

Third Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

Vol. LXXI No. 51B - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 22, 2018

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

Pat Wege Retirement

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize an important leader in Manitoba early learning and child-care community. After 21 years as the executive director of the Manitoba Child Care Association, Pat Wege is retired as of May 11th, 2018.

Pat's knowledge, her expertise, her leadership, advanced early learning and education as a valuable and rewarding profession and promoted the importance of early learning and child-care quality services, really, within Manitoba and across the country.

I'd like to commend Pat for her commitment and her dedication to early learning and child care as well as the child-care workforce. Pat's recommendations and feedback in support of high-quality child-care system in Manitoba were always appreciated and valued by governments—whichever government is of the day—Manitoba families, as well as early learning and child-care sectors.

As a new minister taking on my role over the last two years, I can say that I very much appreciated Pat's direction, her honesty, her passion on anything to do with child care. Her contributions were invaluable during the transition of the government on behalf of myself and our new provincial government.

Pat recently had the opportunity to travel to Africa on a new adventure, and I know she'll be having much more adventures in her retirement.

Madam Speaker, I invite everyone to join me in recognizing Pat for her many years of service in her leadership in the field of early-learning education and being a champion for child-care workforce, children and families in Manitoba, and Pat, of course, is in the audience right here. Pat, give a wave.

Thank you for everything you do for the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): For 21 years Pat Wege has worked tirelessly as the executive director of the Manitoba Child Care Association. Pat's caring and relentless advocacy work has changed the face of child care in Manitoba.

With the announcement of Pat's retirement, I'm honoured speak to the work she's done for Manitoba families.

Pat has brought a better understanding of the interrelated and interdependence—interdependentness of early learning, child care and the education system. Pat has ceaselessly made it clear that quality, affordable and accessible child care is essential for children's development and for the full economic participation of many families, especially women.

As an advocate for the incredible work of early child-care educators, to addressing the needs for quality, affordable and accessible child care in Manitoba, Pat has always gone above and beyond to ensure the best child-care services are provided. Through her integrated approach, Pat continuously pushed government to do better. The integrated system means that they are ensuring that there are enough well-trained child-care-worker educators, more child-care spaces, a good education system and supports for families.

Child care is an essential public service and Pat ensured this was known by working with government to implement a pension for child-care workers.

I would like to thank Pat for all she has done to better the child-care system in Manitoba and wish her all the best on her new journey.

Miigwech.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate Pat Wege on many, many successful years as the executive director of the Manitoba Child Care Association. Your contributions and achievements are many. You have been very strong in keeping governments of all stripes to account. You've always been pointing out that Manitoba should be doing more in terms of child care and improving the quality and how important this is to children and families here in Manitoba.

It is good to see that there has been some increase in funding, largely due to the federal government, in the last couple of years. But there is still a long way to go, and even as we continue the journey forward, it is the steps that Pat Wege has taken over the last number of years that are—continue to push this forward.

So thank you, Pat, merci, miigwech, for all your good work.

Madam Speaker: Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister of Crown Services, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule our 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

Fire in Brandon

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services): Madam Speaker, Manitobans watched in horror on Saturday as a massive fire swept through downtown Brandon, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

The fire began in the Christie's Office Plus building on Pacific Avenue but quickly spread across the street to the Massey Manor and to Collyer's Sales and Service building to the east of the Christie's building. Airborne ash and debris was carried by the wind, igniting a fire two blocks away at the Knight's Inn beer vendor and the former Code nightclub. In less than two hours, four buildings were in flames and dozens of homes and commercial buildings were in danger.

It was the worst fire in decades in Brandon, but it could have been far worse if not for the professional work of firefighters with the Brandon

Fire & Emergency Services, Canadian Forces Base Shilo, the Oakland-Wawanesa and Souris and Glenwood fire departments, Manitoba Hydro and the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Within hours the fires were largely out, with no fatalities and no injuries. It's a remarkable outcome for such a dangerous situation.

On Sunday morning, I was joined by Brandon mayor Rick Chrest and the members for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) and Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) as the officials from the Brandon and—fire emergency services and Office of the Fire Commissioner showed us the enormity of the damage caused by the fire.

What we saw can only be described as staggering. Christie's, Collyer's and the beer vendor have each been reduced to smoking rubble. Massey Manor has suffered serious fire damage to its roof along with extensive water damage to all floors of the building.

Approximately 200 residents of that building, which is partially owned by Manitoba Housing, have been displaced. They were immediately assisted by the Red Cross representatives and housed at a local hotel, and we are working with a number of agencies, including the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Brandon Friendship Centre, to identify suitable long-term housing for those tenants.

Madam Speaker, it is a challenging situation, but there are so many people to thank for preventing it from becoming far worse: the many first responders from Brandon and surrounding communities, the Red Cross, the Brandon Bear Clan, the Friendship Centre and the Canadian Mental Health Association and, of course, the people of Brandon and Westman, who have shown overwhelming generosity toward the victims of this tragedy. We also thank our many government of Manitoba employees who responded to the crisis as it was unfolding and remain actively involved on a range of issues.

This has been a tremendous team effort, Madam Speaker, the kind of all-hands-on-deck, province-wide response that Manitobans are famous for. We face our challenges together, and our government stands with Brandon as it responds to this disaster.

Recovery will take time. It will not be measured in days and weeks, but rather in months and years. But I assure all Brandonites that our government will

be with you every step of the way as you rebuild from this terrible 'tragedy.'

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): The people of Brandon were shocked by the huge fire that engulfed a good chunk of downtown over the weekend and many people across the province looked on with concern and compassion as we saw those images of flames and billowing smoke start to spread across social media.

* (13:40)

Our hearts go out to everyone who's been affected by the fire. We—particularly the nearly 200 residents of the Massey Manor, about 54 families, along with the employees at Christie's Office Plus, the damaged boxing club, and other affected businesses, and all of the volunteer organizations that were involved in co-ordinating their activities out of those buildings that have been affected by the fire. We know that some 93 adults and 57 kids have registered at the evacuation centre, and we feel compassion for them. We are also thankful to hear that, perhaps, miraculously, no lives have been lost.

I want to personally thank, on behalf of our NDP team, all of the first responders who risked their safety, showing great bravery and courage. They fought to contain the fire and protect the lives of everyone affected.

So to all of the Brandon Fire & Emergency Services personnel, the Brandon police as well as the firefighters from Souris-Glenwood, Oakland-Wawanesa and CFB Shilo who all worked together to stop the fire, we want to extend our deepest gratitude on behalf of the people of Manitoba. You truly show the best of Manitoba's commitment to serve one another.

Looks like the Massey building may actually be saved, which is some good news, however, we know that the residents of that building will need housing in the interim and so we want to ask the government to ensure that those people's needs will be met while a long-term plan to repair their homes can be made.

We also want to thank everyone who's rushed to help stabilize things for the people affected. We know that many people in Brandon over the weekend were co-ordinating donations and drop-offs, swimsuits for the kids who were put up in a hotel, things like that. I also want to acknowledge

Kim Longstreet, who is known to many in the Brandon community for all her good work in the community. She set up a GoFundMe page to raise money to help with those people displaced. Last time I checked earlier today, there was more than, I think, \$11,000 already raised, so tremendous work being done there.

Again, we stand with the people of Brandon in their hour of need. We know that Brandon is strong and will recover. We urge this government to help all the families and those affected, but first and foremost we just want to extend our compassion and good wishes to all those who experienced such a tragedy over the weekend.

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

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it was a devastating weekend for the city of Brandon as a massive fire destroyed several buildings, including Massey Manor, a residential building that was badly damaged by the fire. It is times like this that we as Manitobans must stand with the hundreds of people who were forced to flee their homes and offer support to the businesses and homes that were destroyed in the blaze.

We are happy to report that everyone is safe and all pets have been found and united with their owners.

Donations are being accepted at St. Matthew's church, which is located on 13th Street in the city of Brandon, Manitoba. Specific items such as baby formula, diapers and water are still needed, as well as volunteers to help the evacuees sort through clothing donations.

Madam speaker, we would like to take this moment to thank the brave firefighters and all first responders from Brandon, Souris-Glenwood, Oakland-Wawanesa and CFB Shilo that helped to battle the massive fire.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister of Health, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our Rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with this statement.

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

It is with pleasure that I rise to recognize May as multiple sclerosis—or MS Awareness Month in Manitoba and also congratulate the work of the Manitoba Division of the MS Society of Canada. It is particularly important that we mark MS Awareness Month given that Canada has the highest rate of MS in the entire world. In fact, 300—or 3,500 Manitobans and 100,000 Canadians are estimated to be affected by the disease.

There has been significant improvement in treatment and medical support for MS patients over the past decade, and this is in no small part because of the advocacy, support and the fundraising efforts of the MS Society. The MS Society of Canada supports those in Manitoba and across the country who are affected by MS or an MS allied disease.

Thanks to the events such as the MS Walk or the MS Bike which I know many colleagues are familiar with. The MS Society provides services to patients, families, friends, caregivers, health professionals, employers, institutions and to students.

The—many of the Manitoba division of the MS Society have joined us here in the Legislature today and I know that they have an event planned in the Rotunda.

As Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living, I want to take this opportunity to thank them very sincerely for the work that they do, as they are allies, advocates and champions for Manitobans with MS.

And to those Manitobans living with MS and MS allied diseases: We applaud your courage, your determination and your vigor in dealing with your illness. I know that with a committed partner and advocate such as the MS Society of Canada you are well supported.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, I thank the Minister of Health for his statement.

May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, and next week on May 30th is World MS Day. Multiple sclerosis is a chronic and often disabling

disease, primarily diagnosed in people between the ages of 15 to 40. It is the most common neurological disease of young adults in Canada.

Each day, three more Canadians are diagnosed with MS. Women are three times more likely than men to develop the disease. Over 2 million people around the world suffer from MS, and over 3,000 families in Manitoba are forced to deal with MS on a daily basis. Not only does Canada have the highest rate of MS in the world, Manitoba has the highest rate in Canada, for reasons that are unknown.

Many mysteries still exist when it comes to MS. There's no confirmed cause and no known cure for this terrible disease. MS is unpredictable and can affect vision, hearing, memory, balance and mobility. It also has a tremendous effect on the family members of MS patients, and I want to acknowledge those who deal with this disease on a daily basis and to recognize their resilience.

Thank you to everyone involved in the fight to end multiple sclerosis, including doctors, nurses and health-care workers and the MS Society. Special thanks to the MS Society's Manitoba Division for its continuous efforts to spread awareness in Manitoba and improve the lives of Manitobans living with MS. We look forward to a day when we have a cure.

We call on the government to invest in health care, research and certainly the front-line health-care workers and services helping MS patients in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): As has been pointed out—

Madam Speaker: The member needs to ask for leave.

Mr. Gerrard: I ask for leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, as has been pointed out, Canada has the highest incidence of multiple sclerosis in the world, and within Canada, Manitoba has among the highest incidence and prevalence rates. It is therefore very important that we, in Manitoba, pay a lot of attention to multiple sclerosis and to those who have this condition. There are an estimated three and a half thousand Manitobans living with MS, and the direct costs of these are

considerable, both personally and of course for the provincial government.

Fortunately, there are many hard-working, devoted Canadians and particularly with the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada who are working tirelessly to do better in both preventing and treating multiple sclerosis. An example of recent work shows that levels of vitamin D and sunlight, when they are low, have been associated with multiple sclerosis for many years, but recently it's been found that genetic work showing individuals with genetic changes resulting in lower levels of vitamin D have a higher incidence of multiple sclerosis, linking this vitamin even closer to the development and progression of multiple sclerosis.

We need to be investing in the research to improve the treatment and to improve the prevention of MS. Preventive research can be most effectively done in jurisdictions where the incidence of multiple sclerosis is highest. Manitoba needs to be a participant in trials looking at improved therapy and improved prevention.

There's an important role for our provincial government in funding the research, given the scale of the trials which will be needed to look at effective preventive approaches. Manitoba should—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I ask for leave to respond to the ministerial statement.

* (13:50)

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

Mr. Fletcher: I agree with everything that has been said so I won't repeat it, but I will add some comments. They'll be in two parts: one is at the present and looking to the future.

At present, there are too many people with MS. We need to make sure that we as a society have the resources in communities so that people with MS or any other disorder can live full and meaningful lives. That means community care, not institutional care. It means flexible care, patient-driven care in many cases, or just having the proper medications.

The second point, Madam Speaker, is the future hope. MS is a sub—one of many neuromuscular disorders which affect many people. There is a commonality between all these seemingly unrelated disorders, and that is around the central nervous

system—the melon—between nerves and muscle atrophy.

Madam Speaker, this is why I support CIH, our Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and other researches—research around the world that looks to solutions. Some—one of these solutions is stem cell research. I support embryonic stem cell research with embryos that would otherwise be—otherwise be discarded. This is the greatest—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, can I ask for leave to finish up my statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to conclude his statement?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Thaddeus Bourassa

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Do unto others as you would have them do to you. Jesus' words of wisdom ring just as true today as they did when He first said them nearly 2,000 years ago. The golden rule as it has been—come to known is both countercultural and yet essential to a healthy community.

Generosity, compassion, kindness and self-sacrificial love all rest on this foundation: that you should treat others the way you want to be treated.

Sometimes we're told to look out for No. 1, or that money can buy happiness, but, sadly, that way of thinking often leads to an unfulfilling and lonely existence because, after all, everyone knows that the most worthwhile things in life cannot be bought.

