a pleasure to resume my discussion about Bill 4 as part of this Minister of Justice's robust legislative mandate to touch everything other than matters dealing with public safety and reducing crime.

And it's interesting, of course, on Bill 4. Of course, what we heard from this minister and what we heard from the speeches they gave was, well, of course Bill 4 is so important because it's something that's been asked for by the Chief Electoral Officer. Yet, when I asked her about Bill 2 and I said, well, is this something that was asked for by the Chief Electoral Officer, the minister said—well, she didn't answer the question at first, but she eventually did acknowledge that no, Bill 2 wasn't something the Chief Electoral Officer had put forward, and of course we found out at committee that the Chief Electoral Officer had to rewrite the bill that was submitted into this House, but we still agreed to pass Bill 2.

And, of course, Bill 9. Bill 9 we'll be talking about a lot more later on this afternoon. I asked the minister, well, on Bill 9, did the Chief Electoral Officer suggest these changes, and she kind of refused to answer the question but ultimately made it

clear that no, the Chief Electoral Officer hadn't asked for it.

So, sometimes, I guess, on Bill 4, this minister will step up and say, well, of course this is important because the Chief Electoral Officer asked for it. Other times when it's to her government's convenience, she'll just ignore the fact that it wasn't anything the Chief Electoral Officer had ever asked about in the first place.

Now, what this bill will do is to establish a standard 28-day election period for a fixed-date general election. The election period for a by-election or a general election that's not held on a fixed date will be shortened to be 28 days and 34 days from 32 to 39 days.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And some Manitobans may not mind this. We're observing right now what happens when you have an election cycle which never stops. And whether you're American or whether you're Canadian or living anywhere in the world, I think most people are quite happy that the American campaign period will be coming to a close today, and, hopefully, tonight there will be a result which Canadians and, more importantly, Americans, will be able to live with.

So having a shorter campaign is not in and of itself a problem. What did concern me was when I asked this minister, of course, who wants to talk a lot about transparency and openness, and I asked her, given those statements that she'd made, given those statements the Premier (Mr. Pallister) had made, was there anything in this bill that would prevent the government of the day from actually provoking an early election. And the minister either couldn't or wouldn't answer that question. And I think we have to be a little concerned about that. It's one thing to have a shorter election period when we know when the election date's going to be.

There's actually nothing in this bill that would stop the government of the day from attempting either to lose a vote in this House or to simply ask the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the House and have an earlier date. And frankly, if that's the case, that would defeat the benefits of having a set election date in legislation, and that actually could conceivably give an advantage to the government of the day. And I was disappointed that the minister had the opportunity to stand in her place and to say that that would not ever be a consideration, but she didn't.

And, of course, what have we seen from federal governments? Well, of course, we had a Liberal government that called an election federally after only two and a half years. And that election was called because then-Prime Minister Chrétien thought it was his best opportunity to go and get a new mandate from the people. And actually, Prime Minister Chrétien, I guess, rolled the dice properly and was able to get another mandate.

On the other hand, we had the dying days of the Stephen Harper government which was burdened with a fixed election date. They actually decided to call the election early and have the longest election campaign in Canadian history, and I know that I expect that the Conservative Party was either hoping to run the other parties out of money, which is certainly something that we would see from the current crew we have across from us, or perhaps they were hoping something would happen. There'd be some incident or some terrorist attack or something that would perhaps draw people back to the Conservative Party.

We know, of course, that didn't happen. It didn't work out for Stephen Harper who's now doing whatever he's doing, consulting in Alberta. We know, of course, a lot of his staff have found their way to Winnipeg because, of course, there are no Progressive Conservative governments left anywhere else in the country other than Manitoba, so we found them—*[interjection]* Well, I appreciate, one member said, well, what about Saskatchewan? There was a Progressive Conservative Party in Saskatchewan. That party had to disband after so many of them broke the rules on proper spending that many of them not only were charged and convicted, but so many members of the Progressive Conservative Party in Saskatchewan were convicted and went to jail, they actually had to shut down the party.

And they began a—they had to begin the Saskatchewan Party, and, of course, it's very interesting we talked about the Saskatchewan Party just today. In question period, I asked the minister, of course, as part of her responsibility for public safety and responsibility for our court system, whether she would be following the ideological lead of Brad Wall and the Saskatchewan Party in cutting sheriff's officers. To my surprise I asked the question three times, and in none of those three times did this minister actually stand in her place and say, no, we reject what they've done in Saskatchewan; we will not be cutting front-line officers. And it's unfortunate that she didn't take that opportunity to clear the air

today. But, you know, we all know there used to be Progressive Conservatives in Saskatchewan. They now go by a different name. Some of them, of course, I suppose have gotten on with their lives after they finished their jail terms for illegally spending the people's money. I'm not suggesting that would be this minister's style, nor any other member of that side because we do have better, clear rules now in place.

And, you know, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) is just encouraging me to keep talking about this bill, and I'm quite happy to, because it does give me an opportunity to talk about what our previous government did to make sure that elections were fair and that everybody had the opportunity to vote.

One of the main things that we did is we introduced an independent commissioner to enforce the act, and that commissioner has been provided with broader discretion to ensure compliance with the act and make that enforcement process more transparent. And I won't repeat myself today. I'll probably save my comments for Bill 9 when we talk about what happens when the government of the day decides not to follow the rules and when the government of the day decides they are going to try and fund a new political party to try to take votes away from another. But I don't want to steal my own thunder. I think we'll have lots of time to talk about Bill 9 later on today.

So, of course, other things that were done, of course, were to make the redistribution of boundary changes truly independent and reflective of the whole province. And why is that important? Well, every member of this House needs to know that every 10 years, there's a redistribution of the boundaries of the election constituencies in the province of Manitoba. And that is a very serious process. The point of it is to make sure that everybody's vote is worth relatively equal. If there's a part of the province that's experienced a population loss or a part of the province that's experienced a population gain, there is a rebalancing that happens every 10 years. And we took that process seriously and that's why we expanded representation on that electoral boundaries commission to include not just those from the city of Winnipeg but to include rural and northern Manitobans as well. And, when we expanded that commission, we added the head of Brandon University, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we also added the head of the University College of the North to the commission to make sure that they were

given a full mandate. And we expanded Elections Manitoba's role to include the promotion of participation which, again, is entirely contrary to the way the Conservative Party in Ottawa, which, of course, used to give frequent direction to the Conservative Party in Manitoba when they were in opposition. They gave them a lot of direction and they told Elections Canada that it was not within their mandate to encourage people to go out and vote, because the last thing that Stephen Harper wanted is for Canadians from coast to coast to coast to come out and vote. Thankfully, they did. Although the result last year wasn't exactly as we might have wanted, it was certainly better than what we had before.

* (14:40)

And why is it so important when I talk about the redistribution in boundary changes? Well, those changes will happen in 2019, and I expect by 2019, once the full impact of what this government's going to do to our public health-care system and our home-care system, what they're going to do to our education system, what I've already seen them doing to our justice system, the good ship Progressive Conservative is going to be sinking and it may well be that this government wants to call the election and find a way to get on and have their election before the boundary changes occur, perhaps hoping an incumbency will have some measure to try and protect some of their members, maybe because they're fearful of what the new distribution would look like.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't say that lightly, and it is entirely relevant to this bill because we had that happen in 1999 when Gary Filmon decided to hold all his cards close to the chest and no one knew whether the election was going to be run under the old boundaries that had been in place for a decade, or whether it would be run under the new boundaries.

And it was actually a challenge, I'm sure, for the then-government members. It was certainly a challenge for the opposition members and for new candidates to try and decide when they were going to come forward and even what riding they would be running in. Of course, that created a whole bunch of issues with nomination meetings, with a whole bunch of internal party structures, and this is a very, very real question.

And, again, had this minister stood in her place and said, no, the member for Minto is completely

wrong. I will state, categorically, as the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) that we will not call an early election, I might feel a little bit better about that, but, unfortunately, that's not what the Minister of Justice did.

And I know this poor Minister of Justice is bound by the mandate letter she's been given by the Premier (Mr. Pallister). She's been handed a bill of goods which doesn't include anything to give Manitobans confidence that public safety is being improved or even protected in the province, and as we've exposed in the House, that has now had some major results, and we know that in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, in just the past six months, we've seen a year over year increase in 10 crimes which are recorded by the Winnipeg Police Service, they're put online in Crime Stat. We see an 8 per cent increase year over year in those crimes monitored by the Winnipeg Police Service.

Well, what's been the result of that? Well, of course we respect our police. They do a good job. The police have been out there making more arrests in all those cases, and we now see—and I was shocked, frankly, last week to learn that Public Accounts Committee put the population in our jails has gone up by 7 per cent in just the past six months—a 7 per cent increase after a population had been stabilized, in fact had decreased in the previous three years. That's all been undone, and now the rate continues to climb, which is causing great concerns for people about how safe people are in our correctional facilities, both inmates, but also our correctional staff.

Of course, I talked about Gary Filmon and how he decided to play around—will there be an election, will there not be an election; will it be the new boundaries, will it be the old boundaries. Of course, it was our government that established a set date for general elections, and that date was set for the first Tuesday in October every four years.

We heard from the Chief Electoral Officer that setting election dates would allow for better planning around the enumeration process and allow for a stronger and better voters list, because anything we can do to make it easier for people to be registered to vote, any way we can make it easier for people to get down to the polling place, that's all very important, and even more so if we're going to be shortening the election period by a number of days, it is even more important that we continue to move forward to give people greater access to voting.

