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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, if I may, on House business.

Madam Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Cullen: Yes, Madam Speaker, 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 one put forward by the honourable member for the Interlake. The title of the resolution is Celebrating Freedom Road.

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 the Interlake. The title of the resolution is Celebrating Freedom Road.

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Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, I seek leave to debate Bill 218 this morning.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to proceed to Bill 218 this morning? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 218—The Prompt Payments
in the Construction Industry Act**

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I move, seconded by the MLA for St. James, that Bill 218, The Prompt Payments in the Construction Industry

Act; Loi sur le paiement sans délai dans l'industrie de la construction, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Helwer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues.

This bill has been a long time coming. There is other legislation in other jurisdictions, and we are following some of that legislation. We have looked at it all and tried to pick out the best parts that would work in Manitoba.

I did attend a prompt payment summit in Toronto April 4th, and interestingly to me, when I was introduced as being from MLA, someone said oh, the Jets. And I said, yes, Canada's team. And they said, not yet. But we're working on that. Didn't quite happen last night, but it's close. So anyway, the—it was a good summit to learn more about what the industry is doing in the rest of Canada, and we're moving forward on this.

And what I want to say to many people in the gallery here from the construction industry, thank you for taking time out of your busy day to come and view a piece of legislation and see the little bit of how it is made. It's not always pretty to watch, but it's something that we do work through, is that—I'd like us to look at this in the Legislature and in the construction industry is very much a working paper.

This is the chance for industry to get it right. This is a chance for are to get us—for us to get it right as a legislature, to make sure that there is another opportunity for the construction industry to obtain and to access an alternate resolution—dispute resolution mechanism aside from the courts or the liens act.

So this is something that, I'm sad to say, may be necessary, that people may not pay on time, but it is something that seems to be necessary now in the construction industry. Certainly, all of those in various industries use trade credit at certain times, and it is something that is extended throughout all sectors. And it's fine when you're using trade credit according to the terms, and we all take advantage of that trade credit as much as we can, for the 30 days or sometimes for longer.

It's when that trade credit becomes abused, that becomes an issue. If you're extending the terms without the consent of both parties, that then dictates problems for paying staff, for paying subcontractors, even from paying from the owner of the property to the general contractor.

So it can create issues all the way down to the worker, the union worker perhaps, or the actual person that does the work onsite that may or may not get paid. And, if you're waiting for your paycheque to come at the end of the month and it doesn't show up, that's certainly something that can be very serious for your family, Madam Speaker.

So we want to make sure that there is another alternate dispute resolution mechanism available to industry. It means that both parties will come together to look through that—to use that resolution mechanism. If one party wants to do it, it won't work. Then you have to go, obviously, to the courts, or you have to depend on the liens act.

If you're using either the courts or the liens act, it means that you're probably not going to work together after that project is finished. That's probably the end of your relationship, and as I'm sure you know, Madam Speaker, business is built on relationships and trust. And we want to make sure that that relationship and trust can continue throughout the industry so that all these groups can continue to work together.

So this piece of legislation is somewhat complex in the way that it works, but it's also complex for government, because as I'm sure many know that there is a review of the liens act going on at the same time, and we'll probably see a report sometime in the fall.

It's actually a great time for that to happen, at the same time as this legislation starts to be debated, because we can look at things in the liens act that may have to be changed to accommodate this legislation, but we also have to look at other areas of the government that has legislation that may have to be amended as well in order to allow legislation such as this to move forward.

Basically, you—I started looking at the process of which departments would be impacted by this, so we spent a lot of time speaking with Justice, with Finance, with Infrastructure, with Growth, Enterprise and Trade, but then it became an issue of which department actually doesn't build something. All

these departments have impact on structures, on roads.

And then you look at, for instance, Education, the Public Schools Finance Board, as we'll hear later this morning, build schools, and would be impacted by this legislation. Families certainly has an impact with housing, child care and, of course, the Crowns, Madam Speaker, could be impacted by this legislation.

So while it is complex on the industry side, it is also complex on the government's side, and in order for this legislation to actually move through the House and be enacted, we would have impact on other legislation.

* (10:10)

So all of that work is going on now, Madam Speaker, and I am very encouraged at the support we've had not just from industry but also from the various departments on looking how this could be a whole-of-government approach to make sure that we can do the best—have the best result not only for industry but for the government and allow a dispute-resolution process to move forward so that the industry has access to that. Doesn't mean they have to use it. They can still use the courts; they can still use a lien. But this gives them one more alternative, another tool in the toolbox.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Can the member explain to us how this bill will help ensure that construction projects are completed on time?

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Thank you to the member for the question.

What will it able—it will enable to do, and thank the member for that question—I did forget to speak about that in my remarks. As you go through the dispute resolution process, it still allows for work to continue on the site. So there's no work stoppage on the site anymore. As you would see, perhaps, in a

lawsuit, people might withdraw their labour; they might withdraw from the site and work stops on that site. If this legislation does pass, it will mean that you can enter into the dispute resolution process and work will continue on the site.

There is also—when we see companies bid—well, I can go on further with the next one. But that's the major part, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Can the member from Brandon West please tell us and give us a little further detail on who he consulted with for this bill?

Mr. Helwer: Thank you to the member for the question.

There is a working group in industry that I met with several times and have communicated with a great deal over the last several months, and they are a group that has been brought together; they're representatives from pretty much across the board of all of industry. The general contractors were involved a bit through a trade association, but certainly we have allowed an opportunity for many people to be consulted. There are still others. We met with Manitoba home builders' as well. I suspect that we'll have to meet with the architects and other individuals as well. That's where I'm looking at this very much as a working paper that people will see we need to come to the government and talk about this.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward this bill. My question sort of runs off the member from St. Johns. Which specific consumer groups were you able to consult with prior to creating the bill?

Mr. Helwer: In terms of consumer groups, I think the closest would be the home builders'; the others are mostly industry. And it's—because it applies to the construction sector, we—the other consumer group, I don't know if you'd classify it as such, but the group did have several unions that were involved in this consultation. So, again, what I'm looking for in presenting this legislation is there are groups that will come to us and say, you know, we want to talk to you about how this will impact our sector.

Mr. Lindsey: Could the member explain to us what all labour groups that he consulted with in the process of developing this, and did they have any specific concerns that weren't addressed in this bill?

Mr. Helwer: I do have a list of everyone that was involved in the group, and many of them are here in

the Chamber today. The—it would take far too long to go through all of the individuals that are here, and I thank them for that. It is great to say that we have more people than we can actually recognize. I know that there were at least three or four unions that were involved in the consultation, and I'll have to get the member those names after, if that's okay.

Mr. Johnston: Can the member from Brandon West please explain exactly how this bill will facilitate payments?

Mr. Helwer: Well, it's a very good question. It will facilitate payment, as I mentioned, through the alternate dispute resolution mechanism where we will look to create adjudicators, and I'm very much in favour of industry creating that process so they would, as I've seen in other industries that I'm involved in, that industry would go together to outline what those adjudicators will look like, who—what their experience would be, where they'll be trained, and so that they're all working from the same page. So very much an industry-led solution.