So when a community is filled with individuals who consciously and sacrificially choose to show kindness and love, then it could be a place where everyone is valued, everyone is included and everyone is better off.

That's why I'm so grateful to teacher Thaddeus Bourassa from General Vanier School in Windsor Park. In September he started the school year by encouraging students to perform acts of kindness and write them down on coloured recipe cards. Soon there were so many cards that they flowed out of the classroom and into the hallway thanks to the

hundreds and hundreds of acts of kindness performed by his students.

After Christmas the word had spread and the hashtag #LRSDProjectGenerosity was born. More classrooms in more schools in the Louis Riel School Division were inspired by his ideas, and even better, thanks to Twitter, Mr. Bourassa's ideas for spreading kindness went around the globe as dozens of teachers on multiple continents started running with his ideas and classroom materials.

You know, teachers who inspire their students have done very well indeed, and teachers who inspire other educators do even better, but teachers who positively impact their entire community are better still.

Now, Mr. Thaddeus Bourassa and seven of his most kind and generous grade 5-6 students are with us in the gallery today and I ask you to join me in thanking them for building a better, more caring, more generous and kinder community not just today, but for the years to come.

Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of all the seven students that came with Mr. Bourassa today to be included in Hansard?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to include those names in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

General Vanier School grade 5-6 students in attendance: Avery Anderson, Hudson Bishop, Asia Guile, Evan Kupresak, Kali Machnicki, Sylvester Otunba, Gideon Wong; teacher, Mr. Thaddeus Bourassa

Arlene Skull Retirement

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, today I am honoured to pay tribute to the career of Arlene Skull, who after many decades of accomplishments in our public school system is retiring this year.

It has been my sincere pleasure to work with Arlene on many occasions in her current role as principal of Gordon Bell High School. She previously taught home economics throughout Winnipeg and served as vice-principal at General Wolfe School and Kelvin High School. She was also principal of Hugh John Macdonald School before leading Gordon Bell for the past 15 years.

Now, Gordon Bell is one of the most diverse schools in our province, Madam Speaker. The range in diversity includes 48 different languages spoken

by the student body, and it spans from indigenous students right through to new Canadians who may have only joined our community a few weeks or months ago.

Arlene has fought tirelessly to ensure the best opportunities for all of her students, regardless of their background or life circumstances. The experience of meeting young people from all over the world has given her a greater appreciation of the privileges that exist here. She is grateful to have worked with Manitoba chiefs, elders and the Metis council who are, in her own words, quote, probably the most supportive group of people I have ever worked with and learned from. End quote.

New dances—or new classes in dance, Native studies and the Cree language are all now available at Gordon Bell, thanks to her efforts, as are two EAL centres supported by the school division.

Arlene was also at the centre of the epic struggle to build the Gordon Bell Greenspace. Student activists from her inner-city school were demanding that they no longer be the only ones in Winnipeg who didn't have an outdoor green space. Where some administrators may have disapproved or called the cause hopeless from the beginning, Arlene threw her full support and passion to the cause, raising thousands of dollars from her own family members along the way.

Many different people and levels of government played essential roles in our ultimate victory, but without Arlene, the announcement at the 2009 graduation ceremony that we had won our field of dreams probably would never have happened.

In closing, Madam Speaker, let me simply say that Arlene Skull has consistently gone above and beyond the call of duty in her service to public education. She joins us here today in the public gallery, and I would ask all of my MLA colleagues to join me in thanking her for decades of service, her many lasting contributions to her students and to our community and to wish her the very best in her retirement.

Thank you.

Youth Philanthropist Jenna Sigurdson

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): I rise in the Legislature today to recognize a youth philanthropist, Jenna Sigurdson. Following her father's diagnosis with Parkinson's disease, she went on a crusade to do whatever she could in order to battle this disorder.

Over the past few years, she made an extraordinary amount of progress with fundraising and expanding public awareness of the disease.

Her determination has taken her a long way, a journey which began by knocking on over 2,000 doors in her community in order to raise funds for Parkinson's. Since the age 10, Jenna has raised over \$80,000 in support of the many people in our community living with Parkinson's disease. A hundred per cent of the funds raised goes to Parkinson's Canada for advocacy, local programs, education and, most importantly, research for a cure and better treatment that helps people living with this disease.

Her ongoing Jenna's Toonies for Tulips campaign involves organizing, planning and implementing fundraising events for Parkinson's in honour of world Parkinson day. Jenna has met with local business professionals in order to secure sponsorships for the campaign and distribution of a signature bookmark she created for this cause. She successfully secured McNally Robinson bookstore for the first year and Red River Co-op food stores for every subsequent year thereafter.

Jenna's ongoing work has not gone unnoticed, as she's been the recipient of many awards, including being the first child in Canada recognized for the Spirit of Philanthropy Award by Parkinson Canada in 2014, the Young Humanitarian Award by the Manitoba Teachers' Society in 2015, the Manitoba Philanthropy Award for Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy by the Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2016, the award of recognition and appreciation of outstanding contributions in support of people living with Parkinson's by Parkinson's Canada in 2017 and the Collège Jeanne-Sauvé Prix de directeur in both 2016 and '17, Madam Speaker.

I ask my colleagues to help rise in the House today to recognize Jenna Sigurdson and her family, which includes Blair Sigurdson, Karren Sigurdson, Matt Sigurdson, and as well as their special guest, Alain Michalik, the principal at Collège Jeanne-Sauvé.

*(14:00)

Filipino Bilingual Elementary School Program

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): As members of this House may have already heard from the media, Seven Oaks School Division is now accepting registrations for children from kindergarten to grade

3 for a Filipino bilingual elementary school program, the first of its kind in Manitoba.

Currently in the riding that I have the honour of representing we have bilingual programs in, and bear with me here, Ojibwe, Ukrainian, Punjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish and German, and starting this fall, Madam Speaker, in Filipino as well.

The program at Seven Oaks, which emphasizes Filipino culture and history for kindergarten-to-grade-3 students, is commendable for pushing forward a bilingual curriculum and strengthening the multicultural fabric of our province.

It is something we should all be proud of because not only is it a program great for newcomers to our country, but it is also a wonderful opportunity for children who are curious to learn and reconnect with their heritage.

In order for Manitoba to fully embrace our diversity, we need to express our appreciation for young people who today take the time to learn about their heritage, as this is what broadens and preserves our multiculturalism.

In closing, I would just like to congratulate the Seven Oaks School Division on this program and wish them the very best this coming school year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Brigitte Lacquette

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, it takes a lot of work and dedication to compete at the highest level of sport, and while all Manitobans are born with greatness, it's often others that bring out the best in people.

Terrance and Anita Lacquette live in Dauphin and they are the proud parents of Brigitte Lacquette, who was named and played for the Canadian Olympic hockey team in the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang. As a 25-year-old, Brigitte captured a silver medal with Team Canada and has won many other awards throughout her brilliant career.

Madam Speaker, it's no small feat and a very long way from tiny Mallard, Manitoba to the Olympic Games, but with the guidance, advice and prayers of her parents, Brigitte has become an important role model in Manitoba and an inspiration to all First Nations.

Brigitte started playing hockey at the age of five. Her dad Terrance was her coach for most of her

minor hockey years and helped to develop Brigitte's hockey skills on a little patch of ice outside their home in Mallard.

At the age of nine, when Brigitte set herself a goal to play for the national women's hockey team at the Olympics, Terrance and Anita played a significant role in encouraging, enabling and helping Brigitte reach her dream.

In Anita's words, it took 20 years to witness such a call upon her life, and we realize it takes a dream, hard work, determination and perseverance to be a success.

Although she grew up in a small Metis community of Mallard, Brigitte gains her First Nation status from Cote First Nation, where her mother is from.

Being selected as the first First Nations hockey player to be named to Canada's national hockey team and to play in the Olympics is a dream come true.

Congratulations to Brigitte, Terrance and Anita on their success and for making Manitoba proud.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

We have seated in the public gallery from Selkirk Junior High 60 grade 9 students under the direction of Joan Cooney, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Universal Pharmacare Program Government Position

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, it's important to mark events like Multiple Sclerosis Month. We know that many Manitobans are affected by the debilitating disease. There's too many people suffering. But we also know that celebrating events like this should drive us, as public servants, to action to help make a difference for people who are affected by diseases like MS.

We know that many people with MS face massive bills to pay for their drugs and it can have a real impact on their lives, potentially forcing them to choose between rent or food or the medication that they need to be able to have a good quality of life. And that's the choice confronted by tens of thousands of Canadians every year, including many people right here in our province.

There is a unique opportunity right now. The federal government is thinking pharmacare. With a little push in the right direction, they may actually start thinking universal pharmacare, a drug plan that could work for everyone.

While researchers work towards finding a cure for MS, I would ask the Minister of Health if he would support our call for a public, universal pharmacare program for everyone in this country.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite's question on affordability.

Of course, affordability touches a number of different areas when it comes to government, not the least of which is taxation, and we saw for many years under the former government where Manitoba became less affordable for average Manitobans. Those who were living with chronic illness, those who were simply trying to help their families, it was more difficult under the NDP as life, everyday life, became less affordable.

When it comes to the particular issue of universal pharmacare coverage, Madam Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to meet with former Ontario health minister, Eric Hoskins, who was in Manitoba to discuss pharmacare, and we certainly told them that we have a great program here in Manitoba, but we're always open to ideas to make it better.

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

Special Drug Program Request to Maintain

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, the minister's record on supporting patients is a poor one. This government cancelled the special drugs program. Without any warning or consultation the Premier (Mr. Pallister) cancelled that program which

helped 1,000 Manitobans get access to the drugs that they need.

Now, this program helped people with conditions like cystic fibrosis, diabetes and others. We know that as a result of them losing this drug coverage, some people are being forced to move. One individual, in particular, has had to postpone his plans for the wedding that he was going to have this year. All the money that he had raised through socials and stuff like that, instead of paying for the wedding is now going to be paying for the costs of his drugs as a result of the decisions of this government.

Again, we know patients are suffering in silence. We are listening. Is the government listening?

Will the minister reverse his misguided decision to cut the special drugs plan for Manitobans?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, in the case, in particular, of those who are living with cystic fibrosis, 75 per cent of those with CF were under the provincial Pharmacare program for the last 30 years, and never did the NDP, when they were in government over the past 16 or 17 years, ever say that the Pharmacare program in Manitoba was insufficient or not appropriate for those who had cystic fibrosis.

When it comes to those living with diabetes, Madam Speaker, more than 90 per cent—well over 90 per cent of those who had diabetes were using the Pharmacare program that we have, the universal Pharmacare program that we have in Manitoba, Madam Speaker. Never once did the NDP say that that program wasn't sufficient.

So when they were in government they said one thing; now, in opposition they're saying something entirely different. The only thing consistent is they were wrong in government; they're wrong now, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, for the individuals that the Minister of Health leaves out of his comments there, their drug coverage is now worse as a result of his decision. Their drugs are now more expensive, in many cases much, much more expensive as a result of the decisions that he's implementing at the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) behest.

Now, there's a trend here. We know that the government cut support for diabetics last year. They also cut support for people with many specialized conditions and then, of course, they announced the cuts to the specialized—or to the special drugs program. Now, originally, the name of this program was the Life Saving Drug Program, reason being, of course, because it did just that; it provided drugs for people in a way that saved their lives.

We have called on the minister time and time again to reverse his decision, but he has refused to answer.

I would ask him again directly: Will he reverse his decision to cut the special drugs program in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Again, Madam Speaker, the vast, vast majority of Manitobans, whether they have CF, whether they have diabetes, they are on the provincial Pharmacare program—well over 90 per cent for those who are dealing with diabetes, well over 75 per cent for those with cystic fibrosis.

Never once when the NDP were in government did they suggest that the Pharmacare program that we have in Manitoba was insufficient for them. Never once did they suggest that the Pharmacare program was putting their lives at risk, Madam Speaker. In fact, they were quite proud of the Pharmacare program when they were in government, as well they should be because we have one of the best pharmacare programs in the country. In fact, it was their former leader, Gary Doer, who said that Manitoba has one of the most comprehensive universal Pharmacare programs in all of Manitoba—there for all Manitobans. Their former leader said that.

* (14:10)

On this one, I stand with Gary Doer, Madam Speaker.

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

French Language Services Request for Plan

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's become increasingly clear that the government is failing to uphold the spirit and intent of their Bill 5. Now, this is an important bill. It would bring in many important forms of recognition and provision of services for members of the francophone community. But Bill 5 also required

government departments to have multi-year French language service plans. Now, this is so that patients can get the care that they need in a hospital in their mother tongue; so that, you know, young people could go to a daycare or to a school and 'receive' services in the French language. We do live in a bilingual country, after all.

So I'd ask the minister responsible for French services: When did they approve their multi-year strategic plan for the Ministry of Health?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): Merci beaucoup, madame la Présidente, pour la question. On a fait plus pour la communauté franco-manitobaine dans notre premier session que le NPD a fait dans une décennie.

Translation

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the question. We've done more for the Franco-Manitoban community in our first session than the NDP did in a decade.

English

And to answer the member's question en anglais [*in English*]: beginning of April.