And we did that, and I hope this new government will continue the process and, indeed, we will support measures they want to bring in which will truly make it easier for Manitobans to vote.

And, again, this being election day in the United States, we can only look on with horror as we see some of the situations in the United States where individual states have decided to make it as difficult as they can for certain people to vote, and that's why you'll see on TV tonight—you'll see lineups in the inner cities of cities like Philadelphia, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Atlanta, places where the governments of the day in those states, most of whom, I might point out, happen to be Republican, will make it as difficult as possible for people to vote in the hope that people won't stand in line or in the hope that people won't have exactly the right kind of idea—ID, even though they are who they say they are, and people get disillusioned and not vote because, frankly, having someone frustrated, unable to vote, is just as easy as encouraging somebody to come out and vote for you. And it's why it's so important to provide as great access as we can to voting. That's why our government introduced amendments to allow polls on voting day to open an hour earlier. People can now vote at 7 a.m. on their way to work to give them every opportunity.

We added additional days for advance voting, which became greatly successful. And I looked at the results and, frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had almost enough votes after the advance poll closed to win the election, and I'm very grateful to the people of Minto for allowing me to represent them for a fourth term.

We also improved access to advance polls not just in Winnipeg but in rural and northern areas because we thought it was important that residents in a community should never have to travel more than 30 kilometres to an advance poll because we know that a long distance to vote at an advance poll or on voting day makes it much less likely that people will actually make it out to vote. And, certainly, I've had that experience. When I look at the poll maps after each election, I have a look at where the turnout was greater, and, not surprisingly, the turnout is almost always greater right around polling places. There's a number of schools in my area, in the West End of Winnipeg, which are polling places. And, generally, the closer people live to one of those polling places, the more likely they are to come out and vote. And, if it's hard to get people to walk an extra two or three

blocks, we can only imagine how difficult it is to get people to have to drive an extra 20 or 30 kilometres just to cast their vote.

We also removed restrictions from advance voting so that anyone could vote in advance for any reason. And it is hard to believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, of course, back in 1999, you had to convince the returning officer why it was so necessary that you be allowed to cast your vote early. Generally, being a candidate or a campaign worker was a good enough excuse, but, otherwise, you'd have to explain why your work schedule or your school schedule or your life schedule made it necessary to vote in advance. We don't want to go back there. We think it's very useful that everybody has the chance to vote for any reason, and instead of the returning officer putting up roadblocks to people voting, the advance voting process, most Manitobans will tell you, has become very, very positive. And that is extremely important if we're looking at a shorter campaign, which is what will be called for in Bill 4.

Also, on that front, I was very proud that our government increased the number of locations of advance polls and the days on which they could be opened. It used to be there would only be one place to vote in each constituency in advance of the election. That would be the returning office. Even in a small, urban constituency, that could be a challenge. In a larger, rural constituency, that would effectively be a barrier to people being able to go and vote their wishes in advance. So we expanded the number of locations. In most places, it's not only the returning office but another well-known public place or public places where people can come and make it as easy as possible to vote.

We also enabled super polls to be held in malls, so people could come and vote in advance in convenient locations. And people, especially young people, were rather happy when I told them, you know, you can vote any time over the next eight days. You can vote at the university, you can vote at Polo Park, you can vote at St. Vital Centre, vote anywhere, any place, and it doesn't matter which constituency you're in. Anybody from any constituency could walk in to one of those polls and cast their advance vote and have confidence that their vote would then be properly recorded.

Again, with Bill 4, with a shorter period, even more important that we give every opportunity for Manitobans to use advance polls.

So those are all good things that we did. We also extended absentee voting to students and public employees who happen to be outside the province because even though someone may be studying at UBC or McGill, they still have a great interest in what's happening back home. And, certainly, if they're students, they will be very interested to make sure that when they come back home, they continue to have their tuition tax rebate which they're counting on, which, of course, gives them the lowest tax rate in the entire country.

Now, we also reduced travel time to rural voting places. We reduced the average number of voters in a rural voting area from 350 to 250 to make it that much easier for people to come in and vote. And, again, I would juxtapose the experience of voting in Manitoba, where we have polling places and polls that would have no more than 250 people, to the experience many of our American friends will have as they try to cast their votes in states that don't have the same kind of interest, where there hasn't been the same capacity created to let people cast their vote.

* (14:50)

We also placed voting stations in apartment complexes with 100 or more units wherever practical. I have one of those in Minto, in Church of the Cross on Burnell Street. Everybody can simply come down and vote, and vote they do. If you want to guarantee a high turnout, have a polling place right in an apartment complex, because that gets people down to vote.

So these are all things that we did to enhance transparency in allowing people to vote. I raise these as background because, again, with Bill 4, we know that there will be a shorter campaign period. We know this government will not commit to not having an early election, to not going to visit the Lieutenant Governor in advance of the date, and we'll have to be ready for that. And we will be ready for that.

We know that every day this government remains in office, every day is the last best day they're going to have, because we're continuing to raise issues; we're continuing to ask questions. We will be fascinated to see what's contained in the new Throne Speech, even more fascinated to hear what they are going to do to our public school system when that announcement comes out in January. And we will be, like all other Manitobans, fascinated to see what they will do when they bring down their budget in the spring of 2017.

So we are prepared to—with some reservations which I've already mentioned—we're prepared to support Bill 4. I do suggest to the minister, though, as I have before in a very friendly way, she needs to tell the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that she's setting aside her mandate letter, that she's actually going to work on things which are critically important to people that live in her area, in my area, in every community and in every town and every city across this province, which is to enhance public safety, to make people feel safer in their homes and their communities, in their schools. And I do believe if the minister does that, we will have an even better time as we go forward.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 7. I will leave six minutes on the clock in the interests of moving ahead. But I know I have some colleagues who also have some very, very important thoughts they would like to put on the record.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I've got to say, I got so excited listening to the member for Minto (Mr. Swan)—I hadn't intended to speak to this bill at all, but he certainly inspired me with his last speech. We have, I believe, one more speaker on our side after me. And I'll try to keep it as brief as I can. Oh, I see I have 30 minutes, so—but I'll—with that in mind.

Now, this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, amends The Elections Act to establish the standard 28-day election period for a fixed-date general election. The election period for a by-election or a general election that is not held on a fixed date is shortened to between 28 and 34 from 32 to 39. And I recall a number of years ago, federal elections back in 1972, in that period, probably before and afterward, were like an incredible, like, two months or something. It was just ridiculous how long they were. So we accept that that's too long a period; the question is how short a period should you have.

And we've had, like, 35 days in Manitoba for as long as I can remember, and it seemed to be a pretty good amount of time. But I am aware that other provinces have had, you know, smaller periods—28 days—for a number of years now. And I think there's even been shorter periods than that. The danger with that, of course, is that there tends to be a help to the government in power the shorter the period between the call and the election itself. So I don't think we should be cutting it any shorter than 28. I would think we should be stopping there. I think the member for Minto would agree with me.

Our NDP government went to great lengths to make the electoral process more transparent and accountable over our years in government. And the PCs voted against those changes and opposed them every step of the way. Instead of focusing on the issues Manitobans need addressed, like child care, jobs, affordable living, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is picking trying to fight the last election and settle old political debts. And, when you consider that, given the fact that this government's been in power now for over six months, the bills that we are debating here in the Legislature, the priorities of this government are issues such as this, you know, reducing the time period for fighting an election.

The—what we did, by the way, back, you know, 15 years ago, was we improved the electoral law in Manitoba by banning of union and corporate donations and limiting individual contributions. And, you know, that was a measure that was, in fact, started back, I think, just around 1976, if I'm not mistaken, by René Lévesque in Quebec. It was a—it was the first—that Quebec was the first jurisdiction to do that. And I have to say I supported it at that time and I really thought that Gary Doer was on the right track when he did that in Manitoba. And not only that—and I have to—I look to the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) to correct me if I'm wrong, but I think the federal government followed Gary Doer in banning union and corporate donations, although I may be wrong. He may have—Gary Doer may have been first. But I believe that—

An Honourable Member: One of the leaders.

Mr. Maloway: Yes, one of the leaders. They're all three jurisdictions. So I think we started a trend there, and I'm hoping the provincial government currently will continue that trend.

We put in limits on individual donors that have increased the accountability of demands on political parties. The PCs opposed the ban on union and corporate donations, and they refused to make a commitment to keep the ban in place ever since. Instead, they've proposed ideological attacks on unions' ability to organize, as we see with the, you know, the current status of Bill 7. And the Premier's even mused about raising the contribution limit in the last election and changing other aspects of the election law.

The commissioner—there's—we introduced an independent commissioner to enforce the act. The commissioner has been provided with broader discretion to ensure compliance with the act. The

enforcement process was made more transparent. The—we expanded representation on the electoral boundaries commission to include rural and northern Manitobans by adding the heads of Brandon University and University College of the North to the commission, expanded Elections Manitoba role to include promotion and participation.

And I have to say at this point that, you know, Manitoba, to—certainly to the new members—I'm just assuming they don't know, but maybe they do—that Manitoba, the Duff Roblin government, Duff Roblin Conservative government, in the 1960s, was the very first government in Canada to set up an independent electoral commission to redraw the boundaries, because, you know, up until that time, my assumption is that Manitoba was no different than other provinces where we had ridings, constituency boundaries, essentially gerrymandered to have pieces—for example, in Wolseley, you know, have point—the Point Douglas area—

An Honourable Member: Armstrong point.