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, the member's talked a lot about everybody that's in favour of this. Could he explain to us, is there any group that is opposed to it?

Mr. Helwer: Well, I'd be disappointed if there wasn't somebody that was opposed to it, but, certainly, we have had concerns over the last little bit from general contractors because they are the larger group that does handle the money after the money's flowed from the owner to the general contractor. They want to make sure that they are properly consulted, that their opinion can be heard in this, and that's what I think we will see going forward.

Should this bill happen to pass the Legislature when it goes to committee, we have a long period of time, likely, that we can do some of that consultation and make sure that everybody's on board on this working paper that we get the best legislation possible, because in most likelihood we may not have a committee of this type 'til summer or fall.

Mr. Johnston: Does this replace the Manitoba liens act?

Mr. Helwer: It could work together with the liens act or we could see the liens act, once that review process is complete, that the recommendation may be to include prompt payment in the liens act. That is another option that may come forward as has happened in Ontario.

At this point I would see that this legislation would remain separate from the liens act, but interact with it and with other pieces of government legislation as well.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Good legislation. Two quick questions: What happens if there's a bankruptcy at the top and often monies are used for one project to pay for another one, big cash flow challenges. What happens if a payer becomes insolvent and is unable to meet their deadline, at least on a temporary basis?

Mr. Helwer: Thank you to the member for the question.

Well, I believe, if you look at the legislation, it means that we have two active parties that go through the consultation processes. If one is in receivership then you're looking more at court action or the liens process. It is likely something that would not apply to this particular legislation, but we could look and see if there is—isn't a way to include those, but I suspect you're looking more at the courts for that solution.

Mr. Lindsey: The member explained that this process will not take the place of a court process if this process is not successful, that the court is still an option.

Mr. Helwer: Thank you to the member for the question.

Absolutely, the courts are always accessible. It does not mean that you—if you have an unsuccessful approach through this legislation the court is always there as the final arbiter of a decision.

Mr. Johnston: Can the member share any of his personal experience that he has had with regards to the prompt payment issues?

Mr. Helwer: Well, I have several pieces of experience in my sector, in the agricultural sector, and, certainly, the credit world was an important part of our business and we managed that in various ways. It was an opportunity to finance some of our customers, but I also do have a little bit of a bizarre experience in the construction world where we were doing some venture capital and it did cost us a great deal of money learning how that process worked, and we did lose in a court case up to a million dollars.

So I do have some personal experience in this, and I think that there could be a better solution with experienced adjudicators as opposed to—as educated

as the court is, they may not know the construction industry.

* (10:20)

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions on debate?

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): May I ask this question: Some general contractors and owners have questioned the quality of the finished product, meaning how the whole project has been finished, and they refuse to pay on the basis of the question of quality.

Is there a dispute mechanism when these issues arise?

Mr. Helwer: Thank you to the member for the question.

That's—that is an interesting way to look at this. I suspect that you could use the adjudication process on that regard in terms of quality, but quality is very subjective. It is difficult to rule on in courts, no doubt, and I suspect it could be difficult in this situation. But at least you are dealing, hopefully, with adjudicators that are well versed in the industry and knowledgeable.

Madam Speaker: Pardon me, I have to repeat that: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I'm happy to raise and talk a little bit about the prompt payment legislation that's before us here today.

I've spoken with people in the building trades industry that fully support this, and they are relatively happy with the employers that they work for, that if the employer gets paid—if the subcontractor gets paid, they're really good at paying their workers on time. So that was the one concern I had about it, was to make sure that it worked all the way down the line. And certainly the labour representatives I spoke to said that, yes, they're quite happy with it.

So I guess this is a really good example of labour and management coming together and working co-operatively to the betterment of all, which, you know, we see less of these days, when certain committees have been done away with by this government that offered the opportunity for labour and management to come together and find

solutions to problems which they had a long history of. So I don't want to poke the member too much about that, I'm sure that he'll get back to his caucus and say, yes, this is a good example of labour and management working together, and let's do more of it. So I look forward to seeing that.

Certainly, all of us appreciate the work that gets done by the building trades, by the construction industry, and we look forward to a relationship that ensures that that continues, that we recognize that if the working people get paid, if the subcontractors get paid, the whole process works better. The whole process then puts money back into the economy so that more projects can take place.

I understand there were some general contractors that weren't happy with this, but hopefully through the process at the next steps of the bill at committee level and stuff, those issues can be fleshed out and resolved so that everyone can move forward together on this piece of legislation to make sure that it does, in fact, work for everyone.

So we want to make sure that Manitoba's construction industry continues to grow, and some of the things that concern us is when we see infrastructure budgets cut, that that'll have a negative impact on all the members in the gallery today, whether they're contractors, subcontractors, building trades workers, that it's going to take a hit on them. So we encourage the government to really look at infrastructure and the importance of building, of maintaining the infrastructure that the people of the province depend on.

And, certainly, whether it's building hospitals or schools, that is vitally important for all of us. And certainly I know from previous conversations will the building—with the building trades group that they take great pride in the work that they do and they are a vital part of the Manitoba economy. And we need to ensure that that vital part of the economy keeps going and growing so that the whole Manitoba economy is something that we can all be proud of and stand up and say that things have gotten better not worse.

I don't want to talk too long because this is one of the few bright spots that we've seen from this government, and it's certainly notable that it's a bright spot that involves the co-operation of labour management and the government. So we encourage that sort of spirit of co-operation to continue in all dealings with this government. So with that, I'll conclude my remarks.

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): I just wanted to extend my appreciation to the minister of Flin Flon for those kind comments about how the member from Brandon West is—has the vision to try to ensure that all Manitobans prosper, and, certainly, this is one of the many bright spots that our government will continue to proceed with, so.

Madam Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to strengthen the stability of the construction industry. This bill will lessen the financial risk to contractors and subcontractors. By providing timely payments to the construction industry, this bill will enhance the viability of the industry as a whole.

Madam Speaker, first, let me compliment the member from Brandon West for having the foresight to bring this bill forward at this time. The member from Brandon West has worked with the members of the construction industry, stakeholders, labour, to develop Bill 218. At a time when costs continue to grow substantially, interest rates threaten to increase aggressively, material and maintenance costs grow and labour considerations increase, this bill does show vision.

Madam Speaker, prompt legislation is not an exclusive consideration of the Manitoba government. Other provinces are considering their legislation currently. British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec are all in draft stage. Ontario has passed prompt-payment legislation with Bill 142 receiving royal assent. The Canadian House of Commons is also deliberating on Bill S224 which addresses prompt payment nationally. As well, this issue has also been addressed internationally. So the member from Brandon West has identified a real need.

Madam Speaker, I have some experience in the construction field. At one time in my life I represented a company that supplied concrete fasteners as well as the tools to implement them. I dealt with many contractors and subcontractors. I understand and appreciate the challenges this industry has with prolonged payment of service. I also appreciate the contribution the construction industry makes to our economy. There are many times jobs have gone over the time frame or were underestimated or labour needs were a problem—not that the labourers couldn't do the work, but trying to find the labourers sometimes is a problem which creates challenges for contractors and subcontractors. Through no fault of the contractors or subcontractors, can they be—through no fault of the contractors or subcontractors were they

responsible that they were stretched thin. Having access to more timely payment would help them a great deal.