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

Mr. Kinew: Ce n'est pas correct, madame la Présidente. Une demande d'accès de—d'information, mis que jusqu'à mai le dix, que cette plan n'était pas été mise en place par le département. Le département de santé était supposé de présenter un plan stratégique pour les services de santé en français. C'est très important pour que les francophones seront être capables d'accès—d'accéder services de français dans les hôpitaux, dans des cliniques, et toute ça. Mais, ils ont rien fait, ils ont—jusqu'à 2017, ils ont rien fait. Ils ont donné un 'extassion' pour leur plan de—pour leur date de limite, jusqu'à 2018, même à 2018 ils ont encore rien fait. Ça a pris un autre deux mois après de cette date qu'ils sont mis un place en plan.

Alors, je demande le ministre encore pour quoi est-ce que ça a pris si long, si long pour créer eur plan?

Translation

That's not true, Madam Speaker. An access to information request indicates that as of May 10, that plan had not been implemented by the department. The Department of Health was supposed to submit a

strategic plan respecting health services in French. It's very important for francophones to have access to French language services in hospitals, in clinics, etc. However, they hadn't done anything—up until 2017, they hadn't done anything. They extended the deadline for the plan to 2018, and even in 2018 they still haven't done anything. It's been two months since that deadline for a plan to be put into place.

So I'm asking the minister again: why has it taken so long to develop their plan?

Ms. Squires: Merci beaucoup, madame la Présidente, pour la question. [*Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the question.*] I would like to just correct the member that the Health Ministry did provide their French Language Services report. That minister has signed it off; I've signed it off. It has been received, and we're really proud of the fact that we have got expanded bilingual capacity in all government departments in the Province of Manitoba.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, the minister glosses over the fact that she just put incorrect information on the record as to the timeline of when this plan was put in place.

What I'm hearing on the doorsteps in St. Boniface is that those in the community who are francophone think that it's very important to be able to access services in their mother tongue, whether that be in the hospital—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —whether that be in the daycare or whether that be at the school of their choice.

But again, the government set themselves a deadline of spring 2017 to put this plan in place. They gave themselves in—a one-year extension to the spring of 2018 to put this plan in place. Again, two years after that—or two months after that one-year extension, they still hadn't put a plan in place. And now the minister is trying to misrepresent the timeline.

So I would ask again, the Minister of Health or the minister responsible for francophone service: Pour quoi est-ce que ça a pris si long pour créer un plan pour améliorer les services en français ici en Manitoba?

Translation

Why has it taken so long to develop a plan to improve French language services here in Manitoba?

Ms. Squires: You know, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Official Opposition, he is an expert when it talks about misrepresenting the facts.

In fact, a few weeks ago, he came in here, and he warned everybody that there were polar bears running wild in the streets of Churchill and that our Polar Bear Alert Program was no longer in action. And I would like to ask the member to apologize to all the conservation officers and all the hard-working members of Churchill who work hard to keep the community safe and protect the polar bears, and apologize to the members of the polar bear safety alert program for putting that misinformation on the record, for fear mongering that there were polar bears running wild in the streets.

Just like he was wrong then, he's wrong now. The Minister of Health signed off on that report; I've signed off on the report. We are very proud of the expanded bilingual capacity in the province of Manitoba. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

**Education System Budget
Spending on Capital Projects**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Every day the Minister of Education stands up in this House and makes unsupported claims about spending on education, but the numbers tell the real story.

The most recent PSFB report shows that the government spent only \$114 million on school capital in 2017, compared with \$139 million in 2016. This means that in this government's first full year in power they cut \$25 million to the Education capital budget, all the while still claiming that they had spent more than ever.

So now the minister may get up in a minute and try to spin his way out of this, but the spin doesn't change the facts and the facts are clear in black and white. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: Will the minister explain why he thinks that \$25 million less in capital spending is actually more?

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

Certainly, it gives me a chance to remind them that when we came into government the deficit on maintenance in Manitoba schools was \$450 million. Now, we can—we are very aggressively working at that. We are prioritizing it based on safety, security and access issues, and in the meantime we also have a program to build schools in Manitoba to catch up where they didn't.

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

Mr. Wiebe: The facts are clear: \$25 million less is being spent this—by this government on school capital this year.

So the minister wants to talk about spending on capital projects. Well, that spending—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wiebe: That's right, that spending would've been \$25 million more for science labs, for shops classes, for new gym projects. Madam Speaker, \$25 million more could have built new classroom space to keep class sizes small for K-to-3 students, but instead of actually investing in our schools, this Premier (Mr. Pallister), this minister, they continue to spin while their cuts are being shown plainly in the numbers.

Madam Speaker, can the minister please tell us how many school construction and renovation projects didn't happen last year because of this Premier's cuts to education spending?

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member, yet again, for the question on our aggressive program to build capital items related to education in Manitoba.

I mentioned earlier that we have aggressive program to build schools; that would be seven new schools. Every one of those has classrooms, every one has science labs, every one has gymnasiums and quite a number of them have vocational facilities—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wishart: —where they fell behind even further.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I was wrong, Madam Speaker. I thought the minister might try to—*[interjection]*—I

thought the minister may try to spin us here—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —this afternoon, but, in fact, he's just demonstrating how much behind they are because his cut to spending is \$25 million less in this year than it was last year. This is all the while cutting funding to colleges and universities, de facto cuts to public schools. Public accounts show that Education and Training, in fact, underspent its budget by \$40 million in the last year alone, showing that this government's budget numbers are as meaningless as this minister's claim.

So I ask: Can this minister commit that every dollar that's being budgeted for education and training will actually be spent on educating students in this province this year?

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member yet again for the question.

We, certainly, are working very constructively with the K-to-12 system in Manitoba to improve the outcome for students in Manitoba.

When they came into government, we rated fifth in the country in terms of educational outcomes. When they went out of government they were dead last.

* (14:20)

We continue to work constructively to build the right kind of facilities in the right place in Manitoba so Manitoba students can get an education that they deserve.

Health-Care System Request to Release KPMG Report

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, we know this government has a problem with consultants and reports. When they're not cherry-picking recommendations, they're actively trying to interfere in reports to make sure the conclusions meet their ideological agenda and, worse, the minister said he won't even track or report on the progress of those reports.

We do know most of the cuts the minister's making come from KPMG. The minister has refused to release the report.

I ask the minister: Will he release the entire KPMG report on health care and will he do it today?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I'm shocked that the member opposite is still attacking Dr. Rush after the long weekend. I thought he would have had some time to reflect on that strategy, such as it is.

Dr. Rush is a renowned researcher, somebody who has spent almost four decades—40 years—dealing with addictions, dealing with mental health, Madam Speaker, making suggestions, not just in Canada, but, I think, around the world. And so I'm still confounded that the member opposite would want to attack the author even though we've had many, like Bonnie Bricker, come out and speak in favour of the report. The mood disorders of Manitoba have come out and spoken in—favourably about the report. It seems that everybody in the system is supportive of the report except for the member opposite, for some reason.

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

Mr. Swan: Manitobans are confounded by a government refusing to release a report that they promised to release. Of course, back when the report was asked for, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said that they would release it with some redactions for privacy reasons. In February, they said they couldn't do it yet because they were informing decisions related to Budget 2017.

After the budget came down last year they then said they didn't own the information they paid \$750,000 for. Then in October, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) thought it would just only add to public confusion.

Could we cut through it, and could the Minister of Health stand up today and table the KPMG report for this House and for the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the member opposite might forget, but I'll remember for him that when he was the Attorney General they conducted a report on the population of Manitoba jails. Of course, we pushed to have that report released. He said, well, he didn't think it was the right time to release it. Then he said well, it was really confidential information, it couldn't be released. Then he hid behind the Ombudsman and said, well, no, the Ombudsman says I don't have to release it, so I'm not going to release it. That's his track record when it comes to reports.

We've said publicly for the last many months the full KPMG report would be released by the end of May, and it will, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, unfortunately for this minister, it's his Premier (Mr. Pallister) that promised to release that report, and what did the minister do? He released a blacked-out sliver of the entire report in December, and that was after the report had been in the government's hands for nearly a year.

The reasons they've given for not releasing the entire report have changed from month to month to month, and there's no good reason to do so. The minister doesn't want Manitobans to know what cuts his high-priced consultants are ordering for the province of Manitoba. He said the release would be made in May, but not just a redacted copy.

Will the minister release the entire report while this Legislature is still sitting so we can find out what else KPMG plans his government to cut in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, the member opposite, as the Attorney General, refused to release a report that was important to Manitobans when it came to the population of jails. In fact, he hid behind an independent officer of this House to try to not release it.

We came into government. We realized the Peachey report was there, Madam Speaker, and so we released, publicly, the Peachey report. They said we hid it, but we hid it on the Internet.

We said we'd release the wait-times task force, and we released the wait-times task force, Madam Speaker, before December. We said we'd release the VIRGO report. Not only did we release the VIRGO report, released a draft version of the VIRGO report. Could you be more transparent than that? And we'll release the KPMG report at the end of May.

Mature Women's Centre Request to Maintain

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Health Minister's cuts are making it harder for women and girls to access the health care that they need and certainly deserve. Without consultation or warning, the minister shut down the Mature Women's Centre at Victoria Hospital. He fired lactation consultants and has repeatedly refused to provide proper access to reproductive services. The bottom line is that

women and girls are being left behind by this minister's actions and his cuts.

Will the minister stop his attack on women and girls' health care here in Manitoba and reinstate for—to begin with, the Mature Women's Centre at Victoria Hospital?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): The member opposite has forgotten, so let me remind her that when she was a special adviser to her government there was an attack on women unlike anything that this province has ever seen before. They made life more unaffordable for women by jacking up taxes on women. They made access to child care more difficult for women by creating lengthy wait-lists and not addressing them. They made life more unaffordable by running—by doubling the debt and growing the deficit to nearly a billion dollars.

That is the mess that we inherited when we took office. Our Health Minister has increased the health-care budget for women, for all Manitobans, substantially, and we're going to continue to make life better for women in the province of Manitoba.

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

Women's Health Care Access to Mifegymiso

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Women and girls' access—across the province are in real need of proper access to reproductive health care, including access to abortions. Certainly, this is an issue in northern and rural areas. But this government, this minister, has not made any attempt to inform Manitobans that there actually is a game changer in the form of the abortion pill that should be available to all Manitoba women and girls.

Women and girls were improperly charged for the abortion pill and the minister still has not made available Mifegymiso across Manitoba.

Will the Health Minister commit today to making sure that all Manitoba women and girls have access to the abortion pill?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, you know, I certainly wish that members opposite would stop trying to play politics with this issue. She knows full well that all the women who have sought out access to Mifegymiso, 90 per cent of them have received

the product free of charge under the plan that our government has brought into place.

We're reviewing all the options. We know that all low-income and no-income and indigenous women and girls are able to access this product free of charge. We're working hard to ensure that women's health services are available for them when they need them and where they need them. Our Health Minister has enhanced the health-care budget and we're going to continue to make life better for women in the province.

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

Manitoba's Women and Girls Reproductive Health Care

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Certainly, none of what was just said is actually accurate.

And we know that front-line workers are overworked and stressed because of these minister's cuts. Hundreds of nurses rallied on the steps of the Legislature to actually tell the minister that they're being forced to work hundreds of hours of overtime.

Did the minister come and actually sit and listen? No, of course not. He ignored them as he always does. When the minister refuses to listen to front-line nurses, that's when he starts making cuts that really hurt women and girls: cuts like firing lactation consultants, cuts like refusing to properly cover the abortion pill, cuts like shuttering the Mature Women's Centre.

Will the minister finally stand up for women and girls' reproductive health and health here in Manitoba today?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): I would dare say that members opposite know a fair deal about things that hurt women and girls in this province of Manitoba.

And in terms of standing up for women's reproductive rights, our government has always been—we respect a woman's autonomy over her health and we will continue to make life more affordable for women and girls, unlike what previous government did in making life unaffordable, making services unavailable to them.

* (14:30)

We're going in a different direction. I wish that they would stop playing politics with the lives of

women and girls and get on board with a plan to actually make life better.

Legalization of Cannabis Expected Revenue

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): We are anticipating that over the summer the national cannabis legislation will be taking effect. This should be no surprise to this government given it has been the Liberal Party's policy since 2012. This government has had plenty of time to formulate a plan, but it appears that many 'manitobans' still feel left in the dark regarding the proposed legislation.

Has the government decided where it will invest the millions of dollars in expected revenue?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for Burrows for the question.

And that member knows, as all Canadians understand, that this is a rush job by the federal government. There are numerous groups, police associations, community groups, provincial premiers, saying the same thing. Indeed, they'll be saying those things when premiers of western Canada convene this week.

However, that member should also clearly understand that the reason that there is no budget line printed for revenue on cannabis in this year is that we know that when it comes to the Province's expenditures that we will incur, will far outweigh any benefits.

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

Youth Criminalization

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance knows that this is not a rush job. The Liberal Party of Canada has been talking about this proposed legislation since 2012. That is six years that this government has had.

In reviewing Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Lamoureux: —Retailing of Cannabis Act, a major concern that we have with the current legislation as written is that an 18-year-old could face a year in jail or a \$100,000 fine for possessing a single joint. It defies common sense to punish an 18-year-old this way for something that is perfectly legal for a 19-year-old and older.

Madam Speaker, if a person aged 18 can vote and can drink and is legally an adult, how can the minister justify criminalizing the possession of cannabis for 18-year-olds?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, the member opposite does not have her facts straight. I would suggest that she does a little research and some homework before she comes out with these kinds of allegations.

Madam Speaker, it is a fact that we do have Bill C-45, Bill C-46, before the federal government right now. And it—and the federal government, her Liberal friends in Ottawa, are intent on legalizing cannabis before the proper safety measures are in place, and those safety measures have to do with the tools for police officers for roadside safety.