Mr. Maloway: Armstrong point—I'm sorry, Armstrong point in Wolseley, you know, carved off and put over into south Winnipeg. That's the sort of gerrymandering that you would see, even in Manitoba, up to that period.

And, you know, it probably didn't totally end then at that time, but, generally speaking, we had a very independent approach to the drawing up of election boundaries, starting with that move by Duff Roblin back in the 1960s. So Manitoba is—matter of fact has been kind of a leader in promoting election changes, you know, as opposed to some of the other areas of this country.

Mrs. Colleen Mayer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Now, as far as setting a fixed date for elections, this is the first Tuesday in October. Every four years, the set election dates allow for better planning around the enumeration process and allow for a stronger voters list, and now, of course, we're having a permanent voters list, Madam Deputy Speaker, being introduced now. And that's something that I can recall talking to Andy Anstett about years ago because Andy Anstett, in his youth at university, was a research assistant to a Professor Qualter's book called, *The Elections Process in Canada*. And Qualter's book did a lot of work in—on a permanent—the advantages of a permanent voting system rather than just simply gathering up the names in advance of the election when it was coming up.

* (15:00)

We introduced amendments to allow polls to open an hour earlier at 7 a.m. on election day to allow voters more time to vote on the way to work. We have additional days for advanced voting. We improved access to advance polls in rural and northern areas so that residents in a community will not travel more than 30 kilometres to an advance poll.

And, you know, I guess with all these improvements, one has to wonder why the turnout, you know, doesn't seem to be improving as I would hope it would. And I know that, you know, there are different approaches. Australia has an approach to voting that has mandatory voting, and that has been around now in Australia since the beginning of around the 1900s. And did you know that in Australia, out of 18 elections that have occurred in Australia since the mandatory voting provisions have been brought in, it's even? It's nine elections were won by the Conservative Party and nine elections have been won by labour.

So that's sort of interesting. Australia has it. There's, I think, about 20 countries in the world have compulsory voting; I believe Peru, I believe Belgium. And it has support here in Canada as well, and I'm going to throw out some names here that people will recognize, but Joe Clark is a big advocate of mandatory voting. Jean Friesen, our former MLA for Wolseley and deputy premier and a minister, is an advocate for mandatory voting. And there are—it crosses, actually, the political landscape in terms of support for mandatory voting.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

But I would encourage members to read up on this issue because it—the turnouts in Australia result in, like, a 90 per cent turnout in participation in elections as a result of this. And, given that our numbers in certain areas—for example, in Kewatinook, I think we were looking at about a 30 per cent, 25 per cent turnout. So we might be having to resort to looking at options like that in the future.

We've increased the number of advance polls, the days in which they're open, and, you know, just the whole approach to the advance polls has changed since I was a returning officer back in 1973 in Wolseley. You know, in those days, you had to declare that you were not available on election day. In other words, you would be refused if you show up

to an advance poll and they ask you, why you here, what are you going to be doing on election day, and you said, well, I'm, you know, I'm going to be in town. They'd say, well, go to the regular polling station.

We have totally changed that approach in having more advance polls and the days which they're open. There's really some interesting changes that I've discovered in the last election, I guess, and that was that you can vote outside your own constituency. You can be in Polo Park and show up and vote. We saw quite a large use of that. I believe they're called super polls in the malls, so people can vote in advance in convenient locations.

We extended absentee voting to students and public employees who are outside the province. We placed voting stations in apartment complexes with 100 or more units where practical. We reduced travel time to rural voting places by reducing the average number of voters in a rural voting area from 350 to 250. We implemented a requirement for an MLA who crosses the floor to sit as an independent rather than joining another caucus unless a by-election is held. We implemented a requirement of municipal councillors to resign on nomination when they're seeking another position to avoid conflict.

We implemented a requirement of elected officials to disclose additional salaries they receive from a party. I remember Sterling Lyon, way back in the good old days in 1977, had to disclose publicly that the Conservative Party was, in fact, giving him a subsidy of, I believe, \$40,000, and those were then in the days, Mr. Deputy—now it's Mr. Deputy Speaker—the MLAs' salary was only like \$40,000. So he was basically being topped up by as—an amount as big as the MLAs' salary was in those days.

Brian Mulroney, I believe he disclosed that he had a suit allowance from the Conservative Party, and I think his wife might have had a shopping allowance, but he had one huge impressive set of allowances there by the end.

An Honourable Member: And Christy Clark.

Mr. Maloway: And the member tells me that—member from Minto tells me that Christy Clark also had extra top-up allowances from the party.

We created a position for an independent officer to receive and prosecute complaints about election financing, and we implemented a requirement that any loans received by a candidate must be filed with

the CEO immediately, with loans from friends and family restricted to \$3,000.

I must point out that all of these changes, while they're good, they add to the compliance costs of the parties. The parties, to function in the old days, you know, could—didn't have to monitor and file these reports that are now required, so they—all of these changes, while they're proactive and they're good, they have an effect on all of the parties in terms of additional costs in terms of the clients.

We've also put in place Canada's first non-partisan commissioner to determine public financing of political parties. Well, of course, that's all going to be changed, and I have to say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker—though we—in an article, published in the Metro, August the 3rd, the Premier—current Premier (Mr. Pallister) called the Fort Whyte by-election date cynical. This was in response to an announcement made one month earlier, September 4th, of the by-election in Fort Whyte—

An Honourable Member: Too early.

Mr. Maloway: At that time, yes, and the current Premier stated, I remember that. It was August—a matter of fact, nice weather. And he said, quote: August is a month for families. And that he believed a higher voter turnout would have been achieved if the by-election date were held later in September.

The—given the PC track record, we wonder if members opposite can be trusted to do what's right for all Manitobans with respect to electoral fairness and transparency, and all we have to do is look back to the 1995 Monnin inquiry in the 1995 election. The—following the 1995 election, allegations were raised that the Conservatives encouraged candidates to run in three constituencies in an attempt to steal votes from the NDP. That was the vote-rigging scandal of the 19—mid-1990s.

The plan was for those independent candidates to siphon enough votes away from the NDP to allow the Tories to win in three ridings.

So the inquiry led by former Chief Justice Alfred Monnin looked into the allegations, and Monnin found that the geniuses running the Conservative Party at the time—Conservatives Taras Sokolyk, Allan Aitkin and Cubby Barrett, well, those are names I remember so well—hatched the plot to induce Aboriginal candidate Darryl Sutherland to run in order to draw votes from the NDP candidate during the 1995 election.

Gord McFarlane, the party accountant—now, I remember Gord McFarlane, because he actually worked on my accounts for a while—

An Honourable Member: He's a decent enough guy. Fell in with the wrong crowd.

Mr. Maloway: Yes, and—yes, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) knows Gordon as well. And he was the party accountant during the 1995 election. He broke the law when he falsified a false election return, and we also know that the Tories got away with minimal prosecution at the time, because the time limit for prosecutions under the legislation in effect at the time was six months. Monnin said there was nothing he—could be legally done.

Treasury Board Secretary Julian Benson—and, you know, I think he was involved, to some extent, in the accounting business with Gord McFarlane. And I think that's how Gord got roped into it, because—[interjection] I agree with the member from Minto; Gordon is a very nice guy, and how he would have gotten knowingly mixed up in something like this is hard for me to understand.

* (15:10)

But, anyway, Julian Benson, who helped—by the way who got severance as well—who helped cover up the scheme lost his position and that's hence the severance, and very, very healthy severance too. And, as well, Arni Thorsteinson, I remember him too, party fundraiser, a member of the board of Manitoba Hydro, was removed from both positions by Gary Filmon in his role in the 1995 scheme, which was providing money to the candidates.

In Monnin, Judge Monnin said—Justice Monnin, in—quote: "In all my years on the bench I have never encountered as many liars in one proceeding as I did during this inquiry." "It is disheartening indeed to realize that an oath to tell the truth means so little to some people." And this was the brain trust who was actually running the whole operation over there.

So I would think that the members opposite should be reading up on these just to make sure that history does not repeat itself. "A vote-rigging plot constitutes an unconscionable debasement of the citizen's right to vote. To reduce the voting rights of individuals is a violation of our democratic system," he said on page 13. The basic premises of the vote-rigging plot was that aboriginal people in these ridings had historically voted for the NDP, but the Aboriginal vote could be split—would be split if there's an Aboriginal candidate running. "The

attempt here at vote splitting . . . was in my opinion clearly unethical and morally reprehensible," he said on page 13. "Political *mores* have reached a dangerous low when one party member can actively support his party, but sees nothing objectionable in helping to finance and organize the candidate of a second party in order to harm a third party," that's page 11.

He also said: "I cannot ignore the fact that throughout this episode, especially during the investigation and at the hearings, some of these witnesses exhibited a degree of arrogance or an 'I know better' attitude," page 55.

So the members opposite have to be aware, those are the signs that they should be looking for. Look in your—[interjection] That's—you should be looking ahead. I tell the new members, you know, get a little chart, write up your little chart and just do a little—get a few marking pens, get a few coloured crayons and go around and gauge some of the people that running the show over there.