Madam Speaker, I would—I also like this legislation as it creates more of a level playing field. With quicker access to payment it allows smaller and mid-sized contractors and subcontractors to bid on jobs. Not all contractors are able to carry the significant costs associated with major jobs. This bill will allow for more opportunity.

And, Madam Speaker, with a higher level of fair competition in a healthy market comes competitive pricing. A healthy construction industry drives such economic benefits as employment, materials being purchased, secondary industries and the supply chain prospering, more disposable income for people and an industry that's able to fulfill the needs of projects.

* (10:30)

Madam Speaker, the current framework to determine a resolve of prompt payment of goods and services was absent in Manitoba. Contractors and subcontractors will have to bear an—were having to bear an unfair burden without timely flow of payment. This bill can allow for a reasonable satisfaction of services rendered.

Madam Speaker, the member from Brandon West has worked with a coalition of industry, trade, labour to develop this bill. He has consulted with the Manitoba Prompt Payment Coalition, who have endorsed his efforts for timely payments.

I am very pleased to support this member's Bill 218, the prompt payment construction industry act. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'm happy to rise today and speak to Bill 218, The Prompt Payments in the Construction Industry Act. I'll keep my comments very short, as I'm sure all of us here in the House want to vote on this right away.

Madam Speaker, this bill essentially sets guidelines ensuring that contractors are paid regularly and on time and that other regulations are being met. This legislation is accomplished by the use of periodic payments, and these periodic payments can be made at specific times as the work progresses or perhaps when milestones are met throughout the project. Both of these options are to be discussed and agreed upon prior to the project starting. When it comes to the final payment, it must be paid quickly once the work has been completed.

This helps projects, protects those doing the projects and provides incentive to finish them.

Madam Speaker, this bill ensures that the same rules apply for contractors' payments to their subcontractors and therefore to their subcontractors. Again, it's protecting those doing the work.

If payment obligations are not met, there are a couple of options: (1) a contractor or subcontractor may suspend work or terminate the contract altogether with notice, and (2) there's an opportunity to appoint an adjudicator to resolve payment disputes.

Madam Speaker, both small and medium business owners should feel confident that they will get paid in a timely manner. This is not just a question of fairness, but an important initiative to ensure that our construction industry remains strong and viable. And, frankly, when companies and workers are paid in and on time, they continue to invest in our economy as consumers.

Madam Speaker, our caucus is interested in—to hear what Manitobans have to say about the consumer perspective and to learn more about possible increases in costs if a job doesn't get finished and lastly, the assurance of project quality. With that, we are very happy to support this bill going through to the committee stage.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further members to—wish to speak on debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 218, The Prompt Payments in the Construction Industry Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'm wondering if you could canvass the House to see if it is the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to call it 11 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 10—Celebrating a New School in Brandon

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions.

The resolution before us this morning is the resolution Celebrating a New School in Brandon, brought forward by the honourable member for Brandon East.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I move, seconded by the member from Brandon West, that

WHEREAS education is essential to ensuring the success of Manitoba's future generations; and

WHEREAS the city of Brandon has a quickly growing population of Kindergarten to Grade Eight children; and

WHEREAS this Provincial Government is committed to providing a high level of education to all citizens of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the last school built in Brandon was established in 1991, under Premier Filmon's Progressive Conservative Government; and

WHEREAS the last Progressive Conservative Government anticipated Brandon's population growth and built three schools; and

WHEREAS the previous Provincial Government ignored Brandon's population growth and closed two schools; and

WHEREAS the previous Provincial Government promised, but failed to follow through, on the building of a new school in Brandon.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba celebrate the construction of a new school in southeast Brandon that will serve the needs of many children.

Motion presented.

Mr. Isleifson: As the member from Flin Flon said, let's make this the second bright spot of the day.

This resolution before our House today is pretty straightforward. There's a long-awaited excitement in the air around Brandon when it comes to educational growth and opportunity, and this resolution confirms that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba celebrates this milestone. This resolution identifies a number of facts that have existed for years, and it recognizes the needs of many children in both my constituency and that of my colleague from Brandon West.

You see, Madam Speaker, education is an important aspect to the future and the future of our children and our grandchildren. Populations have grown in my home of Brandon at a steady rate, but the progress of building new schools has been non-existence since Waverly Park School was built in 1991. That is correct; I did say 1991.

That would have been some 27 years ago, under the Filmon government. The population of Brandon, at the time, was roughly 35,000, and it is now approaching the 50,000 mark. This simply means a population growth of around 15,000, but no increase in new educational capital infrastructure for K-to-12 students for almost three decades.

I want to spend a few minutes with more specific information related to the needs of the Brandon School Division that will shed some light on why this school is needed. At the same time, I really want to congratulate the folks at the school board, who provide the estimates on 'rolments' from year to year, as they are almost dead-on every year in their predictions of the number of students being enrolled.

Madam Speaker, if nothing was done to alleviate space requirements throughout the division by 2021, Earl Oxford School would have a student capacity of 103 per cent. Green Acres would be at 114 per cent. J.R. Reid would be at 109 per cent, Linden Lanes at 105 per cent and Riverheights would be at a capacity of 122 per cent. The need is real and the requirement is long overdue.

In the reading of the 2018 budget, Madam Speaker, our government announced that we would be proceeding with public tenders to construct five new schools with a capacity of 3,300 students and 392 child-care spaces. This investment is well over \$100 million, with the work scheduled to begin over the course of the next two years.

However, Madam Speaker, those living in my constituency will see the construction of a K-to-8 school in Brandon East, with work already under way. Unlike the previous government, we are committed to improving education for Manitoba students, and that is no more evident the announcement that was made in Brandon last Thursday.

I am sure we all have some very special memories of our school days: our favourite class, our favourite subject or our favourite teacher. It may even be that special class in technology that is so vivid in our minds, and yet so different from today's realities.

And take computer science, for example, Madam Speaker. I remember standing in the work station at the back of the classroom, filling in those little black dots on those cards and feeding it into a machine so that it could print out to do certain tasks that my little pencil marks had actually told it to do. Computers certainly have changed in today's standards.

Going back even further to the late '60s and '70s, had a totally different approach to learning, but they always contained the same desired outcomes: to learn the most we could to become the future leaders of our world back then. While new technology surrounds today's youth, the desired outcomes of education remain, but requires ongoing capital investments.

This important capital investment is part of our government's commitment to catch up on the need for a new school that was ignored by the previous government. The initial request for a new school in Brandon was made to the public schools financial board back in 2012, as it was then stated by Brandon School Division officials that they would run out of space by the year 2015.

Maybe the member from Fort Garry-Riverview, who was the minister of Education at the time, might be kind enough to provide me with a review of that application and explain what 'methology' and the—or science was used to ignore those needs back then.

When we took office in 2016, Madam Speaker, we heard that Manitoba students were roughly one year behind in reading and science and more than half a year behind in math compared to our provincial neighbours. We knew that our high school drop-out rate was the second highest of all the provinces, while scores in science, reading and math were the lowest among all the provinces in Canada.