We are concerned. We will always put the public health and safety of Manitobans first. We hope members opposite will get on board with us on that.

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

Request to Reduce Legal Age Limit

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, it is this government, this Minister of Justice, legislation who has created this legal age gap. She has the ability to correct it; she's choosing not to.

Currently, the minister is saying all 18-year-olds caught with the possession of cannabis here in Manitoba will have a criminal record and they will be subject to a year in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Will the minister consider amending her legislation to reduce the legal age of possession of cannabis to 18 years of age?

Mrs. Stefanson: The member opposite is absolutely wrong and I strongly suggest she gets her facts right when it comes to this.

Madam Speaker, we will always put the public health of safety—and safety of Manitobans first, particularly our young people. That's why we have chosen the age of 19: to keep it out of schools.

I suggest she talks to the Manitoba association of school boards, Madam Speaker. They are very much in favour of the approach we have taken. When you talk to the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police, when you talk to other law enforcement agencies, they agree with our approach in public health and safety.

I suggest the member opposite gets her facts right. She is dead wrong when it comes to what she's talking about.

Northern Workforce Development Centre New Facility Announcement

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Our PC government was elected on a promise to fix the Province's finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy, and we continue to do this by making important investments in our North.

Last week, I was pleased to host the Minister of Education and Training to make an important announcement in my constituency of Thompson, Madam Speaker.

Can the minister please share with the Chamber today the good news that our PC government is bringing to northern Manitoba?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I'd like to thank the member for his excellent question. I was pleased to join him on Friday to make the announcement about the Northern Workforce Development Centre.

This is a centre where all services will be aligned so that we can take advantage of the co-ordination so that Manitobans in the North can have the best access to well-trained jobs in the future.

We're working with many partners, including Vale and the City of Thompson, to make sure that this works very well, so that Manitobans have the opportunity to find good jobs and we can help rebuild northern Manitoba.

Social and Affordable Housing Government Commitment

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Our NDP government was building hundreds of social and affordable housing every year, but this Pallister government is pulling back. The most recent quarterly report shows that the Province has reduced its actual strategic—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —infrastructure spending on housing by \$25 million. It's concerning, Madam Speaker, as the housing—as the National Housing Strategy provides opportunity to enhance housing, rather than move backwards.

Why is the minister not meeting his own commitment to social and affordable housing?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): When you talk about moving backwards, you need to take a look at the track record of the NDP in terms of social housing. We know the NDP left over \$500 million of deferred maintenance on our housing stock.

That is something I'd say is not a good track record, and we need to make changes. Our government is clearly invested in housing—not just affordable housing, but social housing.

Since coming to office, we've invested and opened, as well supported through the rent geared to income or operating budgets, upwards of 487 new units; 42 per cent are social housing, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mrs. Smith: I'll reiterate that again: our government was building hundreds of affordable and social housing every year, but now this minister's own annual report in Estimates show that the Province now owns—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: –300 less housing units than just two years ago. Shame.

That's not even our calculations, Madam Speaker. These are the minister's own reports. The minister likes to brag about the need for housing supports due to growing poverty, but when push comes to shove he's just making—he's just not making the investments.

Why is this minister not keeping up with his own commitment to social and affordable housing?

Mr. Fielding: This government isn't done building social and affordable housing for the province of Manitoba. We have over 148 new units that we're constructing; close to 30 per cent are social housing.

We've also made investment; we've signed on to the National Housing Strategy. That could mean hundreds, millions of dollars more of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: –infrastructure dollars for things like social and affordable housing units.

We think that's progress.

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

Mrs. Smith: I'll repeat it again. Our government—our NDP government—was building hundreds of social and affordable housing every year. They've built zero.

This minister is selling off housing stock and cutting spending on housing by \$25 million. The result is obvious: there's 300 less provincial housing units than just two years ago, and I'll table for the minister a copy of pages from the 2016 annual report and this year's Estimates. This is in the minister's own words, in his own reports.

Will the minister quit playing his game and keep his promise to build social and affordable housing?

* (14:40)

Mr. Fielding: This government has taken a balanced approach to housing when you look at our investments. I mentioned the housing stock that has opened up with a non-profit, as well as Manitoba Housing, as well as all the people, close to 3,000 more people are going to be supported. In fact, close to 3,300 more people will be supported under the Rent Assist program, a portable shelter benefit that's in alignment with the federal government is talking about in terms of National Housing Strategy. We think that's an important investments we made—we've also made important investments on vulnerable individuals: over \$3 million supported Siloam Mission for homeless individuals as well as a housing-first rent subsidy program where 48 individuals in the Brandon area will be supported.

We think these are important investments in housing.

South Winnipeg Recreational Complex Request for New Facility

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): National Health and Fitness Day is coming up next week on June 2nd. It's an opportunity to encourage Manitobans to get active and stay healthy in their communities.

It's concerning that thousands of residents in South Winnipeg lack adequate recreational services. The Province has frozen its funding for municipalities and eliminated programs that provided predictable and guaranteed funding. It's a de facto cut.

Will the Pallister government commit to investing in a new recreational complex for South Winnipeg?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Well, Madam Speaker, on behalf of our government and all citizens of Manitoba, we want to take this opportunity to thank Canada's hockey team for a job well done taking their team, and, yes, the city of Winnipeg to new heights. Who can forget the Whiteout hockey games, Madam Speaker, to Whiteout street parties?

I want to take this opportunity to thank our very own Winnipeg Jets for one fantastic season.

Madam Speaker, go, Jets, go. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Logan, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Marcelino: Active communities require investments in places to play. When the Pallister government cancelled the province's 50-50 guarantee of infrastructure spending, they made it much harder for communities to build these important facilities. But residents of St. Norbert, Fort Whyte and Fort Richmond know that recreation facilities are needed. By their own estimates, residents calculate a ward as big as Winnipeg south should have five more recreational and community centres.

Will the government reverse course and commit to investing in a new recreational complex for South Winnipeg?

Mr. Schuler: Well, Madam Speaker, the blizzard season, unfortunately, ended a couple of days ago, but we know that the Winnipeg Blue Bombers are going to turn the city gold, and they're going to do so in that fantastic stadium that we're renovating right now on the south side of the city.

And we want to point out to members that being active and healthy is very important. That's why our government will continue support a great baseball team. In fact, we're going to be having a great national soccer team coming. We want to encourage all our young people, in fact, all Manitobans to get out, get out and exercise. It's going to be a beautiful summer. Get out and get your ParticipACTION in, Madam Speaker, and on that note, go, Bombers, go.

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

Ms. Marcelino: So surprising that the minister didn't even respond to any of the two questions I responded, so out of relevance was his responses.

Madam Speaker, recreational facilities help keep our communities healthy. Manitoba families need quality spaces for recreation and there is a strong need in Winnipeg and beyond. The loss of the 50-50 funding for municipalities is placing these facilities out of reach for many.

Will the Pallister government listen to the residents of South Winnipeg? Will they commit to investing in a new recreational complex for South Winnipeg, and will the minister be relevant in his response?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I'm—just want to inform the House that I'm looking forward to June districts coming up and getting out to communities throughout, not only Winnipeg but in Manitoba, right across this great province of ours, Madam Speaker.

We're doing the hard work and the heavy lifting that the NDP refused to do for 17 years, Madam Speaker. We're going to continue to communicate with the municipalities right across this province to ensure that investments are being made strategically to ensure, again, that communities are being listened to and supported by this government.

Where they got it wrong, we'll get it right.

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House—*[interjection]*—oh.

The time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

Following question period on May 9th, 2018, the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) raised a matter of privilege suggesting that the official opposition demonstrated a disrespect of the practices and proceedings of the Legislature and that the privileges of the House had been breached because the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) had shared the contents of Bill 223, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, with both the public and media before the bill had been introduced and distributed in the Assembly.

The honourable Government House Leader concluded his remarks by moving, and I quote, that the Speaker rule that the practices of the official opposition and particularly the member for Point Douglas are breaching the parliamentary privileges of all MLAs and are breaking the rules of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The official

opposition should respect the rules, proceedings and practices of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly and the privilege of all its members. End quote.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) and the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) both spoke to this before I took the matter under advisement.

As members may recall, there are two conditions that must be met to demonstrate a prima facie case of privilege: first, a member must establish that they raised the issue at the earliest opportunity, and second, the member must provide sufficient evidence to verify that the privileges of the House have been breached.

Regarding the first condition, the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) indicated that he was raising the issue at the first opportunity after receiving and reviewing Bill 223, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act. In my opinion, this meets the test of timeliness.

Regarding the second condition, whether there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the privileges of the House have been breached, there are many factors to consider. I will note first that the following examples reference the actions of ministers, but in this context the information provided and the conclusions drawn apply to any member of this House. Joseph Maingot, on page 224 of the second edition of Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, advises that, and I quote, a complaint that a minister of the Crown has made a statement outside the House rather than in the House or that the government provides information only to its supporters in the House may well amount to a grievance against the government, but in the absence of an order in the House forbidding such activity, there is no personal or corporate privilege that has been breached in the doing, and neither does it constitute contempt of the House in the privilege sense, end quote.

Further, there have been numerous rulings from the Canadian House of Commons on the subject of press conferences and legislation. I will share one of these with members, as the findings do have a bearing on the situation in Manitoba. On May 13th, 2003, Speaker Milliken delivered a ruling on a question of privilege raised in the House of Commons alleging that the information on a bill was widely available to the media and that the minister responsible had gone to Washington to talk to the US Attorney General about the proposed bill before it was introduced in the House.

* (14:50)

Speaker Milliken ruled that unless there is considerable evidence that the minister has made available copies of the bill to someone else, it is hard for the Chair to find any breach of privileges. He also stated that, and I quote, of course the honourable member, I am sure, will monitor the situation closely and watch and see if copies are being bandied about in advance, which I admit might be a breach of the privileges if that sort of thing were going on. We do not have evidence of that at the moment so there is not a question of privilege here. End quote.

Looking at Manitoba precedents, Speakers from the last several decades have consistently found in similar circumstances that, as Speaker Walding ruled on June 2nd, 1983, that such a complaint, and I quote, may be a matter of discourtesy, but it is not a matter of privilege. End quote. Manitoba Speakers Phillips, Rocan, Hickes and Reid have all supported this sentiment in subsequent rulings.

I will also observe that the underlying principle here is the primacy and authority of the Assembly. As elected representatives it is our duty to carefully consider the business before us so that we may make informed decisions. Any matter destined for consideration by this body, including legislation, should be introduced and explained here first before it is shared with the public or the media. This has been the practice of this place for almost 150 years.

In recent years though, we have seen this practice evolve. It has become common for members on all sides of the House to discuss, in general or conceptual terms, potential legislation outside of the House, in advance of introduction. These discussions have occurred in the form of consultations with stakeholders and also through interactions with the media. As long as such discussions do not reveal or relate any detailed provisions of upcoming legislation, the primacy and authority of the Assembly is not infringed upon.

In the current circumstance, I must note that no evidence was provided to the Chair to demonstrate that any specific details of the bill in question were shared with the media or anyone else prior to introduction in the House. This is a crucial point. In the absence of such proof, as your Speaker, I have no basis to rule that any privileges were breached.

Accordingly, after careful consideration of all that I have related to the House, I must find that a

prima facie case of privilege has not been established in this matter.

However, I would strongly urge all members to reflect on the information I have presented today. I would echo Speaker Walding's sentiments and note that, while this circumstance does not constitute a breach of privilege, it could be considered discourteous to the Assembly. Should a similar situation occur in the future, as your Speaker I would remain obligated to carefully consider all of the evidence presented and deliver a ruling.

I will leave you with the observation that we live in an era when human communications have experienced unprecedented growth and evolution. The modes of communication available to us, and the pace and manner of our interactions, move at a speed unimaginable to our predecessors.

With that in mind, I would offer a suggestion that the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House may want to meet to consider whether or not disclosure of bill contents prior to the introduction and distribution of the bill should be allowed.

I am not stating a preference on this question. I am simply suggesting that the committee should either confirm the traditional practices or re-evaluate it in light of modern communication methods. This discussion could also be extended to consider other potential modernizations of our processes and practices.

And I thank members for their careful attention to this ruling.

PETITIONS

Bureau de l'éducation française

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Merci, madame la Présidente. Je veux présenter cette pétition au—à l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba.

Voici les raisons de la présente pétition :

(1) Le Manitoba fait la promotion d'un système éducatif dynamique en française et en anglaise depuis plusieurs décennies. Au niveau national, les Canadiens ont depuis longtemps démontré leur engagement envers un système éducatif dans les deux langues officielles, et le Manitoba a depuis longtemps exercé un leadership de première plan en matière d'éducation de la langue française.

(2) Le Bureau de l'éducation française développe, évalue et administre les politiques et les

programmes relatifs à l'éducation en français. Il offre une gamme de services et d'appuis pédagogiques aux écoles et aux enseignants du Manitoba et guère tous les programmes provenant de l'Entente Canada-Manitoba relative à l'enseignement dans la langue de la minorité et à l'enseignement de la langue seconde. Il offre également du perfectionnement professionnel aux enseignants et aux directions d'écoles.

(3) Le sous-ministre adjoint du BEF apportait et défendait les questions importantes touchant à l'éducation en française au Manitoba, à la table d'innovations—négociations du gouvernement. Sans cet accès direct, les parents et les parties prenantes ont perdu leurs voix à la table des négociations.