"A considerable amount of time, effort and money was expended by this Commission in order to confirm what should've been freely admitted at the outset." The bank records and other documentation of the PC Party in Manitoba election account and other individuals had to be obtained and examined to find out what really occurred, pages 15 and 16.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to yield the floor to our leader, and then I think we're probably ready for a vote on this bill.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'm honoured and delighted to put a few words to give my comments on Bill 4, The Elections Amendment Act.

I've heard it before: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. That phrase has been around for some time. The first time I have heard it was in the early '80s. I found the phrase interesting and nice sounding despite the grammarian's 'brouse' needed to hear it—hearing it. I found out that it came from an American citizen who wanted to tell the federal government that if they don't do with the unnecessary programs, if they just stay put and let the working ones get on without fixing it, it will save the federal government billions of dollars. Well, what is wrong with—I believe that it is to be true, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

We have a question here on Bill 4. What is wrong with the 35-day election period that it should be reduced to 28 days? Is it not beneficial for all

parties and all candidates to have 35 days to reach out to the electorate and make known each party's policies and programs for thoughtful consideration by voters?

Well, 35 days is way shorter than what Canadians had to endure last year when the then-federal Conservative government decreed the longest campaign period in Canadian history, some three times longer than the present Manitoba election campaign period, and it didn't even work for them.

Why is the present Conservative government, with the biggest majority of 40 elected members, be so concerned with an election period that it brought up Bill 4 early on in its 100—first 100 days?

As a newly minted government which constantly harps on the size of deficit it inherited from the previous government, is the election campaign period such a high priority before bills that will boost the economy or support Manitobans who are struggling to make ends meet?

How come the election campaign period was high priority than increasing minimum wage? Why was Bill 4 a priority than bills that will address the increasing unemployment figures with Manitoba workers now numbering in the twelve thousands out of full-time jobs?

There are pressing issues in health, education and training, family services, housing, day care, job creation, poverty alleviation, the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, consumer affairs and many more. Where are the bills that will address those issues?

The government of the day should be handling the economy. What it inherited before it came to power six months ago was an economy that was second best in the country and with unemployment rate second lowest in the country. Also, minimum wage was a big help to struggling Manitobans because increasing it yearly for the past 17 years made life affordable and it helped those people who needed assistance in terms of income.

Why Bill 4 at this time? Well, why do we need it when there's this previous government—our previous government went to great lengths to make the electoral process more transparent and accountable over our years in government? We didn't have to shorten the campaign period because the process that was in place is sufficient for all parties to feel that there's a level playing field.

Well, those transparent and accountable process was rejected by the then-PC opposition party. They opposed them every step of the way.

I still believe that this government, this new government, should be focusing on the issues that Manitobans need right now, which is child care. We haven't heard from this government how many spaces of child care—new child-care spaces will be brought to fruition.

Jobs and affordable living—right now, thousands upon thousands are losing their livelihoods because of the economy not doing well, when in fact they inherited a robust and a vibrant economy.

*(15:20)

It's—the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is picking a fight here by making this bill that is not needed, because it just settles old political debts which does not need to be addressed anyway.

What have we done when we were in government to improve electoral law?

First of all, the banning of donations from corporations and the unions: By banning union and corporate donations and limiting individual contributions, the playing field was levelled. No candidate or no political party is beholden to big businesses or interests. And that—when that happens, that's best for democracy and that's best for the province and best for the country.

Banning of corporate and union donations and limits on individual donors have increased the accountability demands on political parties. It would—if this were not being practised, candidates like myself would never ever be elected into office. For a candidate to be elected, just like in other countries or south of the border, one needs hundreds and thousands of dollars, even millions of dollars, to be elected. But that is not the case here in Manitoba. In Manitoba, if you're honest, if you're sincere, if you're a dedicated community worker, if you have a good reputation—even though you're poor—and you have the desire to serve and the desire to help alleviate the plight of Manitobans or community members needing assistance and you have a base of supporters that believe in you, you can get elected. You don't need millions of dollars in your own pocket or in the coffers of the political party.

The PCs opposed the ban on union and corporate donations, and they have refused to make a commitment to keep the ban in place ever since. And

this is a big question. If we will be—if we will not ban union and corporate donations, we will be beholden to big businesses, and it could compromise legislation. It could compromise integrity of individuals and it's not a good practice in the first place. There's no transparency and accountability.

Bill 4 proposes—is—Bill 4 is an ideological attack on unions' ability to organize, as well.

I wonder if Bill 4 would be a precursor to even raising the contribution limits in the last election, as well as changing other aspects of the elections law.

There's some questions that—there are several serious questions we have with Bill 4.

This establishing a set date for a general election, this has worked well for some time now, for at least the three elections that I have witnessed personally. And the 35 days, as well, it's not too long nor too short.

Set election dates allow for better planning around the enumeration process and allow for a stronger voters list. Again, 35 days is not too long nor too short, so it should not be changed at all. If it's not broken, don't fix it.

What had happened in the past? In our time, we introduced amendments to allow polls to open an hour earlier, at 7 a.m., on election day, to allow voters more time to vote on the way to—on their way to work. This is—this was, and still now, quite beneficial. Manitobans work hard. They work—our workers—Manitoba workers are working in shifts. Some start early, some in the afternoon, some in the evening. So if you start early at 7 a.m. and end at 8 p.m., somehow those working in shifts would have the time to vote in any of those times. So that should stay.

Likewise, we added additional days for advance voting, and also we improved access to advance polls in rural and northern areas so that residents in a community will not travel more than 30 kilometres to an advance poll.

I thought one of the nice features of elections we have in Manitoba is the ability to vote in shopping malls. People in—people—well, not all people who go to shopping malls shop; not everyone has the ability to shop, but people—when you have a polling place in malls, people will go there to vote.

So I hope the minister will reconsider and then try not to force the issue. Why—you're already—they're already in government. They have all the

resources at their command. They have all the possible resources in their party as well. Why shorten it to 28 days? Just leave it at 35.

Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I am pleased for the opportunity to put a few words on the record for the third reading of Bill 4, The Elections Amendment Act.

Bill 4 defines the writ period of a general election being 28 days, potentially shortening Manitoba's elections by seven days. Further, by-election periods are also shortened, giving less notice to Manitobans for when they head to the polls on election day.

I don't believe anyone would argue with the importance of having sufficient time to make informed decisions before heading to the polls to vote. There are a couple of people in this House who are only here because of a few votes, so it should be recognized how every vote truly does count.

In order for voters to make an informed decision, several factors need to be considered. Voters deserve to have an opportunity to meet with the candidates. They deserve to have a personal encounter and to ask questions. Elections are a busy time for candidates—once again, something I believe everyone in this House can recognize. On top of door knocking, we are often—we often have events to attend, forums to prepare for and our personal well-being to take care of.

I consider myself to be a strong campaigner; something that I have learned and admired from my father. And with this, I was only able to accomplish what I did because of the time allocated. And trust me, there were days during the campaign where I would've been happy to cut short, but, ultimately, the time of a campaign period is essential.

I'm also weary that the government is bringing forth this bill with poor intentions. Consider how this affects Manitobans in most rural riding, Kewatinook. Kewatinook is a vast riding in Manitoba. It has 16 communities that experience the highest number of challenges—11 of these communities are fly-in only. Although most have daily flight schedules, residents in these reserves and towns deserve to be given more time than a quick hour or two to accommodate a candidate's flight schedule.

* (15:30)

If the election period is shortened, many Manitobans will feel that they are neglected yet again if candidates cannot get to the community.

The member from Minto stated in a question during second reading, and I quote, that governments, despite there being a set date for the election, have deliberately provoked an early election, and if that happens, the government then gets back to all the things they were trying to avoid by having a set election date. This bill would shorten the date for that campaign, which gives an additional advantage to the government. End quote. I agree with this concern.

The minister bringing this bill forward also stated that Bill 4 will strengthen our democracy. I have hesitation with this statement, as I do not believe that strengthening our democracy involves giving Manitobans less time and opportunity to make a well-informed decision ahead of election day.

As far as strengthening our democracy on election day goes, we need to continue to work for greater voter involvement and turnout, voter awareness and voter accessibility, not shorten the time allocated for an election campaign.

We are left with too many questions regarding the greater implications that Bill 4 brings, especially at this time, where electoral boundaries are expected to change prior to the next election. This means many Manitobans will be exposed to a drastically different slate of new candidates.

Our party will not be supporting Bill 4.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any other speakers? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading for Bill 4, The Elections Amendment Act.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): I request a recorded vote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

* (15:40)

The question before the House is the concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Elections Amendment Act.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Allum, Chief, Fontaine, Gerrard, Klassen, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Selinger, Swan, Wiebe.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 37, Nays 15.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to call Bill 17 for concurrence and third reading, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It's been called that we're going to review the Bill 9, The Elections Financing Amendment Act—oh, 17, okay—sorry.

So it's been brought to our attention that we're going to bill—review Bill 17, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act and Vital Statistics Amendment Act, for concurrence and third reading.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 17—The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister for Families, that Bill 17, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes médico-légales et la Loi sur les statistiques et de l'état civil, reported from the Standing

Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stefanson: I just—I've spoken on this bill a few times already, but pleased to put a few more words on the record with respect to the Bill 17, The Fatality Inquiries and Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

As mentioned previously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill updates The Fatality Inquiries Act as well as The Vital Statistics Act in order to comply with the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Carter v. Canada* and the subsequent amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada.