The member from Brandon West and myself have had a number of occasions to meet with the board of the Brandon School Division and discuss their concerns and their ideas. They have always been very valid and concerning for the need to provide improved educational settings for our children.

* (10:40)

After 17 years of NDP mismanagement and lack of action, we are carefully steering Manitoba's education system on a path forward to ensure quality education for all students.

At that announcement last Thursday, the Brandon School Division board chair, Dr. Linda Ross, said, and I quote: I just can't stop smiling. End of quote. She continued to say, and I quote: Plans are under way; things are moving forward very quickly, and it's just very exciting when I look around this neighbourhood where there has been so much development. And that's the end of her quote.

Madam Speaker, the excitement about this long-awaited school in my constituency even has the past president of the Brandon and District Labour Council and current city councillor, Jan Chaboyer, shake my hand and the hand of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) with words of thanks and praise that moving forward on this much-needed and long-overdue capital investment in education.

Madam Speaker, the new school in Brandon East not only provides for a direct benefit for students ready to use the school in September 2020 but will also have an outreaching benefit to a very large number of schools in the entire Brandon School Division. You see, teachers and administrators alike have given up a lot of space of—for classrooms. And, as we heard from Dr. Ross, even teachers are going without staff rooms in some schools as these have been designated for student spaces.

Madam Speaker, the new school in Brandon will be 65,600 square feet and will accommodate 450 students, with the ability to expand to a capacity of 675. Plans for the school include a child-care centre for 20 infants and 54 preschool children, 40 nursery-school spaces, 14 regular classrooms and dedicated science, band and art rooms. It will be able to look after the future educational needs such as labs for science, technology, electronics and math, libraries, gymnasiums, home economics, industrial arts and more.

Madam Speaker, this school is long overdue, and we are continuing to work with our partners at the Brandon School Division and the City of Brandon in providing a better use of resources and more opportunities for better results for our students.

As mentioned in the resolution, primary school education is essential in ensuring the success of Manitoba's future generations. The students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow and, as the population of Brandon continues to grow, so must the educational opportunities in the community. Our government is committed to shopping smarter on behalf of the taxpayer and have identified at least \$18 million in savings over conventional tendering

and are able to fund the construction of one more school than initially planned.

Madam Speaker, along with the 50,000 residents of Brandon, let this Legislative Assembly rise in celebration of a new school in southeast Brandon that will serve the needs of many children when the doors open in 2020 and for years beyond.

I want to end my opening—my remarks just by doing one more quote, if I may. And this, again, is Dr. Linda Ross, who's the board chair of the Brandon School Division. She says: On behalf of the board and on behalf of the community of Brandon, I would like to thank the province and applaud them for doing their due diligence in this process, listening to our concerns that have been raised. I'd like to celebrate the fact that we're actually going to get a new school.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I'm wondering if the member could share some details from their consultant's report on the viability of P3 funding to build schools in Manitoba.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): That's a great question.

I mean, there has been a lot of talk about P3s, and I know in past experiences in working in different, various levels of municipal politics that P3s is a very beneficial program. I'm very proud of the fact that this government took the opportunity to investigate in P3s. And, again, it's due diligence that is well acknowledged by the chair of the Brandon school board already that, you know, we did that due diligence.

In the end, it's very evident that not going with the P3 with this project has saved us some money so that we can go ahead and build an additional school than we would have originally.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to thank this opportunity to congratulate my colleague

from Brandon East on this fantastic resolution that we're debating here this morning in the House.

I would like to ask the member from Brandon East: Can the member explain why building a new school in Brandon is such a priority for this new government?

Mr. Isleifson: Great question. Again, we've noticed that the needs of the community in Brandon have increased over the years. It's quite obvious that not a school was built since 1991. So the last government neglected to comprehend that Brandon is a growing community and while the last school was built in Brandon by the PC government under the Filmon government, you know, we're capable of handling a large capacity of students and now we can look further into the future because Brandon is continuing to grow.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): The government—our previous government announced the creation of the school, the construction of the school in January 2016. It's now just about May 2018. What took so long?

Mr. Isleifson: Well, Madam Speaker, I think the previous government was—requested a school back in 2012, I think is what I said earlier, and they were in government quite long, unfortunately, after 2012, and it never got built at all. So, as we've heard many times in this building, what they failed to do, we will get it right.

Mr. Ewasko: It's great to follow up two of the former Education ministers from the previous NDP government. I'd like to ask the member from Brandon East, can he elaborate on why the NDP did not build any new schools in Brandon during their tenure in government besides just the old broken promises of the Selinger government and yesterday's NDP?

Mr. Isleifson: Thank you for the question.

I mean, it's quite obvious the NDP were simply not focused on the needs of the city of Brandon. They allowed our education system in Manitoba to be one of the worst in Canada, and due to their consistent neglect across the board it continued to do so.

So, again, from our perspective, we have an opportunity to work closely with the school board and the City of Brandon in the—developing the needs that they've been asking for since 2012 and we're very happy to do so.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, I asked the member to share some details on the report that was generated by their outside consultant, and yet he refused to share those with the House. I'd give him another opportunity, but maybe he can also focus on how much was spent on that KPMG report. Can he just tell the House once and for all how much was spent on that report, and does he not think that that money would have been better spent in our education system?

Madam Speaker: The—[*interjection*] Order.

Mr. Isleifson: I don't know why the member's getting excited; I mean this is a celebration. We're building a school that is long overdue, so there's no need to get excited about it.

Again, we talk about the—he talks about the cost of a proposal looking into a P3 project. It's not a cost; it's an investment to get things right. Our proposal—when we looked into that proposal we saved \$18 million to build another school, which is more important and more realistic that we need to do than what the previous—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to ask the member which school team is the best in Brandon, and I don't want the member to give us the wishy-washy NDP answer that every school is equal, all students are equal. I want to know which sports team is the best, which school is the best. Don't sit on the fence; list them in order of rank, No. 1 to 7 or 8, whatever it is. Do it and don't give us any hogwash. Do it. Tell us, who's best?

Mr. Isleifson: That's certainly an interesting question. I don't want to get into trouble with my wife because she would say a different school, but all the schools have some great teams—and, yes, you knew I was going to say that. But when I look back, I got to say, go, Spartans, go.

* (10:50)

Mr. Ewasko: As a—an educator myself, it was upsetting, of course, when I was elected here in this House and saw that our educational rankings ranked amongst the lowest, if not the lowest, in science, numeracy and literacy in the province.

I would like the member from Brandon East to just elaborate a little bit on the broken promises and the non-results-based NDP approach to our education system.

Mr. Isleifson: And we've said it all along, and I've mentioned it a few times now, that when we look at the quality of education to school-age children in Brandon, because that's what this resolution is about, it's quite obvious that with nothing going forward in new capital investment that the NDP failed to provide that quality education.

Our government recognizes that strategic and effective investment is the best way to produce results, and by building a new school in Brandon we are strategically investing in education, but also in the future of Brandon and Manitoba as a whole.