(4) L'éducation en française ne peut pas être un calque de l'éducation en anglaise car elle doit refléter les particularités culturelles dans toute sa programmation afin d'être pertinent et efficace. Un BEF qui fonctionne à plein régime est en—essentiel pour une programmation de qualité dispensée par les éducateurs et éducatrices du Manitoba pour le bien des élèves inscrits dans les programmes de langue française au Manitoba.

Nous demandons à l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba ce qui suit :

(1) D'exhorter le gouvernement provincial à effectuer une restauration rapide du poste de sous-ministre adjoint responsable du Bureau de l'éducation française, le BEF.

(2) D'exhorter le gouvernement provincial à renforcer l'intégrité du BEF en assurant le maintien de son personnel et des ressources nécessaires à son bon fonctionnement.

Cette pétition a été signée par Jacqueline McQuin, Chantal Young, Kristina Tetrault et plusieurs d'autres Manitobains et Manitobaines.

Translation

Thank you Madam Speaker. I wish to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Manitoba has fostered a vibrant education system in both French and English for decades. Canadians have shown a long-standing commitment to education in both official languages, and Manitoba has for many years demonstrated strong leadership with respect to French language education.

(2) *The Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) develops, assesses and administers policies and programs respecting French language education. It provides a range of services and instructional supports to Manitoba schools and teachers and oversees all programs under the Canada-Manitoba Agreement for Minority Language Education and Second-Language Instruction. It also provides professional development to educators.*

(3) *The BEF's assistant deputy minister used to bring to the negotiating table and defend important matters related to French language education in Manitoba. Without that direct access, parents and other stakeholders have lost their voice at the negotiating table.*

(4) *French language education cannot simply be a duplicate of English education as its programming must be culturally relevant in order to be effective. A fully functioning BEF is essential to the quality programming provided by Manitoba educators for the good of students enrolled in French language programs in Manitoba.*

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) *To urge the provincial government to quickly restore the assistant deputy minister's position responsible for the Bureau de l'éducation française.*

(2) *To urge the provincial government to strengthen the integrity of the BEF, ensuring the preservation of the staff and resources necessary for its sound operation.*

This petition was signed by Jacqueline McQuin, Chantal Young, Kristina Tetrault and many other Manitobans.

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

Vimy Arena

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I would like to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of St. James and other areas of Manitoba are concerned with the intention expressed by the provincial government to use the Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: —locations such as the St. Boniface industrial park, the 20,000 acres at CentrePort or properties such as the Shriners Hospital or the old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

(3) The provincial government is exempt from any zoning requirements that would have existed if the land was owned by the City. This exemption bypasses community input and due diligence and ignores better uses for the land which would be consistent with a residential area.

There are no standards that one would expect for a treatment centre. The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has stated that the Department of Health had no role to play in the land acquisition for this Manitoba Housing project for use as a drug addiction facility.

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by the provincial government changes the fundamental nature of the community. Including park and recreation uses, concerns of the residents of St. James and others regarding public safety, property values and their way of life are not being properly addressed.

(6) The concerns of the residents of St. James are being ignored while obvious other locations in wealthier neighbourhoods, such as Tuxedo and River Heights, have not been considered for this Manitoba Housing project, even though there are hundreds of acres of land available for development at the Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.

* (15:00)

(7) The Manitoba Housing project and the operation of a drug treatment centre fall outside the statutory mandate of the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation.

(8) The provincial government does not have a co-ordinated plan for addiction treatment in Manitoba as it currently underfunds treatment centres which are running under capacity and potential.

(9) The community has been misled regarding the true intention of Manitoba Housing as land is being transferred for a 50-bed facility even though the project is clearly outside of Manitoba Housing's responsibility.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction treatment facility.

(2) To urge the provincial government to take necessary steps to ensure the preservation of public land along Sturgeon Creek for the purposes of park land and recreational activities for public use, including being an important component of the Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail and the Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation PR2 for the 255 Hamilton Ave. location at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain the land to continue to be designated for parks and recreation active neighbourhood/community.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition.

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed by multiple systems which were meant—which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

(5) Tina Fontaine's murder galvanized Canada on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, MMIWG, as she quickly became our collective daughter and the symbol of MMIG across Canada.

(6) Manitoba has failed to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports and recommendations to—meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous peoples and children,

including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Justice to immediately call a public inquiry into the systems that had a role in the life and death of Tina Fontaine, as well as the function of the administration of justice after her death.

(2) To urge that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by Ryce—Reyce Cochrane, Anya Ingram and Jocelyn Mallette and many, many other Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition.

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed by multiple systems which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

(5) Tina Fontaine's murder galvanized Canada on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, MMIWG, as she quickly became our collective daughter and the symbol of MMIWG across Canada.

(6) Manitoba has failed to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports and recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous peoples and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Justice to immediately call a public inquiry into the systems that had a role in the life and death of Tina Fontaine, as well as the function of the administration of justice after her death.

(2) To urge that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be jointly developed with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by many Manitobans.

Medical Laboratory Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislature.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provision of laboratory services to medical clinics and physicians' offices has been historically, and continues to be, a private sector service.

(2) It is vitally important that there be competition in laboratory services to allow medical clinics to seek solutions from more than one provider to control costs and to improve service for health professionals and patients.

(3) Under the present provincial government, Dynacare, an Ontario-based subsidiary of a US company, has acquired Unicity labs, resulting in a monopoly situation for the provision of laboratory services in medical clinics and physicians' offices.

(4) The creation of this monopoly has resulted in the closure of many laboratories by Dynacare in and around the city of Winnipeg. Since the acquisition of Unicity labs, Dynacare has engaged in anti-competitive activities where it has changed the collection schedules of patients' specimens and charged some medical offices for collection services.

These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served, having to travel without obtaining lab services. This situation is particularly critical for patients requiring fasting blood draws, as they may experience complications that could be life-threatening based on their individual health situations.

(6) Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all STAT's patient, patients with suspicious internal infections, be directed to its King Edward location. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the patients who are required to travel to that lab rather than simply completing the test in their doctor's office.

The new directive by Dynacare presents a direct risk to patients' health in the interest of higher profits. This has further resulted in patients opting to visit emergency rooms rather than travelling twice, which increases cost to the health-care system.

(7) Medical clinics and physicians' offices service thousands of patients in their communities and have structured their offices to provide a one-stop service, acting as a health-care front line that takes off some of the load from emergency rooms. The creation of this monopoly has been problematic to many medical clinics and physicians, hampering their ability to provide high-quality and complete service to their patients due to closures of so many laboratories.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to request Dynacare to reopen the closed laboratories or allow Diagnostic Services of Manitoba to freely open labs in clinics which formerly housed labs that have been shut down by Dynacare.

(2) To urge the provincial government to ensure high-quality lab services for patients and a level playing field and competition in the provision of laboratory services to medical offices.

(3) To urge the provincial government to address this matter immediately in the interests of better patient-focused care and improved support for health professionals.

Signed by Nicole Jasen, Bob Kawink [*phonetic*], Mary Lou Cooke and many others.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House Business, pursuant to rule 33(7), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon). The title of the resolution is Recognizing Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention.

* (15:10)

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon). The title of resolution is Recognizing Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention.

* * *

Mr. Cullen: In terms of today's House business, would you call report stage amendments for Bill 7 followed by concurrence and third reading of the following bills: Bill 7, Bill 23, Bill 15 and Bill 18.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider report stage amendments on Bill 7 and following that—completion of that, it will then move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 7, and then that will be followed by concurrence and third reading of bills 23, 15 and 18.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Madam Speaker: So we'll start with the first one, report stage amendments.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a point of order.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, as I read the orders of the day, it doesn't seem to reflect what the House leader has expressed. I just wonder if we could confirm that the House leader is correct or that the orders of the day are consistent with what the House leader just said.

Madam Speaker: I would point out to the member that the House leader is correct and he is following the rules of the House in what he has put forward.

Bill 7—The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various Acts Amended)

Madam Speaker: So moving now to the report stage amendments on Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various Acts Amended).

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino),

THAT Bill 7 be amended in Clause 33

(a) in the proposed clause 45(1)(f), by adding ", which must include an opportunity for public

consultation regarding its proposed scheme" after "budgets"; and

(b) by adding the following after the proposed subsection 45(1):

Public consultation in regulation development

45(1.1) In the formation or substantive review of regulations made under subsection (1), the minister must provide an opportunity for public consultation regarding the proposed regulation or amendment.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: The amendment—the report stage amendment is in order. Debate can proceed.

Mr. Altemeyer: I will put a few additional contextual remarks behind this amendment. I hope the government would view this as what might be called a friendly amendment. It is simply looking to improve the existing legislation by giving the public more opportunities to have input at several important stages relating to changes that could happen on the landscape and the possible alteration of wetlands. This was also a piece that was mentioned—this was a recommendation that was mentioned by multiple stakeholders during the committee stage. And so I would hope this government, which loves to claim that they are listening and that they are consulting, will now act accordingly and implement the amendment I have proposed.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people that came to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs to present to Bill 7. We heard a compelling array of testimony from people—from Ducks Unlimited, from Keystone Agricultural Producers, Lake Winnipeg Foundation, conservation districts and so forth—on the importance of this legislation.

We also heard from numerous stakeholders that they were very pleased to see that our government actually taking action on ensuring the sustainability of our watersheds. And so we were really pleased to see broad support for this bill in—at committee a few weeks back. We also know that, you know, members opposite is talking about the requirement for consultation, and I would just like to walk through the consultation that we have conducted thus far to get here.

We did release three documents, in August of last year, one of them being—really talking about the

conservation districts, the other one talking about wetland enhancement and sustainable watersheds. And we consulted broadly on that and received a broad consensus from many stakeholders that they were very pleased with our no-net loss wetland approach in bills—in this bill and a variety of other initiatives that this legislation would enable so that we could have a more sustainable water management practices in our watersheds. So I certainly do—was very pleased with all the consultation we received from that.

We were also in, you know, concurrence with that, consulting with Manitobans on our climate-and-green-plan-implementation proposal at that point, and this bill, in terms of addressing some of the challenges with our watershed, is really addressing a lot of the challenges that is—were noted in our climate-and-green-plan document that we had unveiled last October.

And we're going to continue to consult with Manitobans, with the people that are on the front lines, and, in this particular case, the grassroots folks that are working in the conservation districts which will be renamed the watershed districts—working with them and working with all stakeholders to ensure that the—all the aspects of Bill 7 are implemented thoroughly and appropriately. So there's no need for this member's amendment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to—or is there any further debate?

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the report stage amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, 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 Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

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

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

The question before the House is the first report stage amendment moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

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

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 13, Nays 34.

Madam Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

* (15:30)

Madam Speaker: We will now move to the second amendment for Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various Acts Amended).

The honourable member for Wolseley.

Mr. Altemeyer: Thank you once again, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan),

THAT Bill 7 be amended

(a) in Clause 67, by adding the following definitions:

"class 1 wetland" means a wetland that usually holds surface water caused by melting snow in the spring for one week or less;

"**class 2 wetland**" means a wetland that usually holds surface water caused by melting snow in the spring for more than one week but not more than one month;

"**class 3 wetland**" means a wetland that usually holds surface water caused by melting snow in the spring for more than one month but not more than three months;

a "**class 4 wetland**" means a wetland that usually holds holds surface water caused by melting snow in the spring for more than three months but not permanently;

"**class 5 wetland**" means a wetland that holds surface water permanently;

(b) *in Clause 71*

(i) *by replacing the proposed clause 4.1(2)(c) with the following:*

(c) result in the loss or alteration of a class 3, 4 or 5 wetland; or

(ii) *in the proposed subsection 4.2(3), by striking out "If the registrar" and substituting "Subject to subsection (5) and section 5.3, if the registrar"; and*

(iii) *by adding the following after the proposed subsection 4.2(4):*

Works affecting class 3, 4 or 5 wetlands

4.2(5) The registrar must not register works or water control works if they are likely to result in the loss or alteration of a class 3, 4 or 5 wetland.

Restoring wetland as condition of issuing registration

4.3(1) Before the registrar registers works or water control works that would result in the loss or alteration of a class 1 or 2 wetland, the applicant must have taken one of the actions specified in subsection 5.1(2) to ensure that there is no net loss of wetland benefits. In that subsection, a reference to the minister is to be read as a reference to the registrar.

Proof of compliance

4.3(2) Subsection 5.1(3) applies to the applicant. In that subsection, a reference to a licence is to be read as a reference to a certificate of registration and a reference to the minister is to be read as a reference to the registrar.

(c) *by replacing Clause 72 with the following:*

72 *Subsection 5(1) is replaced with the following:*

Issue of licences

5(1) Subject to sections 5.1 and 7, the minister may issue a licence to an applicant authorizing

- (a) the use or diversion of water for any purpose;
- (b) the construction, establishment, operation or maintenance of works for any purpose; or
- (c) the control of water and the construction, establishment, operation or maintenance of water control works;

if the activities authorized by the licence are not likely to result in the loss or alteration of a class 3, 4 or 5 wetland.

(d) *in Clause 73,*

(i) *in the proposed subsection 5.1(1), by striking out "a prescribed class of wetland" and substituting "a class 1 or 2 wetland";*

(ii) *in the proposed subsection 5.2(1), by adding "by registration applicants under subsection 4.3(1) or " before "by licence applicants under clause 5.1(2)(a)"; and*

(iii) *by replacing the proposed subsection 5.2(2) with the following:*

Reporting

5.2(2) The agreement must include a requirement to provide the minister with an annual report no later than September 30 in each year that sets out for the previous year the total amounts received from licence and registration applicants and details of all wetland restoration or enhancement work performed.