We know that members opposite have had—have looked at this bill as well. I believe they are supportive of it, although I guess we will find out in their remarks. Certainly, this is important. This is complying with the federal laws of Canada, and we believe that we can move forward with this bill in third reading. And we look forward to comments from members of the House. Thank you.

* (15:50)

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Bill 17 is intended to bring Manitoba in line with a new federal law which was recently passed in the spring, which is intended to move forward after the landmark Supreme Court decision to legalize assisted dying in Canada. And I was hoping that the Minister of Justice, in her third reading speech, would answer the questions that had been posed on first reading, but also in the committee meeting just a couple of nights ago.

And it was actually, I thought, a very good committee meeting. There were questions asked by myself, by the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) and by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and there were a couple of different areas that we wanted to address with respect to this bill. And one of those was that we asked whether the actual number of Manitobans that would be choosing assisted death would be compiled and recorded, because we think that is something that's useful moving forward. There were questions about whether we'd be retaining the information on the death certificate or in other materials on the underlying causes, and, third, and perhaps the most important, there was some questions asked about making sure that nothing in this would create unintended consequences and unintended problems for Manitobans, especially with respect to insurance. And, frankly, as the lawyer in the room, I actually

had less knowledge than the two other members of this Legislature that asked questions, being the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), who's a medical doctor and the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), who I respect, who has tremendous experience from his own life and has become extremely knowledgeable and an advocate and an author on this subject.

And I'm hoping, perhaps it's not too late, I would give leave for the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) to get back up and perhaps provide answers to those questions, which weren't provided in the course of that committee, because I think it is important for us to know before this bill becomes law.

I do want to spend a few minutes speaking about the role of the member for Assiniboia. The member did come to the committee that night and asked questions. And I know, sometimes, on the government side, we've been frustrated—on the opposition side, we've been frustrated when government members have come to committees and have asked questions and we get the sense those questions have been written by the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) office or by a communicator. That wasn't the case when the minister—when the member for Assiniboia came in and asked what I thought were some very good questions, very important to people who may be facing a very, very difficult choice not only for themselves but for how it's going to impact those families. And the specific question that the member for Assiniboia asked was making sure that someone choosing assisted death would not be invalidating the right to collect, or for the family to collect, on their insurance policy, which, I think, is very, very important, was a very wise question and a very important one for which we still haven't received an answer.

And I know the member for Assiniboia put on the record some concerns about the federal bill. He felt the Supreme Court of Canada relied—did not go far enough—or rather the Supreme Court had it right, relying heavily on the materials he'd written, the book he'd written, and felt the federal bill fell short. I appreciate that we're not discussing that today. The intention of the bill is to comply with the federal act, which we respect. But it doesn't mean that there won't be future problems.

I know the member for Assiniboia put on the record the very real possibility of ongoing challenges from Canadians, from Manitobans, who may not feel

that the federal bill actually mirrors what's contained in the Supreme Court decision. And it doesn't mean any of us have to agree or disagree with the position of the MLA for Assiniboia. He has his analysis, the Supreme Court decision, which, I know, is based on his personal experience and on the knowledge that he brought to the House of Commons and also has brought to this Legislature. The fact is he does have extensive knowledge and probably has more knowledge about this subject than anybody else that I know.

And I am a bit concerned that it's apparent, from the nature of his question, which he had to come to committee to ask, that he needed to get that clarification, which we still haven't heard in the House. And it's a bit different for the member from River Heights and myself; we expect not always to get the answers. I'm surprised the member for Assiniboia from his question in the committee meeting, it would certainly lead anyone to believe that maybe he hadn't been consulted at all, or adequately, on this bill.

So, again, I support the intention of this bill. I think we can all agree as legislators that we don't want the medical examiner to have to go and spend resources and time investigating an assisted death which is done in compliance with federal legislation; it's done in accordance with the practice standards that now exist. That's all fair, but I think there are some questions that remain unanswered.

And I know that this government has talked a lot about the level of consultation they're doing. I would think the first level of that consultation would be for the Minister of Justice to take two steps back in this Legislature and talk to somebody who has brought to this House a lot of knowledge and a lot to add to what we all can appreciate is a very, very difficult subject, an emotional subject and, frankly, a matter of conscious—conscience for every member of this Legislature.

So, with those short comments, I just want to make it clear that although the intention of this act is good, I think there was clarification this minister put on the record that she would be providing to us. In fact, I do have the transcript from that Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs which was just on Tuesday the 1st. The Minister of Justice did say that she would be providing some clarification, and I'm wondering, if we're now debating this in third reading, when exactly is that clarification going to come.

Again, I would be prepared to give leave to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) to answer the questions that were asked in committee, because I think we want this bill to go ahead, but we want to make sure the bill is going to go ahead in a way that protects Manitobans in the way I think everybody intends.

So, with that, I will sit down, Mr. Deputy Speaker, see if the Minister of Justice has anything to add and to see if any of my colleagues have anything they want to say about this bill. Thank you very much.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to thank the Minister of Justice for bringing forward this bill and for the member of Minto and the member from River Heights for participating in the committee a few nights ago where I thought there was a very genuine discussion about what is really the most fundamental part of life, and that is, how do we die?

Now, Madam Speaker—whoops—Mr. Speaker, I—when I was an MP, I brought forward a bill that outlined physician-assisted death and a bunch of criteria, safeguards, and I tabled a second bill for analytics to collect empirical evidence to be reviewed after five years. These two bills were seconded by, ironically, the only other disabled person in the House of Commons at that time, the member from Montcalm. And there was silence. There was no support or views from any political party, to be frank, except for the Green Party. Elizabeth May—I give her credit—she was there.

The senators, by and large, were very supportive right across the political spectrum, but in the House of Commons, there was nothing. But the media was interested, and the media picked it up, and in a very short order, it became one of the topics of the day, because this is something that affects everyone eventually or has the potential to.

And I will say that this all can be read in a book by a former colleague here of Linda McIntosh, called what do—Master of My Fate. Can be found at any respectable bookstore. But the fact is that, to make a long story short, notwithstanding almost no support in the House of Commons, someone was listening, and it was the Supreme Court of Canada. They essentially took the wording from my private member's bill and inserted it into their decision.

*(16:00)

I only raise this because this is why I want to speak to it. I would be—I'd be neglectful if I did not at least say on the record a continuation from that time. The—I also had the good fortune of participating on the joint parliamentary committee on physician-assisted death. I went out to Ottawa, the Minister of Justice—federal Minister of Justice, to her credit, reached out to me and we had a long discussion on this issue. And, at the end of the day, the legislation that was brought forward dealt only with terminally ill people, and this is not consistent with the Supreme Court decision. And we're not here to talk about that today.

But the legislation—well, the Supreme Court decision goes far beyond terminally ill to include catastrophically injured people, people who are in pain and not in a terminal sense. Now this bill, that the Justice Minister tabled, I guess deals with the federal bill, though, I just want to say to this House that this issue is coming back. It's going to come back with a lot wider scope, and it will come back because the federal legislation is not consistent with the Supreme Court decision. Almost all legal experts agree, and I happen to know that there are legal proceedings being—started to make that very point.

The legislation—in our discussion, it was interesting because, when you change a piece of legislation around physician-assisted death, it—there are things that go beyond what you may originally have thought. And the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) was quite correct when he says that—well, I guess I raised it at committee and he raised it here—but issues around insurance law. We need to make sure that insurance law does not penalize people who choose medically assisted death as a suicide. It's—these are two very different issues, and people should not be penalized for medically assisted death in my view.

Furthermore, it may be worth, as time exists and we know this is coming back, for each of us to reflect on our lives, to talk to our families about what our wishes are. Think about what it means to be Canadian, and, when the next piece of legislation comes down, that we'll be able to talk about it with knowledge, hope, empathy and mercy. Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I am pleased to stand today and put a few words on the record during third reading of Bill 17, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

We as Canadians should be proud that we have the option to live and end our lives with dignity. We supported the momentous decision of the Supreme

Court in 2015 that granted Canadians who wish to seek medical assistance in dying the opportunity to do so. The option for Canadians to live their lives with dignity was recognized with this decision. This crucial change impacts the lives of many Canadians, including our very own Manitobans, along with their friends, their families and their loved ones.

Bill 17 is important, as it brings Manitoba in line with the federal law. However, I am curious as to what the future of medical assistance in dying here in Manitoba and what it will mean for those who are interested in seeking it.

I have heard from Manitobans that they would like to have better understanding of the rules and regulations that will be in place, as there is much uncertainty as to how medical assistance in dying will be practised.

Furthermore, the questions of who will have access to seeking such treatment remains to be definitive. For example, those individuals who suffer with mental health are left feeling uncertain as to if they would be eligible to seek medical assistance in choosing to end their life. These concerns are beyond the scope of Bill 17, which is a good start to meeting Manitobans' rights to seek medical assistance in dying.

I agree with the member from Minto and would be okay with leave being given for further answers from the minister.

To wrap up, I am looking forward to committee for further rules, regulations and clarification. And I am pleased to say that the Manitoba Liberals will be supporting Bill 17.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Point of order, okay.

Mr. Swan: There—we've made reference in the course of our speeches today about certain questions that were asked at committee in which the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) undertook to give answers. And in just a few minutes we're going to be asked to vote on this very important bill, which we think is important. And I—again—I asked if the minister would ask for leave to provide answers, and I'm hoping, in response to this, she will.