Mr. Allum: Maybe the member from Brandon West could explain to the House why the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), why the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), why the current Education Minister, the member for Portage, why the Premier (Mr. Pallister) himself voted against a new school for Brandon in 2016?

Mr. Isleifson: Well, Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to address a question like that.

How many good proposals have we put forward in this House? For example, childhood cancer awareness week that the opposition voted against, you know. So when we look at things like that—

An Honourable Member: What are you talking about?

Mr. Isleifson: What am I—we're hearing this, what am I talking about—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

The honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), to continue.

Mr. Isleifson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And, again, I'm speaking facts, and, I mean, we can look back in Hansard and see it. [*interjection*]

So again, Madam Speaker, they're upset. We're trying to celebrate the building of a new school that is long overdue, but I can understand their frustrations because they failed to get it done. We're doing the right thing.

Mr. Ewasko: It upsets me that the member from Fort Garry-Riverview, who was two of the five previous Education ministers to get up and do the doom-and-gloom story, and as the member from Brandon East says, we're here to celebrate the fact that we're going to be building a new school in Brandon, and it is an exceptional, exceptional

announcement. We're getting it done when they just couldn't get it done.

Can the member explain how we're better providing resources and the use of those resources in the great city of Brandon, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Isleifson: When we talk about providing resources, we look at who our partners are out there. We're working closely with the Brandon School Division, the City of Brandon. We're looking at what their needs are. We're looking at their needs for today. We're looking at their needs for tomorrow.

We look in the gallery today and we have some young students that are in that period, that K-to-8 area of education, and we need to look that these young folks are our future. So looking at these young folks, and we want to wish them all well in education, but I also want to make sure that we give all Manitoba children the opportunity to someday sit in their—this House, if that is their desire to do so, to help grow Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader?

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: On a point of order.

Ms. Fontaine: I would ask the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) to retract his comments in respect of us not supporting the Child Cancer Awareness Month private member's bill. As I actually approach, next week, 29 years since my little sister died of leukemia, I take such great offence that you would stand in this House and erroneously say that we did not support that.

I ask the member for Brandon East to retract those comments.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon East, on the same point of order.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker. I lost a brother to cancer as well. I'm not here to decry anything against cancer. I am stating the facts that the motion was

brought forward and I'll let Hansard speak for itself. I will not withdraw my comments.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): There is no point of order. It's a dispute of the facts, an attempt to extend the debate. There is no point of order. No rule has been broken and now is not the time to extend that debate or squabble over the facts.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate that this is a dispute over the facts. It is not a point of order and a point of order should not be used to debate an issue of difference of opinion.

Madam Speaker: The—yes. The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Well, on a morning that the member stands up and wants to talk about celebrating, he goes on the record and puts false information on the record, won't even be the big enough person to stand up and retract those comments.

You know, Madam Speaker, it just—it speaks to where this member is coming from—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

I have ruled on that already and it was not a point of order. It was ruled not a point of order, so I would just urge caution by members in making any reference to what I have already ruled on.

So the honourable member for Concordia.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, this speaks to where this member is coming from. The—his willingness to put false information on the record and miss—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker, this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The Speaker's—the Speaker is standing, and I would urge all members here right now that are yelling in this House that I have ruled on this. I don't think this is time for yelling and heckling. This is certainly—I'm glad the students have left so that they didn't see this, because this is not the type of debate that we want to see here. So I would urge all members to please—to contain yourselves. I had ruled on that.

There tends to be a lot of passion here. There's a lot of times we vote on something and against something, and it's sometimes just a very partisan vote and it doesn't always necessarily relate to the topic. So I would just urge—that's all part of debate and I would urge caution right now by all members. I have ruled on this, and I would ask for co-operation of all members to please respect the person that is on debate, and I would urge members to just recall what I have just indicated. That was not a point of order and I would urge caution in continuing remarks along that direction.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, Madam Speaker, this is a whole new level of a hypocrisy by this government here this morning. This is an unbelievable resolution.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

You know, this is a government that when they were in opposition—and I'm looking at the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko); I'm looking at the member for Morris (Mr. Martin); I'm looking at others across the way who stood up and said, you know, that government over there—when the NDP was in government—that government over there, they're all about the photo ops. They're all about the announcement and they never follow through.

Well, here we are, Madam Speaker, not only are we watching the member for Brandon East (Mr. Helwer) grab his Premier (Mr. Pallister), drag him out of the House to go out to Brandon, right? Then he decides that he wants to spend the morning talking about something that isn't even done. There's not a shovel in the ground; there's nothing built.

And, in fact, it was this government that dithered, this government that delayed, this government that did nothing for two years on education, on investing in Brandon. And it's the absolute height of hypocrisy.

* (11:00)

And when this member stands up—and I didn't hear him talk about K-to-3 class sizes going up in the province. He didn't talk about teachers having less one-on-one time with their students. He didn't talk about the cuts, the overall cuts to education that are not even meeting enrolment, Madam Speaker, let alone inflation. I don't hear this member talking about all the school divisions throughout the province who are making tough decisions on what they need to cut, on teachers they need to let go, on EAs they can't fund and other supports they can't

fund. I didn't hear this member mention that once. Instead he talks about capital.

Well, let's talk capital, Madam Speaker, because it just so happens that there was a little bit done in this province over the last 17 years that this government doesn't want to talk about, that this government won't acknowledge, this government won't put on the record and talk about. Well, I'm happy to do that: \$1.4 billion invested in this province; 35 new and replacement schools, 82 additions to schools in this province. And what was the record of this—of the government in the '90s? What was the record of this government in the past? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: What was their record, Madam Speaker? They're pretty loud, they're pretty happy to talk about it. What was their record?

An Honourable Member: Fifty schools.

Mr. Wiebe: Fifty schools cut and closed by this previous government.

Now, they say, well, that's the '90s. That's a long time ago. That's not us.

Well, what did this government do? Two years, two years they had and they sat on their hands. They sat on their hands and they did nothing. They dithered, they delayed and they didn't do squat, Madam Speaker, for education capital.

Now, where did that \$1.4 billion go? Well, it went—it was spent smart, Madam Speaker. This wasn't just a plan—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —out of the blue.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Micklefield: The member opposite continues to reference Madam Speaker. Clearly, that's an error. I just would like to pause and take a deep breath and remind all members that it's yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, on the point of order for the member from Rossmere, it's not a point of order, but acknowledge that it's an interruption of the

debate, so I want to go back to the honourable member for Concordia.

* * *

Mr. Wiebe: This member from Rossmere thinks it's a joke. We don't think it's a joke. We think this is serious. We're talking education here this morning, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to do that.

We spent smart. We talked about the importance of STEM.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: We talked about good jobs. We had a plan for jobs in this province, and I think it's important to focus on because it's this government that comes in and sits on their hands for two years. Well, we invested in science labs, \$24 million on new science labs; 66 new science labs built throughout this province, with others in the works, that were then delayed, that were then dithered on by this government. Instead of going forward on important projects, including in my own community, what did they do? They sat on their hands. They refused to keep moving forward.