Assembly 5.2(3) The minister must table a copy of the report in the Assembly within 15 days of receiving it if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), seconded by the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan),

THAT Bill 7 be amended

(a) *in Clause 67, by adding the following definitions—*

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Did I hear dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order. Debate can proceed.

Mr. Altemeyer: I am pleased to provide some additional remarks clarifying the need for this amendment. And, once again, it is compatible with the advice and hopes that we all heard at committee when various stakeholders and concerned citizens came forward to share their views about the importance of new laws to protect our ability to manage surface water and, in particular, to protect wetlands.

Manitoba, according to Ducks Unlimited, is losing an enormous amount of wetlands on a regular basis. And two thirds of the wetlands that we are losing is what would be classified as class 3 wetlands, which are among the most valuable in the ecological services that they provide—their ability to retain water, provide habitat for species, absorb nutrients and address climate change.

Now, the government's legislation does not go, in our view, nearly far enough in protecting these larger and more valuable wetlands. We still maintain the ability to designate wetlands which could be drained, if they are class 1 or class 2, with this amendment but only if the proponent is successful in applying to the Province for the right to do that, and only if the proponent indicates that they either have the ability to ensure there is no-net loss of wetlands elsewhere, or they are willing to pay sufficient funds to the Province to ensure that that restoration and no-net loss of wetland benefits occurs elsewhere in the province.

I would note that the written submission from Ducks Unlimited that we received at committee made it very clear that this last option is their least preferred, that there should, in fact, be a hierarchy of remediation options and that the approach of draining a wetland and having the applicant pay funds to have that restored elsewhere should be at the bottom of that list.

This amendment moves the government much farther along than it has indicated it is prepared to go, given that the government just voted down an amendment which merely called for additional consultation abilities with stakeholders and with the public. I am under no illusions that they are likely to vote this down, but, with this amendment on the public record, it is very clear that a better way to proceed is readily available for a future government

which is serious about protecting wetlands in Manitoba.

Thank you very much.

* (15:40)

Ms. Squires: The member opposite talks about, you know, government being serious about protecting wetlands. I'd like to remind the members opposite that they never did pass legislation that would ensure no-net loss of wetlands in Manitoba and they allowed the wetlands to be eroded and stripped away year after year when they were in government.

Our government takes a responsible approach to wetland, the sustainability of our wetlands. We know that 70 per cent of our wetlands have been lost over the last century and, in fact, during Manitoba, or—during the NDP time in office, we continued to lose a staggering amount of wetlands.

We are, with this legislation, we have a goal of no net loss of water retention capacity and wetland benefits, and that is a principle that we have brought forward to preserve the valuable ecological function of the wetlands.

The no-net-loss concept is recognized and used in wetland conservation, both nationally and internationally, and was strongly endorsed by Manitobans through the recent consultation process. This principle is built on the hierarchy of avoidance, minimization and compensation landowners and developers must seek to avoid and minimize their impacts on wetlands.

We know that wetlands are important because they provide improved water quality, flood and drought mitigation, increase biodiversity and cultural and recreational value. The benefit wetlands provides has become increasingly evident in recent decades.

Historically, wetlands were underappreciated and undervalued and, as a result, many wetlands in southern Manitoba have been lost over a period of time. The province is working to protect and restore wetlands through many different initiatives, including the passage of this new legislation.

Recent scientific evidence has confirmed the wetland drainage has a significant impact on the nutrient downloading and downstream flows as well.

So our new no-net-loss principle will become a central part of the province's drainage and water control works licensing process.

Moving forward, trained staff will assess the ecological value of wetlands and work with landowners and developers to reach compensation agreements when wetland loss is unavoidable.

There are several measures in The Sustainable Watersheds Act to ensure compliance with the no-net-loss principle. For one, the act supports the modernization of inspection and enforcement tools for provincial regulators. It also increases the maximum penalty for illegal drainage to \$500,000.

I would like to put on the record, Madam Speaker, that our government is using the Stewart and Kantrud Wetland Classification System to protect the class 3, 4, and 5 wetlands and specific classifications for wetlands will be further defined in regulation and there will be further opportunities for public input.

So, Madam Speaker, a regulated no-net-loss approach to surface water management in Manitoba will focus on the class 3s, 4s, and 5s, and if a project proposes to drain these types of wetlands, compensation will be required through regulation.

Compensation agreements will give landowners the option to either restore a wetland elsewhere on their property or pay a fee to a conservation agency to restore a wetland somewhere else within the watershed.

Madam Speaker, we do think that this legislation takes a responsible approach to ensuring that our wetlands are protected and preserved for future generations in the province of Manitoba and to reverse the dangerous trend of eroding wetlands that we saw under members opposite's time in office.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, while I certainly agree about the tremendous loss of wetlands that has occurred and certainly continue to occur and the importance of a no-net-loss of wetlands approach, which we've been arguing for, in fact, brought in an amendment—I think it was 2005 to bring in, but it was rejected at that point.

However, you know, it would be reasonable, I believe, to put the classification of wetlands in the bill rather than in the regulations and so we'll support the amendment.

Madam Speaker: Is there any further debate on the amendment?

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, 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 Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

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

* (15:50)

The question before the House is the second report stage amendment on Bill 7, moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Gerrard, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

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

Clerk: Yeas 13, Nays 36.

Madam Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— AMENDED BILLS

Bill 7—The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various Acts Amended)

Madam Speaker: As determined earlier, we will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 7,

The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various Acts Amended).

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur les bassins hydrographiques durables, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: It is an honour to bring Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act, back to this Chamber for discussion and third reading.

The Sustainable Watersheds Act strengthens the current legislation to provide comprehensive watershed-based framework that will streamline and co-ordinate provincial programs and policies in the contents of watersheds and protect surface water in Manitoba. It does so by addressing a range of activities that negatively impact our lakes, rivers and wetlands. The act will amend four existing statutes, including The Conservation Districts Act, The Water Rights Act, The Water Protection Act and The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Act.

This bill supports a comprehensive approach to water management. It seeks to preserve natural resiliency in our aquatic environments and ensure future development does not negatively impact surface water in the province. Specifically, this act will modernize the conservation districts program to strengthen watershed management planning and implementation, including the ability to enter into agreements with our indigenous partners.

It will change the name of conservation districts to watershed districts, including a change to the act title, to support a shift to watershed-based boundaries and management. It will also streamline drainage licensing requirements and enable a registration process for low-impact, low-risk water control works. It will protect valuable class 3, seasonal, class 4, semi-permanent, and class 5, permanent, wetlands. It will enable requirements for compensation of the loss of wetland benefits including water retention.

It will modernize drainage inspection and enforcement tools and increase maximum penalties for illegal drainage; and it will broaden the mandate of the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation to include wetland protection, mitigation and

restoration; and support the corporation's ability to leverage private donations and matching funds; and it will enable the establishment of water quality targets for nutrients and reporting requirements to measure progress towards these targets; and will recognize transboundary water boards such as the Red River Basin Commission and the Assiniboia river basin commission initiatives and their important role in watersheds that cross international and interprovincial borders.

Again, Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank all the numerous people that entered into consultations and provided their input, whether it was during our initial consultation phase or at committee a few weeks ago, on Bill 7, The Sustainable Watersheds Act. I'd also like to thank the numerous landowners who have reached out to share their support for this act, and I look forward to its unanimous passage in this House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I hope to, in the 30 minutes allotted for this presentation, be able to provide some context for where this legislation has come from and the enormous holes in what has been brought before the Legislature here today. Legislation along these lines, stronger legislation than this, was available to this House two years ago. This legislation had all-party support, back in 2016, and it had broad support of stakeholders in our province. The then-opposition Conservatives at the time blocked its passage and then, in the first year that they were in office, they did absolutely nothing on the topic.

* (16:00)

So I brought in a—I would say, an improved version of the original bill. Those improvements were thanks to consultations that I held with a number of diverse stakeholder groups in our province. And that bill was brought forward to the Chamber as a private member's bill to be debated and, hopefully, passed, and the Conservatives voted against it.

Now, finally, they have brought forward their version of how surface waters can better be managed, but it is the weakest of the three versions to come to the Chamber. Weakest by far. The improvements that it does contain will be enough for our caucus to support it, but conditionally, with my comments documenting, hopefully, the many flaws and missed opportunities that have passed because of

this government's inaction and because of the weak nature of what they've brought forward.

And perhaps most alarming to many agricultural producers in rural Manitoba right now, those two lost years, where we could have been changing the landscape or, rather, stop changing the landscape so much, might mean that there was more water available in some of the driest, most arid conditions that Manitoba has seen in decades.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Ducks Unlimited has provided all of us with some very stark numbers on what the loss of multiple football fields of wetlands every single day means in Manitoba. We are losing, according to Ducks Unlimited, approximately 110 hectares per month on average. And that means that, in the 25 months since April 2016, we have lost the following, Mr. Deputy Speaker: we have lost 2,750 hectares of wetlands for a total loss in ecological benefits of over \$24 million. This includes the lost ability to retain over five-and-a-half billion litres of water; we've lost the ability to retain nearly five tons of phosphorus from entering our rivers and lakes, at a cost of \$1 million in lost ecological benefits; we have lost \$2.7 million in additional ecological benefits, because 275 additional tons of nitrogen is also now entering our waterways; and our greenhouse gas emissions, because of this government's inaction, have now increased by 850,000 tons. That is a massive number, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All of those are massive numbers, but the climate impacts, in particular, are particularly striking because of this government's complete inaction on climate change, and their vague hopes of doing anything to reduce our annual emissions, quite clearly, are going to be cancelled out by inaction such as this.

Now, at committee, the minister referenced that she was very pleased to hear the submissions that were made by various stakeholders. I will agree with her on that point. I think the stakeholders, however, are going to be very disappointed in her and very disappointed in her government colleagues, when they learn that what she said at committee has not been backed up with action, either later on at the committee stage, or here today at report-stage amendments, where she has led her government caucus, on multiple occasions now, of ignoring good suggestions from the stakeholder groups and of actively voting down well-intentioned, reasonable amendments that would've only made the situation better in Manitoba.

Let's review some of the pieces of advice which the government, led by this minister, just felt were too radical for their comfort level. First and foremost, we had a request from both the Lake Winnipeg Foundation and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, that there be a legislative requirement for public consultations when regulations are being developed on how nutrient levels will be measured in Manitoba's waterways. Both of these organizations felt that it was important for the public to have a chance not just at the legislative stage, but also at the regulatory stage, to talk about what the rules should be, about who's going to be able to monitor nutrient levels in our waterways; what type of training they might be involved, or required to have, and when those—when and where those nutrient readings would take place.

They also both requested that the data be made publicly available. The government collects nutrient-level data all across the province every single year, but under the government's proposed legislation, that data is only going to be released once every four years.

So what happens? Well, the minister, after hearing those presentations, she committed to them verbally that the raw data would, in fact, be made public.

But what happened when I introduced an amendment later on that same evening requiring the government to do that? She voted it down.

So, while the stakeholders are in the room and while the cameras are rolling, she's going to say one thing, and then when she has an opportunity to do the right thing afterwards, she votes down an amendment that simply would've implemented something that she is supposedly already in favour of.

So I think both the Lake Winnipeg Foundation and the International Institute for Sustainable Development and everyone else who presented at committee will be very disappointed to learn about the minister's behaviour.

I would also say that the International Institute for Sustainable Development made three additional recommendations. They asked that the nutrient targets in all of Manitoba waterways be established, and that this be done using science.

Heaven forbid that this government actually use science. The government's record on this is spotty at best, and they certainly have not taken

the appropriate steps in bringing forward any amendments of their own to address this issue.

The IISD has also asked the government to include other large river basins, and to specifically mention them in their legislation as being 'trounsbandy'—transboundary, sorry, waterways. These would include the Nelson-Churchill river basin and also the Winnipeg River basin, the latter of which, of course, we share with Ontario. Nothing came forward on that front from this government.

The IISD, lastly, their third additional suggestion was that the wetlands need to be included in the report. They said, quote, that an annual report that sets out the total amounts received from licence applicants and details of all wetland restoration or enhancement work performed, including wetland benefits conserved, restored or enhanced. End quote.

A perfectly reasonable request, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which, again, has gone completely unanswered by this government.

We also had a very good suggestion from Ducks Unlimited, on top of the many other good suggestions that they have made and the advocacy that they have done over the year. They are proposing that a hierarchy be established when it comes to mitigating the potential loss of wetlands.

They said, quote, they recommend, quote: that a mitigation hierarchy approach be adopted that only allows compensation as a last resort, with a focus on avoidance first when reviewing water rights application. End quote.

What Ducks Unlimited is highlighting here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that under the government's proposed legislation, even the more valuable and more permanent wetlands, the class 3s, 4s and 5s, they could still be altered.

They could still be drained completely under the government's legislation, and what they would like to see instead is for the government, at a minimum, to come out with a mitigation hierarchy which would place that type of activity at the very bottom as the last resort before a wetland is removed.

And having attended many presentations on wetlands and surface water management issues over the years, both before becoming an MLA and afterwards, everyone in the field understands that you simply cannot recreate nature at the best of times.