And let me put on the record what these questions were. Page 103 of the transcript from committee on October 1, 2016, I asked the minister:

"Can the minister confirm whether the Chief Medical Examiner in their annual report will then publicly report how many Manitobans chose assisted death in each year?" And the Minister of Justice responded: "You know, I can endeavour to get the specific answer to that and how that will be recorded moving forwards. I can get that for the member."

I can advise this House that no answer has been received from the minister.

At that same hearing, at page 104, Mr. Fletcher—rather, the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) asked a question: "Along those lines, a very important aspect that hasn't been dealt with at any level, as far as I know, is the issue of insurance. What the member from Minto has raised"—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I just—if you can just state what the leave was requested for that was on a point of order.

Mr. Swan: Well, in this case, my point of order is that we have a committee process in which members of this Legislature exercise their obligations and their rights as members of this Legislature to ask questions of the minister who was sitting in the chair and answering those very questions. When there's an undertaking given by a minister to give those answers, we expect that's going to be provided before we're voting on the bill at third reading.

And, again, I gave the opportunity to the Minister of Justice to stand and give those answers. I presume she is not going to do so. So I'm raising a point of order that as a member of this Legislature, I should be entitled to receive answers to questions posed of the minister in committee in order that I can do my job as a member of this Legislature and my job on behalf of Manitobans on serious questions, not just raised by myself as an opposition member, but by a member of the government and also by an independent member of this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, on the same point of order.

Mrs. Stefanson: I thank the member for this. It's not a point of order, I don't believe, but certainly I know that it was raised at committee. I know that there was some of my staff that was there after committee which I had believed had already taken care of the answers to some of these questions. I know the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) was there, if that—and I believe and I thought at that time that this had already been cleared up.

* (16:10)

So, if that is not the case, I certainly will endeavour to get the answers to those questions to the member right away. I was not aware. I had thought this had been dealt with already. Again, I don't think it's a point of order. I'm happy to speak to the member.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, I just want to establish that there was no point of order, and as—and the thing was, the House asked for—give leave for—to have questions for the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson). Leave—[interjection] No. The leave is denied.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So is there any further speakers? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House—oh, the honourable opposition leader and member for Elmwood.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm very pleased to speak to this bill, and perhaps while I'm speaking to the bill, the minister can get the research necessary done to answer the questions that are being asked by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan). And, if she would like—if she's able to do that, then perhaps we can have the vote on this bill and send [inaudible] deal with the third-reading vote. But I don't think that denying leave on this important bill at this juncture is a productive exercise in terms of moving this bill along through third reading. So I'm prepared to speak until the member can ascertain—or obtain the information and provide it to the House here by reading it into the record.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill, as members know, brings Manitoba law into line with the recent Supreme Court decision to legalize assisted dying in Canada. It amends the fatal inquiries act and Vital Statistics Act so that death that results from medical assistance in dying is not defined as a homicide or a suicide, and further, the amendments allow for Cabinet to make regulations requiring information about medical assistance in dying to be provided.

In terms of our position in this matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our NDP team supports the right of all Canadians to access appropriate end-of-life care.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

More transparency in health-care information is important as well, and we support the publication of aggregate health-care information that helps decision makers and policy analysts that nonetheless respect patient privacy.

The Supreme Court's historic judgment on physician-assisted death gives all Canadians ability to have a dialogue about end-of-life care. We want what is put in place to be focused on dignity and respect for those nearing the end of their lives. It needs to be patient-centred and respected—forum choices by individuals while at the same time protecting vulnerable people. That's a very important point, Madam Speaker.

We urge the provincial government to continue to consult with a range of Manitoba stakeholders, including disability advocates, religious organizations and health providers. Our NDP government made steady progress for families needing palliative care services, and we know that there's more to be done because everyone matters. We want to ensure that Manitoba's working hard with other provinces, territories and the federal government to ensure a collaborative process that does not lead to a patchwork of approaches to implementing the court decision across Canada. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba has completed online consultations and has established physician guidelines. These guidelines are posted on the college's website.

In terms of our record, Madam Speaker, we had a—have a provincial elder-abuse strategy. We established a 24-hour seniors abuse support line for supporting counselling to help seniors who are experiencing abuse. We've also created regional elder abuse response teams that help vulnerable seniors access the supports they need close to home. We've also created the Safe Suite Program to provide a safe place for older adults leaving abusive relationships.

We invested to build new, safe, affordable homes for seniors. We invested in seniors' housing by supporting over 15,500 homes for seniors across the province. We made sure that seniors have access to the care they need when—and when they need it. We were building hundreds more personal-care homes—home beds. We're creating a new rehabilitation program to help seniors regain and maintain their independence following an injury or surgery, and we were making supportive housing an affordable alternative to a personal-care home for

low-income seniors with added supports. We committed to helping seniors stay healthy and stay in their homes longer. That's why we improved home care and expanded prescription Pharmacare for under-prescription coverage under Pharmacare.

In terms of palliative care, Madam Speaker, and this is a very important point because, in actual fact, Manitoba, I believe, is a leader, particularly in Winnipeg, in the palliative care area. And when this issue became, and the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) was a MP, Member of Parliament, when this came up, but back in 2008, 2009, it was a private member's bill brought to the House, private member's resolution. And I can tell you that while there was maybe 80 per cent of people in favour, MPs in favour of the resolution, as the debate began, over the course of the debate the whole conversation shifted against the resolution because people, as they discussed this issue, tended to feel that improved palliative care was a—was part of an answer here as opposed to some of the clinics that we discussed in—that were set up in Belgium and other jurisdictions, I think in Oregon and other parts of the world where there was always that possibility that things could happen that would not be in the person's interest.

And so, in December of 2002, we established a Palliative Care Drug Access Program, covering the costs of drugs for patients in their homes. Last year, we spent \$2.3 million on this program. And, in September 2000, \$2.75 million in funding was announced for expanded community-based palliative care services in Winnipeg, dedicated home-care services: 24-hour, seven-day-per-week, professional nursing response team, specialized case managers and essential support staff, medical and surgical supplies and capital and equipment.

In June of 2000, the state-of-the-art St. Boniface palliative care unit officially opened, and patients were admitted beginning in July 2000. We approved funding to recruit dedicated palliative care physicians with the expertise to support the comprehensive palliative care program. These doctors provide clinical care to patients, consultation and education to family physicians regarding palliative care. A new 12-bed hospice was opened at the Grace general hospital.

And, you know, a former member of this Chamber, one Rene Toupin, who represented Springfield back in the—since 1969, '69 to '77, I guess, he was here. But Rene passed away with cancer in the last year or two, but in his final years he

spent a tremendous amount of energy advocating for improved palliative care in this province and really, really was an inspiration to a lot of people in this area. Matter of fact, the 12-bed hospice that was opened at Grace Hospital, that one I know was around in 2008 because my father passed away in there, and that is a terrific facility, and the people there take very good care of the families that are there.

Our NDP team believes in public, universal and high-quality health care for all. Seniors deserve to age with dignity. A strong home-care program helps loved ones remain at home for as long as possible, which is what Manitoba families want.

I am proud to say that it was an NDP government that established home care in Manitoba 40 years ago. And, a matter of fact, I think that there are jurisdictions in Canada to this day that don't have home care. And, matter of fact, I think even Pharmacare, which was around even longer, is not universal in Canada at this point.

*(16:20)

The No. 1 universal home-care program in Canada, which quickly became a model for all other provinces, Manitoba's Home Care is widely regarded as one of the best in all of North America and is—to ensure it remains accessible to all Manitobans, we rejected calls to base home care on one's ability to pay, and of course that's a concern going forward in this province now that we have a new government that may have a bent towards private participation in our health care system.

Our approach was getting results. The report of the Coalition for Seniors and Nursing Home Residents' Rights says: "Examples of best practices and standard delivery, and fully funded programs can be found in the Manitoba model. Established in its present form in 1974, it is the oldest comprehensive, province-wide, universal home care program in Canada." And that was November 23rd, 2012.

So, Madam Speaker, as I wind down—*[interjection]* We hired doctors, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, occupational and physical therapists, speech language pathologists, and respiratory therapists to create hospital home teams that improved home-care services in Manitoba.

Brian—the Premier (Mr. Pallister), on the other hand, Madam Speaker, has spent his whole career here privatizing or attempting to privatize services Manitobans depend upon, tried to sell Home Care

and introduce user fees, and that, I remember, was a big issue here back a number of years ago in the former government back in the '90s. He's also looking at bringing in American-style, two-tier health care, and we, the NDP, more than doubled funding for Home care from \$149 million to over \$330 million from 1999 to 2015.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I believe the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) wanted to speak, so I would just adjourn debate, then, seconded by the member for Concordia—*[interjection]* no? Can't do that—*[interjection]* Somebody else will have to get up? Okay, well, somebody else just did.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I move, seconded by the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), to adjourn debate on this bill.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: Is there agreement of the House? Agreed and so ordered?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Micklefield: Speaker, it's slightly curious that the members opposite were—I'd just like to raise—I'd just like to respond to the goings on of the last 30 minutes.

Madam Speaker: There is no speaking to a motion such as that. It's either there is leave or there is no leave, or a question for the House.

So the question before the House is, shall debate be adjourned? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Micklefield: This is an interesting situation. Yes, I'd like to call Bill 9 then, please, for debate, I believe. What stage are we at here?

I think we've got some things sorted out here. I certainly hope we do. I'd like to call Bill 9, please, for concurrence and third reading.

Madam Speaker: We will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance).