New shops classrooms, Madam Speaker. We don't hear much about apprenticeship, about the importance of building our economy based on smart tradespeople and important tradespeople in this province. We don't hear that from this government; that's a focus, not only in this province, was a focus throughout Canada, around the world. We saw a need, and so we invested. And what did we invest, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Thirty million dollars to upgrade shops, classrooms, 18 schools with the latest technology that kids could be ready for the jobs of tomorrow. That was culinary arts in Kildonan-East, that was autobody, that was upgrading shops at Garden City, that was broadcast, an online media studio over at Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre. This was across the province, and it was a true investment.

How about gyms? How about staying healthy and active? This government comes into power, what is the first act that they do? Was it to invest in education? Was it to talk about the importance of investing? No. What was it, Mr. Speaker? It was to cancel two gym projects that were ready to go, that had the community building a fund, investing in that project, ready to go and ready to build, and what did

this government say? Stop, cancel, dither, delay. That was their record.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: –and that remains their record. You know, \$26.5 million invested in six new gyms, one gym addition, three wellness centres and 10 schools throughout Manitoba. Well, you know what, Mr. Speaker? I could go on. I could go on all morning long, but I won't because I'm going to turn to what this member wants to talk about, and that is Brandon.

Well, he says Brandon, there was no investments in Brandon during the 17 years that the NDP government was in power. Well, let me put some facts on the record, Madam Speaker, not the hypocrisy coming from the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson). Six million dollars spent in Brandon West since 2000, and this was: \$2.5 million for a roof replacement and additions and renovations at Linden Lanes School; \$1.5 million for additions and renovations at J.R. Reid School; \$750,000 for a roof replacement and renovations at Earl Oxford School; science lab renovations, grooming room and lift at Meadows School; renovations at Riverheights School, Valleyview Centennial School and Vincent Massey school. [*interjection*]

Well, maybe that was just Brandon West. Maybe we only spent money in Brandon West. No, actually, Mr. Speaker, we spent it in Brandon East as well: \$5 million in capital in Brandon East since 2000: roof replacements, renovations and repairs at Betty Gibson School, Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School, George Fitton School, Green Acres School, Kirkcaldy school, Neelin High School and New Era School; a new grooming room at King George School and renovations at Earl Oxford School.

I don't know why the members aren't cheering here, Madam–Mr. Speaker. There's so much that we can talk about, but the government is—all of a sudden silent. I thought you were all about capital and investments. Well, where are they? They're dithering; they're delaying; they're doing nothing is what they're doing.

An addition and construction of a new gym and ancillary space at George Fitton School, additional gym space at Green Acres School. My sheet just

goes on here, Mr. Speaker. I don't think—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —I'm going to fit it all in.

Revitalization and upgrading of two science labs for chemistry, physics, biology at Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School and two science labs for chemistry, physics, biology at Neelin High School. And what contrasts this record, Mr. Speaker, is 50 schools closed by this—these Conservatives in the 1990s—50 schools closed throughout our province—and you know what, if I had to guess, I would say, more to come because of the funding cuts and the pressures that they're putting on our school divisions. They're just getting started.

You know what, this is a government who is full of hypocrisy and is full of putting false information on the record, which we heard this morning. You know what, it's unbelievable that they would stand up and they would trumpet something that they delayed, that they put the brakes on for no reason, no good reason. I asked the member, tell me, how much did you spend on the consultant's report? No answers. Well, tell me what the consultant's report—why aren't we going ahead with P3s? He could give me no details.

This is a government that sat on their hands for two years, and now they say, oh, don't worry; we care about education. The people of Manitoba understand when you cut funding, when you cut teachers, when you cut school divisions and when you sit on your hands for two years and then dribble out some money and say, oh, look at how great we are—nobody buys that, Mr. Speaker. Nobody believes this government cares about education. And don't worry; it's only two years, and the people of Manitoba will give you their grade on what they think of your education investments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Well, let's just take it down a notch here and talk about things that actually are happening as opposed to, you know, lots of fear and trepidation that we always see from the members opposite, the NDP party. They like to scare people and they like to use them as props, and I distinctly remember prior to the 2011 election—which was the first election, provincially, that I ran in, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know, I—it was nice to work with my colleagues and it was nice to work with colleagues in the Legislature that I hoped to become a colleague with them. It was also nice to work with people in the community.

And strangely enough, in the spring of 2011, I heard rumours that the government was going to come out to make a—an announcement on schools. So I found out when this was going to be and where it was going to be, and I showed up at the appointed time to find out that they had moved the time an hour ahead. So I wasn't able to attend the announcement, but, strangely enough, the NDP candidate who was running against me was informed of that announcement and knew what time to show up. So games were played all the way along.

So this was announcement in 2011 about two new gyms, and they used students as props. They used students as props throughout their career in government and it was sad to watch, mister government—Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because when you tell a student that you're going to get a new gym, they're excited, and they should be. They expect that it's going to happen right away, but, no. When did that happen? Well, let me think now.

* (11:10)

The Green Acres, it was announced in 2011 and spring 2016 was opened. So the students there were in that class are now graduating from high school. So maybe once they get married and settle down and have children, their—maybe their children can go use the gym at Green Acres and maybe their children can go use the gym at George Fitton. And so this is just—you know, the member talks about dates; well, these are pretty important dates.

And then maintenance and repairs, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we saw a dearth of that. That did not happen well during the NDP reign. They cut that all the way along and we're seeing that now as we look at all the schools that we have to fix that they left to decay.

So what I compare it to is, you know, many of us, you've got a faucet that's dripping in your home and if you have a little wherewithal you can go and look it up on YouTube or somewhere on the Internet to figure out how to fix that faucet and it'll tell you which one to buy. You go to the hardware store, you buy that faucet for \$2.38 and you come back and you figure out how to replace it and that drip is gone.

Or, you know, you can let it drip and then what happens? Eventually, it stains the sink, it uses water, it wastes water, the tap will become eroded. So now eventually you're going to have to call in somebody that knows a little bit more about it because now you have to replace the tap, the sink and it's probably dripped into the cabinet, and while we're at it we'll take that out, you know, and we better redo the bathroom here, too, and better do the—so your \$2.38 repair has now gone to \$10,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's what we've seen under the NDP reign. They could have fixed things at a low cost. They could have fixed them when it was efficient, when it should have been done, and they delayed it for years and now we're paying the price. We have substantial upgrades that we have to be paying for, for all these schools.

So, you know, I'm thrilled that we are the government that is building a new school in Brandon and it may be in Brandon East, but it is for all the school students in Brandon and it's happening quickly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The member talked about, well, why did we—why was there a delay? Well, you know what, we looked at the P3s, we looked at an opportunity that we could use this new way of looking at projects in Manitoba that the NDP had made illegal because they hate them, they hate the private sector. And, you know, we found that it wasn't really going to work for schools at this time and may work down the road and may work for larger projects, but we did find \$18 million in savings, so I think that's a pretty good return on investment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If I have to say I'm disappointed at all, it's that it wasn't done earlier. Obviously, the NDP didn't want to save money. They had no concern for how schools were built; they just blank cheque, away you go, if they built any at all, and they certainly didn't build 'edy' in Brandon. So it's sad to watch.