* (16:10)

You certainly cannot recreate it overnight and that it would take many, many years, if not decades, potentially, to fully restore the lost ecological benefits that disappear when a wetland is drained or altered in some way. So Ducks Unlimited came forward with what I thought was a very reasonable request. I was listening while they presented. The minister was in the same room that I was, but, once again, we see nothing from the government actually implementing that suggestion.

And then, also at committee, we had two very good suggestions that came from the president of the Manitoba Conservation Districts Association. He made the point that he felt the legislation would be strengthened if it was made clear that provincial parks, wildlife management areas and other jurisdictions, or other protected areas, rather, were specifically included and welcomed into the discussions and planning that is going to happen under the new watershed district title. He also suggested that our federal counterparts should be invited to that table when federal parks, national parks, such as Riding Mountain, are involved. And the government did absolutely nothing on that front.

And, lastly, the presenter from the Manitoba conservation association, the president, noted that we really need to have better integration between the legislation happening here around water management and simultaneous legislation happening with changes to municipal planning. And the irony of this was not lost on anyone in the room, and I asked a question of this presenter, specifically on this front, and he gave a very good answer. He made it very clear that far too often it is procedures under The Planning Act which continue to trump the priorities of integrated watershed management. And, just down the hall, the very same evening, this government was bringing in anti-democratic, anti-environmental legislation to The Planning Act to make further changes, under their Bill 19, which will only make that situation worse. Local residents now do not have the right to attend a hearing when a development is proposed; only some people who live in the area are allowed to attend and not others. And, if the hearing does not go the way that the developer wants, the developer can still appeal that decision. But, if a decision goes in favour of the development and local citizens are still concerned, they, under this government's watch, will have no right of appeal. It's very difficult for anyone with two brain cells to rub together to avoid concluding that that type of legislation happening, just down the hall, is designed to fundamentally

undermine proper water management and local democracy in rural Manitoba. So he made those excellent points and, of course, radio silence from this government.

So, for my part, as the environment critic, I attempted to bring in a number of amendments to this very flawed piece of legislation. All of these, I am sad to say, have been voted down by this government. I was only mildly optimistic that any of them would see the light of day. This government has a well-deserved reputation for not listening, a well-deserved reputation for doing whatever they want without feeling that they have to explain their rationale or listen to experts in the field, and this, unfortunately, is borne out yet again, with the amendments that were voted down both at committee and now here today at the report stage. But, in the interests of putting on the public record the ideas that could be included in this same legislation at a later date when a government which actually cares about the environment is in office, I'm very pleased to add my own ideas to the very good ones that I just highlighted from various stakeholders that—who presented their ideas at committee.

So there were six specific suggestions that I have brought forward to improve this bill. The first was to make sure that the projects that are coming forward for consideration to try and improve things in a watershed district, that the board reviewing those applications should give priority to those programs and projects which, quote, scientifically demonstrate the ability to absorb nutrients and retain water, end quote.

Now why would I want to highlight these two things as priority? Well, quite simply, wetlands are unique in many ways but one of the truly unique things is the number of different types of ecological benefits that they provide to all of us; very few of them can be replicated as effectively as they can, but we do have some other options for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. This is something that wetlands are capable of doing. They can sequester a not insignificant amount of carbon, and that should continue.

However, the ability to both absorb nutrients and to retain water on the landscape, I believe those two ecological services are perhaps the most important in that very few other alternatives exist for being able to achieve that effect as effectively as a wetland can, and so, therefore, I believe that projects coming forward as a proposal to a watershed district, a local

board should be directed by government to place a higher priority—not an exclusive priority but a higher priority—on projects which are going to keep some of the harmful nutrients out of our lakes, rivers and streams and also provide the ability to retain as much water on the land as we can.

This will, of course, be enormously beneficial during flood years and it will be enormously beneficial in very dry years, which, unfortunately, it looks like we might be headed into very soon. And which agricultural producer in southern Manitoba right now wouldn't be sleeping a little bit easier if, two years ago, the government and the opposition had been able to pass good legislation, which might have helped that local producer now have more access to water when we are in a record dry spell here in Manitoba?

So, again, perfectly reasonable proposal brought forward in good faith to help strengthen a piece of legislation, government voted it down at committee out of hand.

The second proposal that I brought forward related to this government's tendency to run away from its accountability and its responsibility to the public to provide accurate information on a regular basis. This is a pattern of behaviour, so while I was very disappointed to read that this had been changed from the version of this bill that I brought in, I was not unduly surprised. In their climate change legislation, they are not going to be required to report on the actual emissions in Manitoba until after the next provincial election because they know they're not doing anything for climate and the numbers will make them look bad. Exactly the same situation is on the books here.

Remarkably, even though the government collects the raw data every single year, presumably analyzes it, sends it to the minister for informational purposes, there is only a requirement that the government would provide that information once every four years and they would not be required to provide that until the year after four years from now on December 31st, putting us well past the next election.

So I changed that particular clause in their bill to make it annual, and lo and behold, this was something that the minister, again, assured members of the International Institute for Sustainable Development and assured members from the Lake Winnipeg Foundation and everyone else who was in the room, that she would release the raw data every

single year. So, why on earth, when I bring forward a simple legislative amendment saying, all right, we all agree to this, let's make it an annual requirement and put it into law, she votes against it and gets all of the Conservative members on the committee to vote against it, and the amendment dies on the paper right there. I think it is quite clear this is a minister who has no problem saying one thing to people when they're in the room and doing something completely different when they're not there.

* (16:20)

The third amendment that I brought forward at the committee stage concerned retaining the Lake Friendly Accord. This takes us into the realm of transboundary threats to our water supply here in Manitoba, something which our caucus has been doing fantastic work trying to drag this government kicking and screaming into the 21st century, over some of the threats that are involved. The legislation, as proposed by our government, and the legislation that I proposed last year, both would've retained the Lake Friendly Accord. This is a diplomatic initiative; it's a diplomatic document and it was very successful. All it did was it enabled us to go to other jurisdictions with something tangible, to say, will you please sign on to the accord and commit your level of government—whether it be a municipality, whether it be an NGO, whether it be another provincial government, or a state government even, in the United States—will you commit to meeting the general principles that are outlined in the Lake Friendly Accord so that all of us can begin working better together to reduce the amount of nutrients and any other threats that might be happening to our lakes and rivers here in Manitoba?

And, lo and behold, the government's new version of this legislation strikes out the Lake Friendly Accord completely. So all of the effort that went into having Minnesota sign the Lake Friendly Accord, all the effort that went into having Ontario sign the Lake Friendly Accord, all the effort that went into having all the other signatories join in this collective effort to help protect our collective environment—all of that wiped out by a government that would have us believe they actually understand water issues and care about them. Quite clearly, neither is the case. I brought forward an amendment, yet again, to put the Lake Friendly Accord back into legislation, and, led by this minister, once again, all of the Conservative MLAs on committee voted it down.

The fourth and final amendment that I brought forward at committee, I actually thought the minister might be interested in, because it would make her more powerful. It would give her the ability to declare a significant transboundary threat and take action to address that threat. And we have spent, time and time again, here in this Chamber, trying to get this Premier and this minister and this government to pay attention to the enormous threats to our water, posed by the Red River Valley Water Supply Project in North Dakota. A 10-year-old environmental impact study conducted by the Americans found no less than over two dozen foreign invasive species live right now in the Missouri River. Water from the Missouri River would end up in the Hudson Bay drainage basin if this project is allowed to proceed and if it is allowed to proceed without the proper protections put in place and we can't get the government to even publicly acknowledge that the project is under way in North Dakota.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

So I brought in a new section to this legislation which would've given the minister ability to declare any such threat to be a significant transboundary threat to Manitoba's waterways; give her the ability to go to her cabinet and seek direction that she could notify the International Joint Commission; that she could notify the federal government and especially in the instance of where the transboundary threat may be coming from North Dakota. And it wasn't limited to foreign invasive species; we could have a significant transboundary threat due to flooding. We could have a significant transboundary threat due to drought. And this capacity would've given the minister the ability to alert the public here in Manitoba of what was going on and to take specific steps to try and address it. And what do they do in committee? They voted it down.

And now, today, two more suggestions that I brought forward have now been summarily dismissed by this government, the most recent of which, we have right here, with the refusal of this government to include the definitions of different classes of wetland in the legislation. They are claiming that this will happen under regulation, in which case, once again, I merely say, if everyone agrees that this is the right direction to go, why not have the strength and the courage and the commitment to the environment to be open about it and put it in the legislation.

When that type of crucial information is left to regulations, the regulations can be created, they can be deleted, they can be amended any Wednesday morning when Cabinet meets, and that's the end of it. There's no public consultation; there's no public awareness; nobody necessarily learns about it until much later, if ever, when the decisions of Cabinet are made public.

When we go through a legislative process, then, of course, it is a much different thing, and yet the government has flat-out refused to even include the classifications of wetlands in their legislation.

And, further to that, Madam Speaker, I would note that the amendment that I just brought forward and which this minister spoke against and which all of her Conservative MLAs voted against individually, when we called for a recorded vote, that legislation would have actually permanently protected class 3, 4 and 5 wetlands. It would only have left the class 1s and 2s to be designated, and this would actually take progress much farther than what this government is prepared to do.

All of the stakeholders are in agreement that the class 3, 4 and 5 wetlands are the most important ones for a wide variety of reasons. They also agree that the mechanism, which we came up with while in office for a no-net-loss benefits, is an appropriate mechanism to use but that it should be applied to class 1—and 2 classes of wetlands only, and the government has voted against that.

So we have, on the public record, Madam Speaker, numerous incidences where time and time again this government has every opportunity to do the right thing, has every opportunity to actually protect the environment, has every opportunity to listen to the advice that's being given to them by stakeholders, and, at each and every opportunity, they refuse to listen; they refuse to act; they refuse to care about what is actually going on with our wetlands and surface water management in Manitoba.

So the additional ideas that we can put on the record, as well, items that I hope a future, more progressive government would consider, is there are still several areas of southern Manitoba, including the city of Winnipeg, which are not even included in a conservation district yet. As watershed districts emerge, those remaining areas of southern Manitoba should absolutely be encouraged by this government to get on board.

I would note that the minister, in her remarks, commented on how much she's looking forward to inspections, helping to make sure that this new regime works. Well, it should be noted that the Water Stewardship branch of her own ministry has a 25 per cent vacancy rate, the highest by far of any branch in her department. I don't know how she expects inspections to be able to be performed with that level of vacancy rate.

And so, in conclusion, Madam Speaker, I think it's quite obvious this is the weakest version of this legislation this Chamber has seen yet. That said, we will vote in favour of it, but, overall, this government's approach and attitude towards the environment is making things far worse and not better for Manitobans, and we hope somebody soon will be able to step in and correct this horrible record.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, a few comments on this legislation. We're in support of the move to a no-net-loss-of-wetlands approach. It was one, as I mentioned earlier, that I brought in an amendment to implement in about 2005, so it's only 13 years later and, finally, we're getting it. So I thank the minister for that.

* (16:30)

Their cap has raised some concerns about the mechanism. I think we'll wait and see how it works and we'll—we may have to address that later on, but, for the moment, at least we have the no-net-loss-of-wetlands policy.

I believe we will need to use satellite images as a way of monitoring this. There are now, I'm sure, approaches using automated tracking of satellite images in which it would be fairly easy to monitor changes in wetlands and be able to compare, year on year, what's happening. So I think that's going to be important in being able to follow it. We'll—once you have the satellite tracking, then it will be fairly easy to move in and enforce the regulations and the rules.

The recommendations of Dimple Roy and of IISD—at IISD and of Dr. Alexis Kanu of the Lake Winnipeg Foundation for changes to the phosphorus recommendations which would have allowed easier and faster removal of phosphorus by the North End treatment plant at the City of Winnipeg could have been considered. We are now many, many years late in terms of addressing the North End treatment plant and getting the phosphorus removed. It is—you

know, I think that there were people who are very knowledgeable who talked about how, with the political will and with the right approaches, we could have removed phosphorus probably in the period between 2005 and 2010, and here we are 10 or 15 years almost, later, and we're still not there. And that's still the biggest source of phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg, so it's time to get that done.

I was a little disappointed that the minister didn't give the precise time when it's going to be achieved, but I look forward to hearing that shortly.

One of the things that the Ducks Unlimited submission talks about is the potential and importance of wetlands for major—to be major reservoirs of stored carbon and being able to use this fact to mitigate climate change. I think it's going to be very important to invest in the research so that we can accurately account for the storage of carbon. And, in that way, once we can account for the storage of carbon accurately in wetlands, then we can potentially give farmers carbon credits for storing carbon.

And I think that until we reach a point where we can monitor and know accurately the carbon content of wetlands, then we are going to be short of an important ingredient, an important tool, that will provide incentive for farmers to maintain wetlands, to put in water storage areas, new wetlands.

I've been talking for almost 20 years about the importance of adding additional water storage so that we can protect ourselves better from floods and from droughts. And clearly the optimum time to protect ourselves from droughts is to put that water storage in when it's wet years so that we have the water stored in dry years. And now we may be in a—we are, so far, in a dry year. We'll have to wait and see how the rest of the year turns out, and the next few years, to know whether we're going to be into a dry cycle and whether, in fact, we are going to have difficulties on the drought side. And it would be important to be able to protect ourselves better in years of drought, and we should be actively investing in the storage of waters to protect ourselves. And, once again, having the tools, including the carbon storage research, so that we know what's actually being accomplished, and the carbon credits process, so that farmers can get credits, would be important in being able to move that forward.