Bill 9—The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance)

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Yes, on behalf of Minister Stefanson—the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson)—thank you—I'd

like to move that, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Government House Leader on behalf of the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is now open.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It's a pleasure to be the first to rise to speak about Bill 9.

Bill 9, of course, is intended to remove the annual allowance for registered political parties from The Election Financing Act. And, as we debate Bill 9, I think it's very, very important for every member of this House to understand the history, not just of the annual allowance but, indeed, to understand the whole history of how this came about in the first place.

And just as we talked earlier today about Bill 4 and how things have changed in terms of the way that Manitobans can vote, in terms of the way that Manitobans can exercise their democratic right, so, too, have the obligations on political parties changed, and they've changed frankly for the better.

And now, in 2016, the obligations on political parties to report money coming in, money going out, the use they're making of those funds and a host of other reporting that didn't exist back in 1999, is now before us. And, of course, those things are expensive for political parties, and they've been an additional expense that every party, large or small, has had to build into their finances.

And what indeed did much of that come about? Well, that came about because the Progressive Conservative Party, back in the 1990s, entered into a scheme to put up young, indigenous people to run for a made-up party funded by the Progressive Conservative Party with the intention of splitting the vote of indigenous people with the hope of defeating New Democrats in the 1995 election.

And Premier Filmon, of course, when he learned of all the circumstances, things that were dug up by NDP MLAs Tim Sale and Clif Evans, to his credit Premier Filmon—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, on a point of order.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Just on a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On a point of order.

Mrs. Stefanson: The member opposite, the member from Minto, mentioned something earlier that—just with respect to Bill 17, and a question that he had that was outstanding, I'm wondering if it might be the will of the House to revert back to Bill 17 so I can answer some of those questions and we can deal with that.

The question was specific in what was outstanding, and I'd like to clarify that. So I'm wondering if we could revert back Bill 17.

* (16:30)

I'm wondering if there would be leave to revert back to Bill 17 just so I can—and leave to just speak to the bill to answer the outstanding question that was left at committee.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the member to revert back to Bill 17 in order to respond to the outstanding question that had been left during debate, and leave for her to speak a second time? *[Agreed]*

And just for clarification, we will revert back to Bill 17 to allow the Minister of Justice to make some comments, and then we will go back to the member of Minto and his debate on Bill 9.

Mrs. Stefanson: If it—if we could, Madam Speaker, because we were debating Bill 17, if we could revert back to Bill 17 so I can answer the outstanding question and then we could ask the question of if we're ready to move on.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the House to revert back to Bill 17 and complete debate and voting on Bill 17 after the Minister of Justice has made her comments? *Agreed? [Agreed]*

When the matter of Bill 9 is before the House, the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan) will have 28 minutes remaining.

Bill 17—The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act

(Continued)

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Again, I, just for clarification, I thought because the staff had been there after committee that this matter had been dealt with. It was—so my apologies for not having dealt with it, but certainly happy to deal with it.

Just in perusing Hansard from committee, there was an outstanding question. The member for Minto asked: Can the minister confirm whether the Chief Medical Examiner in their annual report will then publicly report how many Manitobans chose assisted death in each year? I said I could endeavour to get back to the member with the answer to that question.

The answer to that is that the reporting of the Chief Medical Examiner will be determined by way of regulations. And we will be working with the federal government as to how that will unfold—certainly open to ideas from members opposite as to how to do that. We are an open, transparent government. We will look to making—look at ways of making that public.

So I hope that deals with the matter at hand. That is the only outstanding question. We believe that that answers the outstanding questions.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) had adjourned debate on this bill. And the bill remains standing in the member's name.

Is there leave to allow the bill to stand in the member's name?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No. Leave has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, yes—The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Micklefield: Yes, Madam Speaker, we'd like to call for concurrence and third reading, Bill 9.

Madam Speaker, we—I'd like to ask for leave to resume the debate on Bill 9.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to resume debate on Bill 9? *[Agreed]*

**Bill 9—The Election Financing Amendment Act
(Repeal of Annual Allowance)**
(Continued)

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, who has 28 minutes.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yes. I'd ask for leave, though, because I know the minister was away getting information for this House. I wonder if there's leave for me to defer my comments until the minister has had her usual opportunity to speak first on this bill and for me to resume with the time that I have left, the 27 minutes.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to allow the Minister of Justice to make her comments now, and then the member for Minto will speak after the Minister of Justice? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I appreciate my honourable friend allowing me the opportunity to get up and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 9.

I don't have a lot more to add. I've spoken on this on several occasions, but, certainly, Madam Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that Manitobans' tax dollars are invested in important priorities for Manitobans, and we do not believe that the annual vote subsidy is in the best interest of the taxpayers of Manitoba. We don't believe that that should be a priority for a government. And so we have refused to take this money each and every year since it came into effect, and we returned hundreds of thousands of dollars to Manitoba taxpayers because we believe that that's where it should be.

With this change in Bill 9, Madam Speaker, Manitoba will be more in keeping with other jurisdictions across Canada, as the majority of provinces and territories do not pay such allowances. So I hope at this point in time that members—all members of this House—see the importance, especially now given the tough fiscal times that we're in in this province, that they see fit to give this money back to Manitobans, which is the way it

should be, that we should not be accepting this kind of money as a subsidy for our own political purposes and our own political parties. There are other priorities that Manitobans elected us to invest in. This certainly was not one area that Manitobans—I know when I went door to door, Manitobans were not asking me to make it a priority for us to put more money in the hands of political parties rather than in various programs, social programs, that are needed in this province.

And so I think this is a very important point. I hope that all members of this House will join with us in doing the right thing, and that is putting the priorities of Manitobans first, not lining the pockets of political parties.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, who has 28 minutes remaining.

Mr. Swan: I'll pick it up where I left off, and it's a good juxtaposition to have the Minister of Justice talking about doing the right thing, because I was just talking about the circumstance that led to the Monnin inquiry following the 1995 election, and as I had led off, I was talking about how after the 1995 election, allegations were raised that the Progressive Conservative Party encouraged candidates to run in three constituencies in a blatant attempt to steal votes from the NDP and to try to get their own members elected.

The plan was for those independent candidates to try and siphon enough votes away from the NDP, particularly among indigenous voters, to allow the Progressive Conservatives to win. And Premier Filmon did call an inquiry which was led by former Chief Justice Alfred Monnin, who was a man who truly suffered no fools. I can say that from reading his book and from having appeared before him as a young counsel when he sat on the Court of Appeal.

And Justice Monnin found that various high-level Conservatives hatched the plot to induce an indigenous candidate to run, that the party accountant during the 1995 election broke the law and filed a false election return. And what happened as a result was that these Progressive Conservatives got away with minimal prosecution, because the time limit for prosecutions under the legislation in effect at that time was six months. And Mr. Justice Monnin said there was nothing that could be done legally.

* (16:40)

We know the Treasury Board secretary helped cover up the scheme and he lost his position, although it didn't prevent him from getting a very, very healthy severance payment, a severance payment that now is the sort of thing that bothers the government members. We also know that a key party fundraiser and a member of the board of Manitoba Hydro, coincidentally enough, was removed from both positions by Premier Filmon for his role in the scheme.

And earlier today my colleague, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), made one of the most famous quotes from that inquiry from Mr. Justice Monnin. On page 16, he said, in all my years on the bench, I never encountered as many liars in one proceeding as I did during this inquiry.

And, the end of the day, of course, that was a factor in why the Progressive Conservative government lost the 1999 election, and then were thrown into being opposition for 17 years. But the lesson we take away from that and why it is so important for this bill is that as a result of the Monnin inquiry, as a result of what was done by certain Progressive Conservatives, the new government decided that never again would we be in a position where political parties could actually do those sorts of things. And that's why there was greater emphasis put on the record keeping and the returns made by each political party. And that remains in effect today.

And, as I said at the outset of my comments, there is an expense to that. There is a cost to doing that which wasn't borne by parties before 1999, and that is one of the things, frankly, that the New Democratic Party has used some of the allowance to do, is to follow up and make sure that we're following the rules that were necessary because of the fraud of certain members of the Progressive Conservative Party.

What else happened? Well, after 1999, the new NDP government followed through with its commitment to end union and corporate donations to political parties and to political candidates in Manitoba. And, of course, we used to hear the things just never change—we used to hear the old Progressive Conservative line that, well, the NDP just gets all their money from unions. So Gary Doer called that bluff and said, well, let's have an even playing field: we won't take any money from unions, we also won't take any money from corporations, and you'll follow the same rules.

And, oh, how the Progressive Conservatives complained. They complained and complained. And yet, and yet, that bill went through. It was debated. We had Hugh McFadyen saying perhaps he would undo it at some point, but we know what happened to him. We still don't know, maybe that'll be the next thing that comes forward when the new mandate letter to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) gets produced.

But we know that by taking out corporate and union donations, it would require parties to find different ways to raise money. And in almost all cases in our democracies in the west, when there are steps put in place to take away that source of income, another source of income is provided. And that was where eventually the annual allowance paid to political parties would arise.

Now, it is interesting, because, of course, we heard the Minister of Justice talk about how important it is to save money. And, yes, there's no question that if the annual allowances disappear there will be a saving for the provincial Treasury. I've had a look at the statements of the Chief Electoral Officer over the past number of years. The amount of money that's been paid out has been slightly less than \$300,000 a year. So that would be a saving.