And then, you know, I do remember, oh, a year or so ago the leader of the NDP saying that—he was thundering away that if they'd been in power, this school would have been built already. Well, if that's the case, then I guess he's just following on the, you know, Steve Ashton's Tiger Dams debacle because they don't like tendering, so that would mean if it was done in that short of time, it would mean that the school process didn't go through the Public Schools Finance Board, it would mean that it didn't come to Treasury Board, it would mean that it didn't go to Cabinet, it would mean that it didn't go to tender, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to build a school

within a year of the election, that—none of that would have happened. So obviously the leader of the NDP wants to continue on with what we saw under the previous government, which was untendered, undisclosed contracts to their friends. That is their mantra. That's what they want to do, and he has just talked about it again and again and that's the process that we see would happen.

And then you know, I look back at the announcements they made when they were in government about this supposed school in Brandon and I listened intently to the scrum with the then-minister of Education from—where was he from? He was from Fort Garry-Riverview at that time. I think that was the one. There was a few ministers.

So I listened intently to the scrum and the media asked the minister: Well, can you tell us when this school will be built?

Well, the answer was, well, we have a process for that, we're going through that process, we're evaluating and when the—you know, we've already made this announcement several times but, again, they have no timing. And then the 'nuther' question: Well, how big is this school going to be?

Well, the minister said, well, we have a process for that and we're going through that and evaluating how large we need to build this school and what size and which—so again, you know, not really an announcement at all. And then another question was from the—well, how much is the school going to cost? Well, the minister said, there's a process for that. We're going to go through that carefully and determine—it's not a real announcement, Mr. Speaker, it's just a wish at most.

And they put this off before the previous election, of course. Supposedly, this was going to be an announcement of a new school without any information of when it was going to be built, how much it was going to cost or what size it was going to be—no knowledge of that at all, just a wish, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Not a real announcement of how this school was going to be built, like the minister was in Brandon for last week. And I'm thrilled that he was there and he had a—got a lot of good remarks made to him from the trustees and the public of Brandon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the—Brandon knows that they've been—we've been working on this for a number of years. Obviously, it was ignored by the

previous government. And they know they can trust us to build schools as opposed to close them, like the previous government did. We know that there were schools closed in Brandon under the previous government, certainly not built in Brandon.

So, again, it's just sad to watch that, again, they're advocating for untendered and undisclosed contracts. That was their history. Tens of millions of dollars went to their friends, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to do this right and we're going to do it well, and there will be a new school built in Brandon East. I'm thrilled to see that happen, as is all of Brandon.

Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'm happy to rise and put a few words on the record about Brandon's new school.

I spoke with my colleague from River Heights on this earlier today, and he mentioned how, for many years, he's been hearing from people in Brandon about the critical need for a new school in the community. The population in Brandon is growing rapidly. Eleven of its 19 K-to-8 schools are at or above 100 per cent capacity, while another three are more than 90 per cent full.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some schools have had to convert staff rooms, music rooms and other spaces into classrooms to handle the influx of new students. Some students are also having to be bused across the city to alleviate pressures on the schools. We hope that the government has considered how Brandon is growing and that this school should be built for the needs of the community to come.

And just to be—close, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention and advocate for more schools in the North End of the city of Winnipeg, specifically the constituency of Burrows. We currently have portables being used to full capacity and could certainly use some more classroom space as well.

Thank you.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I'm pleased to get up and join with my friend from Concordia, who gave a barnburner of a speech, worthy of any member in this House. I have to 'shay,' I share his outrage and I share his passion, and I won't be able to do as well as him today. In fact, it's a rare moment when I'll be the quiet voice of reason in the House as opposed to being over the top.

But I have to begin by saying that, you know, we on this side of the House are happy that the government's going to build a new school, or say they will. I mean, we have nothing against building new schools. In fact, as the member from Concordia stated, we built 35 new schools in Manitoba during our time in government.

So, you know, that's almost beside the point in this debate today. We hope you actually do build the school. But there are a couple of caveats that I do want to say about it. One, of course, is that we'll believe it when we see it, because we know that this government has a history in the past—and, really, a history over the last two years—of absolutely building nothing. Nothing. They put the brakes on everything. They don't construct anything. We built; they don't. That's become the common understanding in Manitoba over many, many years. And so we on this side of the House are a little skeptical, a little uncertain that this is actually going to happen. But if it does, we don't have any problem with that. That would be a good thing.

But the other thing is, is that my friend from Concordia pointed out that the school would have already been built if the government hadn't wasted a colossal amount of time over the last two years screwing around with P3s that we told them on this side of the House, they don't work. They cost taxpayers more. They cost governments more. They cost communities more. We said that right from the get-go.

*(11:20)

If they'd just listened to what we had said, then we wouldn't have wasted two years on listening to overpraised, overpriced, overpaid consultants when, in fact, the advice from the loyal opposition was sound and crystal clear from the get-go: don't waste anybody's time. Get on with constructing these schools in the same way that we had since 99–1999. And the fact of the matter is they ignored us. They've wasted time.

They've put out an announcement now, but only—only—this government, only these Conservative folks would celebrate something that doesn't exist, and I have to say, that's one of the great disappointments about this resolution. I have no doubt that some member from the opposition will have a resolution next week celebrating unicorns because they don't exist either, and then after that it'll be about a free-trade deal with Mars that is likely to happen.

The fact of the matter is we'll believe it when we see it. But it says something about the hyper-partisan nature of the government that they should celebrate something that doesn't exist and then go on and put a number of incorrect, inaccurate points on the record—that my friend from Concordia did a magnificent job in countering—and put the real facts on the table in relation to capital construction of the K-to-8 system in Brandon, in terms of the operating side of investments in Brandon School Division, who was among the highest recipients of funding year over year related to the very growth in that city—and why did that growth happen? Because we invested in the economy, and as a result 125,000—probably more like a 150,000 newcomers came to this province during our time in government when, in fact, during the 1990s 5,000 people left Manitoba. There's a big difference in how we operated compared to how they operated.

And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my friend from Concordia outlined all the various things that were invested in in the K-to-8 system, so it's probably worth talking about some of the investments in Brandon University and ACC as well just to complete the whole puzzle here about what our record really was in government and that contrasts so severely with the government that has cut funding to education, both of the K-to-8 system and in the post-secondary system as well; who's put the brakes on all capital construction as well in the K-to-8 system and in the post-secondary system in Brandon; and, as a result, continues to allow our education system to deteriorate in a way that is quite reminiscent of the 1990s.

And I have to say, if you think that I'm not pro-Brandon, that's not true. My daughter went to Brandon University. She did her B.A. there. She became a teacher. There's a fantastic school and a fantastic experience and a fantastic city.

We're pro-Brandon on this side of the House. We always have been, and yet what we hear from the government's side is a litany of incorrect, inaccurate information that, as I said, my friend from Concordia did a wonderful job in countering.

But let's think about some of the things that have happened at Brandon University and at ACC as well. The first thing, of course, and the most significant was the movement of ACC from downtown to the North Hill, and today when you go to the North Hill you see a fantastic educational complex, complete

with a beautiful culinary arts facility that is second to none in this province.