So there are, as I've pointed out, some things that could be improved here, but it's a—important step

forward, and so, from a Liberal perspective, we'll be supporting this bill.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to thank everyone for the opportunity to speak for the next 30 minutes on an issue that is very important to Manitobans—most Manitobans, and to me, personally, and that is the water that we have, both freshwater but also our marine coastline.

Madam Speaker, we have over 110,000 lakes in Manitoba and many watersheds, and I'd like to talk about each of the major watersheds and the potential implication that this legislation will have on these watersheds.

Then I'd like to move into some of the historic nature of the watersheds and then discuss the implication of The Efficiency Manitoba Act on the watersheds, particularly in section—part 2, section 4(1) where the Efficiency Manitoba Act discusses regulating drinkable water, potable water.

Then I will move on to aquifers, which I have a deep passion—in fact, my engineering thesis was on aquifers and hydrology and—fact, these aquifers are also a very important part of our watersheds.

So let's draw the map, so to speak. So our marine estuaries and watersheds include the Seal River, the Churchill River, the Nelson River, the Hayes River and about half a dozen more as well, but these are the main rivers that go in—and this is important because in the estuaries, there are a huge number of beluga whales.

In fact, I had the good fortune of being up in Churchill with the then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and you could also almost wheel across the estuary on top of beluga whales. Now, obviously, I'm exaggerating, but not by much. There are so many, it is unbelievable, and this is in a freshwater—saltwater estuary right here in Manitoba.

So this legislation speaks a lot about municipalities. The challenge we have with these dozen or so northern rivers is that there are no municipalities. In fact, some of the—and, shockingly, we don't even have a good idea of where the watersheds are. And I'll give a specific example.

As some of the members of this Assembly know, I am a passionate advocate of protecting the Seal River watershed, provided there's appropriate caveats for First Nation and mining opportunities, but this is a world—well, it's a Canadian Heritage River, but it is

also one of the last untouched watersheds in the world.

Untouched, in that there's very few people that live along the watershed, and it's significant. It's about 50,000 square kilometres, and when I was doing the research on the Seal River—and there's a parallel river just to the south, elbow river—anyway, it turned out that the watershed was originally thought to be about 46,000 square kilometres, but over 3,000 square kilometres has been added to that watershed due to more recent satellite imaging. So watersheds which you would think we'd have a pretty good idea about, where the water's flowing where, up north, it's still not properly defined.

* (16:40)

So that brings us to section 45(2) of this legislation, the maps. I'm concerned—and I hope the minister will take it under advisement that where it says maps, it's not clearly defined what kind of maps, where the maps are coming from, are they coming from—are they satellite images? Is there going to be on-the-ground survey? Is it going to be done through maps branch in the Manitoba government or somewhere else? What is the government's plan for maps branch in Manitoba? Because this is an area that I think it'd be very helpful in. And there are maps that are available on these types of things; in fact, I probably have a half a dozen of the watershed maps in my office. But it changes. There's an interesting—and I know, Madam Speaker, you'll find this very interesting—that there are some watersheds where the drainage goes two ways. I point to the historic Echimamish River, which connects the— which flows between the Hayes River and the Nelson River and it actually flows two ways. There was a famous Aboriginal—it used to be called the Painted Rock because the settlers would come down the Hayes River and due to the uniqueness of the river there was Aboriginal paintings at the sort of—this short portage between the two watersheds and then off they went.

So this—the Painted Rock, unfortunately, has been—long gone. But it does illustrate another important part of our watershed and that is that they were used, and still are, by First Nations and by the people who discovered, from the European perspective, the interior of North America. So that is why the Hayes River has the Canadian Heritage River designation. I was very pleased to be a part of that announcement. And the Seal River has

subsequently received a heritage river designation and so does the Bloodvein River.

And that brings us to the watersheds that enter Lake Winnipeg. Now, everyone knows the Red River goes into Lake Winnipeg and by Grand Falls, the Saskatchewan River, but do people realize that the dozens of watersheds on the east side—and this is off the top of my head—but I can think of the Poplar River, the Pigeon River, the Bloodvein River, the Wanipigow River, Manigotagan River, the Winnipeg River—these are all rivers that have their own watershed. And, in fact, the headwaters are across the Manitoba-Ontario divide. I'm particularly familiar with these rivers because I had the good fortune of canoeing many of them, with their spectacular history and whitewater and portages, they inspired me to do hydrogeology for my thesis.

And what I have learned, and that is important, again, most of the east side does not have municipalities to—legislation focuses on municipalities. But there's also, Madam Speaker, a lot of mining potential on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. And we have a situation in Manitoba where on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, many of the greenstone belts have been turned into parks. Now, the important thing about greenstone belts is there are often minerals discovered or mineral deposits in these greenstone belts, and so far the government has not met expectations on the mining industry—and it's important to note that watersheds and the mining industry can coexist.

If you look at a map in—of Manitoba, between Atikaki Provincial Park and Nopiming Provincial Park, you will see there's a space, and that space between the two parks is because there are still unexploited minerals and minerals that still need to be exploited, the Bissett gold mine, for example, but there are other gold finds and other important base metals that continuously are discovered, but we've knocked ourselves out of the mining industry on the east side of Lake Winnipeg because we've not done a proper job in accommodating both mining and freshwater—watershed management.

The two are not exclusive. You can have a mining operation and not affect the watershed. So there's economic development and protection for the environment and, in fact, over time it's been demonstrated the stronger your economy is the more likely your environment is going to be protected because people's jobs—people want to survive the short term. There's no point in not being able to—you

know, to starve or to have a short lifespan because your economy is weak, and no wonder we have so much devastation in places like Brazil and Southeast Asia when it comes to our forests and watersheds. So that is important, that we cannot take for granted in Manitoba both the watersheds or our economic potential in the mining industry.

This is why, Madam Speaker, I like to raise the lowlands provincial—or, the lowlands federal park, which was announced by the federal government in the 2016 budget. This park is located between—around the Grand Rapids area, just south, and it's about 4,500 square kilometres and it is actually on top of the southern extension of the Thompson Nickel Belt. So what does that mean? So the Thompson Nickel Belt, where we have all those economic mining jobs, extends from north of Thompson, through Thompson and goes southwest from that spot. There is a—it goes—I guess, for lack of a better term, it goes under what we'd call the Paleozoic limestone that the Interlake is so famous for, and what the federal government has done is make an announcement that blocks not only the greatest—one of—perhaps one of the greatest deposits in the world, it knocks out—it knocks out—hope and economic prosperity for many Manitobans, many First Nations and in the order of, like, 'uncalculable' billions of dollars. However, if we were smart about our economic development and our watershed management, there would be, I think, a way of creating an understanding.

* (16:50)

And we'll start on the watershed side. At present, the 49,000-plus square kilometres that comprise the Seal River could be protected for all time with First Nation input and development in Tadoule Lake, which is actually not in the watershed. You can make it a requirement that people, if they want to go into a watershed, they have to go to Tadoule Lake. Ideally, as a canoeist and a right-of-centre naturalist, you want to see these beautiful lakes and canoe the rivers, I would not be opposed to making you work for it, make you walk—portage into the watershed. That would guarantee protection of the watershed and people will respect it even that much more.

So—and there are no mining claims at present in that 50,000-square kilometres, not a one. There is some possibility of mining development around what is called the Great Island, or Grand Island, and there has been mineral—or diamond exploration in that area, but because the watershed—it's like a tree: the

trunk of the river, and then it branches out; at the trunk part is where the—it would be quite amazing and bad luck if they found mines right in that trunk, but if they did, we have to deal with it and deal with it in favour of the mining industry, provided that they can provide assurances of the water quality.

Now, in exchange for this, with the mining industry, it would be appropriate to ensure that the national park that is suggested in the Interlake not be approved and that it be allowed—that area would be allowed to have exploration and development, and exploration and development be allowed on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, perhaps in between the dozens of watersheds that I've already mentioned.

This is smart planning. You get buy-in from the mining, and you grow our economies, and you protect priority green spaces. The problem right now, Madam Speaker, is with the extension of the Thompson nickel belt below the national park and the fact that Flin Flon and Thompson are running out of ore is that there's little hope for the mining companies to find more ore bodies to mine. So what results is what we're seeing right now in Thompson, which I predicted years ago, that, unless there's further development, that whole industry will go from—to—from third largest in Manitoba to almost nothing, which would be a shame for that way of life and for the people of the North.

Mining is an honourable occupation; can be dangerous, but I've worked in the Bissett gold mine with people from Manigotagan and Hollow Water, and I have never met a harder group of workers in my time; makes what we do here in the Legislature, quite frankly, quite easy, at least from a physical point of view.

Madam Speaker, so we need to examine what the costs that are associated with this legislation. It's not clear where the money's come from, but it could be coming from the made-in-Manitoba carbon tax. This made-in-Manitoba carbon tax is exactly not going to do what it says it's going to do. If these are things that are truly priorities of the government, we will find the resources and not increase the taxes on Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, the problem with initiatives like the carbon tax—when it claims to protect the environment, when we know a carbon tax does not do that, and certainly not at any kind of reasonable level, anyway, that—and it won't reduce one molecule of GHGs, greenhouse gases, or—it undermines public confidence in public policy-making.

Now, if you want to tax for revenue, just say it. But don't pretend to do one thing and not have any results on the environmental side. And, if you do want to make investments on environmental side, which are good, do it, but don't do it by increasing taxation; do it through efficiencies or reallocations.

Madam Speaker, like to talk about the Assiniboine River. When I was a kid, I remember being, Camp Manitou and, when at Camp Manitou, incredibly—this is the Y camp just outside of—well, between Headingley and Winnipeg—we used to walk across the river. We were told to bring our wet shoes, and we would all grab a rope, and we would walk across the river, touch the bank on the other side, and walk back—like, yes, like, talk about free-range parenting. Like, I guess it would be unimaginable to do that today, in part, because it's a fast-flowing river and the likelihood of death seems high, especially when you're five and six going across the river, but, secondly, the river appears, and is, a lot higher than it used to be.

Why is that? I've heard members of this Assembly say, well, it's because of global warming. Well, that's not the case. It—there's been a change, but, in the case of the Assiniboine River, it's not

because of global warming. There are studies that have been done by Stantec engineering and others that demonstrate, and have modelled forward, that the water—or the precipitation in the watershed is the same—or within the, you know, what—a regular standard deviation.

So what is going on? It is increase in the efficiency in the runoff. The runoff—and, Madam Speaker, if you could let me know when I—you know, if I'm running out—like, the 30-second mark before the day ends, or Clerk. But the runoff happens a lot more efficient than it used to be, and this causes the river to have more flow than it has historically.

So, Madam Speaker, the issue isn't climate change; the issue is land management. And that's a watershed issue, for sure. And it's not clear how the government plans to—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

CONTENTS

| ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS | | | |
|--|------|---------------------------------------|------|
| Ministerial Statements | | Health-Care System | |
| | | Swan | 2466 |
| | | Goertzen | 2466 |
| Pat Wege Retirement | | Mature Women's Centre | |
| Fielding | 2455 | Fontaine | 2467 |
| B. Smith | 2455 | Squires | 2467 |
| Gerrard | 2456 | Women's Health Care | |
| Fire in Brandon | | Fontaine | 2467 |
| Cullen | 2456 | Squires | 2467 |
| Kinew | 2457 | Manitoba's Women and Girls | |
| Lamoureux | 2457 | Fontaine | 2468 |
| Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month | | Squires | 2468 |
| Goertzen | 2458 | Legalization of Cannabis | |
| Swan | 2458 | Lamoureux | 2468 |
| Gerrard | 2458 | Friesen | 2468 |
| Fletcher | 2459 | Stefanson | 2469 |
| Members' Statements | | Northern Workforce Development Centre | |
| Thaddeus Bourassa | | Bindle | 2469 |
| Teitsma | 2459 | Wishart | 2469 |
| Arlene Skull Retirement | | Social and Affordable Housing | |
| Altemeyer | 2460 | B. Smith | 2469 |
| Youth Philanthropist Jenna Sigurdson | | Fielding | 2470 |
| A. Smith | 2460 | South Winnipeg Recreational Complex | |
| Filipino Bilingual Elementary School Program | | F. Marcelino | 2470 |
| Lamoureux | 2461 | Schuler | 2471 |
| Brigitte Lacquette | | Wharton | 2471 |
| Michaleski | 2461 | Speaker's Ruling | |
| Oral Questions | | Driedger | 2471 |
| Universal Pharmacare Program | | Petitions | |
| Kinew | 2462 | Bureau de l'éducation française | |
| Goertzen | 2462 | Kinew | 2473 |
| Special Drug Program | | Vimy Arena | |
| Kinew | 2462 | Fletcher | 2474 |
| Goertzen | 2463 | Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry | |
| French Language Services | | B. Smith | 2475 |
| Kinew | 2463 | Fontaine | 2475 |
| Squires | 2464 | Medical Laboratory Services | |
| Education System Budget | | Gerrard | 2476 |
| Wiebe | 2465 | | |
| Wishart | 2465 | | |

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Report Stage Amendments

Bill 7—The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various
Acts Amended)

| | |
|-----------|------|
| Altemeyer | 2477 |
| Squires | 2477 |
| Gerrard | 2481 |

Concurrence and Third Readings—Amended Bills

Bill 7—The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various
Acts Amended)

| | |
|-----------|------|
| Squires | 2482 |
| Altemeyer | 2482 |
| Gerrard | 2487 |
| Fletcher | 2488 |

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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