But what is interesting is to put it in some context. And I know the Minister of Justice has not enjoyed it when I've gone back to the mandate letter. I've always tried to give her a bit of an out, to say, look, I know it's not her fault the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has given her a mandate letter that contains nothing but—well, it contains nothing about public safety, about public protection; instead, a series of projects the Premier wants her to take on. And what's fascinating is the very last bullet point in that mandate letter says that there should be immediate disclosure of untendered contracts—immediate disclosure of untendered contracts. That's on her to-do list.

And the fascinating part, of course, is that not only has that not been done, but we learned just last week that probably one of the biggest untendered contracts in Manitoba history went out the door the first week that the newly appointed board of Manitoba Hydro took control.

And what do we now know? We know there was an untendered contract somewhere north of \$4.2 million to Boston Consulting Group—not even a Manitoba company, not even a Canadian company; an untendered contract. And, of course,

this was something that the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) was tasked by this Premier (Mr. Pallister) to try to prevent from happening. And not only did she not do that, we now know that taxpayers are on the hook for more than \$4.2 million.

And, of course, to hear the Minister of Justice today talk about how Bill 9 will create this great saving, you know, I got out my calculator, and I thought, well, wow, how many years of this annual allowance at the rate that's been payed over the past four years, how many years of that allowance would it take to equal the untendered contract that was issued by Manitoba Hydro? And the answer, Madam Speaker, 15.3 years.

Not only will the hydro—will the Keeyask be built and bipole will be built, the tie-in line will be built, we'll be generating more power, we'll be making money, Hydro, of course, will have paid off the cost of that dam in less time, of course, than the amount paid for the report from Boston Consulting Group, when you equate it to the amount of this allowance.

And, of course, there's many other things you could pay for with \$4.2 million, but for the purpose of this bill, I want to make it very clear that when the minister stands up and says this is necessary to save money for taxpayers she may be saying , but right behind her back, was Hydro running off and commissioning a \$4.2-million report in the very way and in the very details that she was supposed to prevent in her job as Minister of Justice based on the instructions that she was given from the Premier of the province, and I realized that perhaps nobody's put all those pieces together. And I don't want to cause the Minister of Justice too much more discomfort this afternoon, but it does call into question the necessity and importance of this bill.

Certainly we believe that it's not just the New Democratic Party that will be impacted, we also believe that smaller parties also have the right to be at the table when it comes to putting their ideas forward, the Liberal Party of Manitoba, The Green Party of Manitoba, even the Communist Party, which I think was only entitled to a couple of hundred dollars every year, but, if we do believe in the political process, we accept that even people with whom we may not agree would—should still have the right to be at the table. And that was the intention of the annual allowance.

There's different ways it could've been done. Frankly, the annual allowance could've been expressed as a flat amount for each political party or a sliding amount based on the number of candidates put forward or something else. It didn't have to be based on the number of votes received, and perhaps someday we'll debate whether that was the perfect way to go. But certainly, when we consider the additional requirements put on political parties, thanks to the misdoings of certain members of the Progressive Conservative Party, the need for political parties to be able to bring their ideas to the table, and thirdly the incongruence of making a \$300,000-a-year item at the same time as \$4.2 million walks out the door, gives us great concern about the real reasons and the real bona fides of this government in bringing forward this bill.

I've seen a number of occasions that I hope the Minister of gets to work on important issues, and we know exactly what those issues are. They're being reported to us by correctional officers. They're being reported to us by the sheriffs. They're being reported by organizations like the John Howard Society, they're very concerned that our jails are overcrowded and getting worse.

We know that in the past six months, the number of prisoners in our jails has gone up by 182, that's a 7 per cent increase. And we know the jails were crowded. The overcrowding has increased by 50 per cent in just these past six months. And why is that? Well, it's because crime is going up and crime which has been declining for more than a decade has suddenly taken a U-turn and we now have the Winnipeg police reporting that crime in the city of Winnipeg is up 8 per cent in the last six months over the previous year.

So I hope the Minister of Justice can get through her to-do list. I hope that she can again throw off the constraints that's been put on her by a Premier who clearly does not understand from his perspective, from his reality, that public safety is vitally important to people that I represent in the West End of Winnipeg, vitally important to my friends who represent the North End of Winnipeg, northern and rural communities, Elmwood, Fort Garry, you name it. These are important things and they counted on having a minister that was prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder, not just with police, and not with just Crown attorneys and correctional officers, but also with community organizations, with organizations

like the E. Fry society and the John Howard Society to try and come up with better solutions, so that we're not just arresting our way out of the problem, but we are actually getting at the reasons why crime exists.

* (16:50)

We heard the Premier (Mr. Pallister) just the other day give his reasons as to why crime is up, and it was quite something. If you want to go back and read the Hansard, it's amazing what government members are now saying in Hansard when they get even the least amount of pressure, which is why I'm very proud of what our team is doing, and we're going to continue to do as we ask the tough questions on behalf of Manitobans, as we ask the tough questions about continuing to build a stronger province and preventing the things that we got right from being torn apart.

And so we will not be supporting Bill 9. We believe in democracy. We believe in keeping big money out of elections. You needn't look no further than south of the 49th parallel to see what the results can be.

So, for those reasons, Madam Speaker, my colleagues and I will be voting against Bill 9. I'm looking forward to what other members may have to say and getting forward to every member standing in their place on this bill.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, a few comments on Bill 9.

First of all, it should be clear to all Manitobans that the Conservative government is getting—sorry, not—the Conservative Party, in the way that the rebates are organized, is getting hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money, right? There should be no trying to hide that; this is well known; this is what's happening.

It also should be apparent to all Manitobans that donors to political parties of all stripes are getting substantial amounts of money in terms of rebates, and those monies go solely to those who earn enough to pay taxes.

Now, as it happens, the Conservatives are represented disproportionately by those who are wealthy, and it is Conservative donors who, in fact, benefit disproportionately from the state of affairs that we currently have and that the Conservative donors in total get hundreds of millions of dollars—hundreds of thousands of dollars each year as a result

of this, and that becomes—that is, in fact, taxpayers' money that is going to Conservative donors. And it goes disproportionately to Conservative donors. We need to acknowledge that.

Now, this change, which will appeal the annual allowance, would have provided some recognition that, in fact, people who are not earning enough to pay tax, who are struggling, that they deserve to be represented. And one of the ways that they have been—political parties have funded to represent them is, in fact, through these dollars coming from—tax dollars going directly to political parties.

Now, there is an alternative way to achieve some level of fairness so that all Manitobans can get benefit when they make a donation to a political party, no matter whether you're a taxpayer or not; actually, even those who are not paying income tax pay lots of taxes in other ways, right? They pay lots of taxes in PST, pay lots of taxes in all sorts of ways.

So one of the things that Mike Harris did was to recognize this, and he said it doesn't matter what your income is, if you donate \$100 to a political party, you should get \$75 of your first \$100 back. And this is what's equivalent to a non-refundable—or a refundable tax credit. And Mike Harris decided that this was appropriate because it was fair. It treated those who are high earners and those who are low earners similarly. And at second reading I raised this issue of the possibility of a Mike Harris-type amendment here in this Chamber, and I asked the minister to look inside her soul and see if she had an ounce of fairness, to see if the Conservative Party had an ounce of fairness, in making sure that people who were high-income earners and low-income earners were treated fairly and equally in this respect. That doesn't matter whether you earn a million bucks a year or whether you earn a thousand bucks a year, that if you make a donation of a hundred bucks, you know, it should be recognized and you should get \$75 back.

That would have been a fairer way to do it. I mean, quite frankly, somebody who's at the lower end of the income scale who makes a donation, that's a much bigger proportion of what they earn and it's a much bigger contribution proportionately.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, the minister and the Conservative government have shown that they don't have any sense of fairness. They don't have an ounce of fairness. That's okay. We wondered; we asked the question, and they provided an answer that fairness is

not a part of who the Conservative Party and who the minister is.

This is, you know, important to know because, in fact, this essentially asks the question, you know: Is the minister and her party, are they from Mike Harris toward the centre of the political spectrum, or are they to the right of Mike Harris? And it's quite clear that this Conservative Party in Manitoba is quite considerably to the right of Mike Harris, and Manitobans need to know where this political party stands.

And now we have found it out because this political party, this Conservative Party in Manitoba, has shown that they are to the right of Mike Harris, and that has been one of the important things that we found out as a result of this bill being brought forward. You know, if there'd been an ounce of fairness, we would have considered the possibility of supporting the revised measure here, but there was no ounce of fairness. This is a bill that is clearly to the right of Mike Harris in Ontario, and that is why we reject this bill, because it doesn't have an ounce of fairness. It treats only those who are rich as deserving of getting rebates, and it doesn't treat the many who, in fact, don't earn enough money, are at the bottom end of the income scale, that they would be eligible for a rebate under the Conservative system.

So, Madam Speaker, with those few words, that is where we stand. With those few words I just want to make sure that this was abundantly clear where—we now know where the Conservative Party stands and we've made it clear where we stand, which is: we stand for fairness; we stand for treating people equitably; we stand for making sure that people who are, whether they're at the upper end of the income scale or at the lower end, can participate and receive benefits.

This is—the member from Emerson—Madam Speaker, I think, you know, we might be ready for a vote, and so maybe we can proceed to a vote.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance).

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote.

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

Order, please. The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 9, The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance).

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 37, Nays 16.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

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<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>