In addition to that, you'll go just a little ways next door and you'll see the Len Evans Centre, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Itself, again, a facility that provides outstanding educational opportunities for young people in Westman and in Brandon, and I'm sorry to say that members of the government then always voted against these kinds of investments.

In addition to that, if you go down to Brandon University you see the magnificent, outstanding healthy-living centre, which was a fantastic capital construction that spoke quite directly that—to the fact that a healthy mind and a healthy body go hand in hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That's how we've thought about education. We worked in partnership with Brandon University, with city council, with partners in the community, to make sure that there was a facility there, the Healthy Living Centre, which, as I said, like the culinary arts school at ACC, like the Len Evans Centre at ACC, it's second to none.

And then, in addition to that, we have a—just not so long ago an investment in student housing for Brandon University as well, but for families, because there was a recognition that students were not simply solo artists all the time, but they came with their families to go to school as well. Another outstanding capital investment that continued to build Brandon University, the educational system in Brandon and in the city of Brandon itself. They are educational facilities on the one hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but there are also—incredibly important community assets that create jobs, provide great educational opportunities and do the right thing for students and parents both yesterday, today and tomorrow.

So, if we look at the budgets that have been proposed by the government over the past few years, we see absolutely none of those kind of capital investments either in the K-to-8 system or in the post-secondary system in Brandon, in Winnipeg or across Manitoba.

The—in our last budget in January 2016, we had committed upwards of about \$66 million for the renovation and completion of the Parkland building to create the centre for Health, Energy and Environment. Have we seen one single red cent being invested in the Parkland building since? The member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), has some

explaining to do to the people of Brandon why they're not doing their job, why they're not advocating for the continued rebuilding of the educational complex at ACC on the north hill, why they're not advocating for future investments in Brandon University and why only—why only—they celebrate a school that has yet to be built. There's not a shovel in the ground. We don't even know if there's a sign on the front lawn yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it's—I have to say this has been a colossal disappointment to me. Outside of the member from Concordia who put facts on the record and has spoke with great passion, this has been a very, very—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: —disappointing resolution. I'm sad for the member of Brandon East who has bought into the hyper-partisan rhetoric of the Pallister government. On this side of the House, we're going to continue to stand with the educational community, going to continue to stand with students, with their families. We're going to continue to fight for an educational system that serves all Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I guess there aren't any more Conservatives that are even brave enough to stand up and speak to this, so I'll be happy to talk about education and also talk about Brandon and how important Brandon is to the people of Manitoba and certainly to our NDP caucus.

I love driving out to Brandon and visiting and meeting with folks out there, going to great events in Brandon. And, of course, there's two main ways—I guess, really, three now, with construction of Highway 110—there's two main ways that most people come into Brandon from the Trans-Canada Highway. The first, of course, is coming in on First Avenue. Of course, as you drive on First Avenue, as you look to the left, just before you go down the hill, what do you see? You see an amazing campus, the North Hill campus, of Assiniboine Community College, which now serves thousands of community college students in Brandon. And as my friend the member from Fort Garry-Riverview put on the record, an incredible culinary arts program, among other programming, that has really put Brandon on the map.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) and Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) get up with their standard rhetoric: Well, the NDP did nothing. Well, I'd like to ask both of those members, how did the Assiniboine Community College on the north hill get there?

And I remind them one time, one of the more entertaining speeches the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) made, when the then-member for Lac du Bonnet, Gerald Hawranik, was complaining about how nothing was going on in his riding, and the member for Elmwood got up and I believe for about five minutes listed all of the investments that the NDP government was making in Lac du Bonnet. And I believe at the end, he asked the rhetorical question, who does the member for Lac du Bonnet believe brought these things? The Easter Bunny? Well, of course not. It was investments by an NDP government which didn't play off areas of the province against each other, that didn't try to divide up north from south and urban from rural. It was a government that invested in all.

* (11:30)

And what if you take the other route in? Eighteenth Avenue, which I would take if I was going to be heading to the Keystone Centre for one for one of the great events there. You roll by Brandon University and again, as the member for Fort-Garry Riverview (Mr. Allum) pointed out, what do you see when you look over at a very beautiful campus? Well, you see a tremendous new building, The Health and Wellness Centre at Brandon University.

And again, how did that building get there? It just didn't magically drop in. It wasn't a gift from alien cultures. It was a New Democrat government that believes in Brandon—that believed in Brandon certainly through our 17 years in government, that invested in Brandon University.

And what about schools in Brandon? Well, it's very rare I've seen the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) quite as upset as he was this morning, and speaking with incredible passion because I know the member for Concordia cares. He cares about his own community, but he cares for all communities. And I thought it was very helpful to have him go on the record and talk about the various investments that the NDP government made, in complete contradiction to what the member for Brandon East and the member for Brandon West would want

people to believe. There was regular, steady investments in Brandon K-to-12 schools.

He pointed out the \$2.5 million for roof replacement, additions and renovations at Linden Lanes School; \$1.5 million for additions and renovations at J.R. Reid School; \$750,000 for roof replacement and renovations to Earl Oxford School; science lab renovations, a grooming room and a lift at Meadows School; and renovations also just in Brandon West—not even talking about Brandon East; renovations to Riverheights School, Valleyview Centennial School and Vincent Massey High school.

And he also pointed out the investments in Brandon East; roof replacements, renovations and repairs at Betty Gibson School, Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School, George Fitton School, Green Acres School, Kirkcaldy Heights School, Neelin High School and New Era School, a new grooming rink at King George School and renovations at Earl Oxford School. In addition, construction of a new gym and ancillary space at George Fitton School, and additional gym space at Green Acres School.

Well, I'm almost jealous reading through this list because I know there were substantial investments in West End schools in Winnipeg, but I think each of Brandon East and Brandon West actually got more from the NDP government than maybe even schools in the West End.

And I know we've got some other projects that we want to have happen, and I know the Minister of

Education knows how concerned I am about and interested I am in Tec Voc school.

And, of course, Tec Voc school was slated to get a new welding and aerospace wing, and I know it's a project that the Minister of Education, in his heart, is very supportive.

Yet nothing has happened and I don't know whether we'll have another phantom announcement coming up in the weeks and months to come where I suppose the government may go out and try to pretend they're doing something they did nothing about for the last two years.

And even beyond the specific examples that the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) put on, of investments in Brandon East and Brandon West, what else was this government doing?

Well, we were investing in students. We were investing in classrooms. We were investing in making sure that children from kindergarten to three have smaller class sizes. That made sure that every student—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan) will have four minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolutions	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Res. 10–Celebrating a New School in Brandon	
Second Readings–Public Bills		Isleifson	1711
Bill 218–The Prompt Payments in the Construction Industry Act		Questions	
Helwer	1705	Wiebe	1713
Questions		Isleifson	1713
Lindsey	1706	Ewasko	1713
Helwer	1706	Allum	1713
Johnston	1707	Fletcher	1714
Lamoureux	1707	Debate	
Fletcher	1708	Wiebe	1715
T. Marcelino	1708	Helwer	1718
Debate		Lamoureux	1720
Lindsey	1708	Allum	1720
Johnston	1709	Swan	1722
Lamoureux	1710		

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