

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 14, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I have a statement for the House.

May 12th, 2018, marked the 148th anniversary of Manitoba joining Confederation as a province. In honour of this historic occasion, in today's Speaker's parade the Sergeant-at-Arms carried the original Manitoba mace. Carved from the hub of a Red River cartwheel by a soldier of the Wolseley expedition, this mace made its first formal appearance on March 15th, 1871, at the first session of the First Manitoba Legislature held in the home of A.G.B. Bannatyne, in Winnipeg.

Included in the designs carved into our original mace, are the rose, thistle, harp and fleur-de-lys. The Bannatyne home was destroyed by fire in December 1873, but thankfully, however, the mace was saved. This mace was retired in 1884 after 13 years of service when our current mace was first introduced. The original mace has a permanent home on display in the Speaker's Office. It came out of retirement for the second time today after 134 years for this celebration. This important historical artifact was used in today's Speaker's parade to pay tribute to the rich history of our province.

The original mace as well as the Assembly's current mace will also be on display in the Chamber in their respective cases during the Doors Open event on May 26th and 27th, 2018, and Manitobans are encouraged to visit the Assembly Chamber on those days to see the maces first-hand.

In addition to the original mace, the star-blanket mace cushion and the beautiful beaded mace runner gifted to the Assembly by indigenous peoples in

2010 are also on display today to help celebrate Manitoba Day and to honour Manitoba's indigenous heritage.

These artifacts also serve as a reminder that this Legislative Assembly Chamber and Legislative Building are in Treaty 1 territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinabe and the homeland of the Metis nation.

I am pleased that we are able to include our original mace in the celebration of Manitoba Day here in this province.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I rise on a point of order today.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Graydon: Yes.

For a number of months now I've been referred to as the senior of this Chamber and, in fact, I probably am the oldest senior in this Chamber, but the truth is, Madam Speaker, that you are the senior of this Chamber, and I want to congratulate you on your 20th anniversary today. When the election was called in 1998, today was the day, the anniversary of the swearing in of the Speaker, and so I would ask all my colleagues and the members from both sides of this House to congratulate our Speaker today.

Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: I just want to thank everybody for those—that acknowledgment. It has been a fabulous 20 years, but I would indicate to the member that he doesn't have a point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Is there any tabling of reports? None? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Winnipeg Jets

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Madam Speaker, it was—is with great pleasure that I rise in the House

today to congratulate Manitoba's National Hockey League franchise, the Winnipeg Jets. We—and by we I feel all of Canada is now supporting Manitoba in successfully taking the next step towards the Stanley Cup.

After a competitive, seven-game series against the Nashville Predators, the Jets secured their position in the Western Conference Final by defeating the Predators 5-1 on Thursday night. A small group of about 800 of us helped cheer on the Jets to that final victory at our Progressive Conservative spring gala. Now, for the first time in franchise's history, including the original franchise from '72 to '96, the Jets have advanced beyond the second round of playoffs.

These historic events have truly brought Manitobans together in support of our team. Tens of thousands of fans have been continually returning to the Whiteout block parties in the downtown area during these games. It is truly awe inspiring to see Manitobans coming together with Canadians as fans. Participating in the Winnipeg Whiteout is compared to an unruly snow blizzard by media.

Now the Jets are pitted against the Las Vegas Golden Knights. These two teams will now compete in the best-of-seven series to determine the contender in the Stanley Cup finals.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the supporters Canada-wide, and a special thanks to the Winnipeg Police for keeping Manitoba fans safe.

Watch out, Las Vegas Golden Knights, only three more to go. Go, Jets, go.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Music Education in Public Schools

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): Plato once said that music is a more potent instrument than any other for education. We could find many teachers who would agree with him. Recent research has found that music uses both sides of the brain, a fact that makes it valuable in all areas of development. Music affects the growth of a child's brain academically, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

We believe music education helps students create meaningful relationships with each other. Music education has the potential to build a sense of community within a school as well as create connections in the wider community. We believe that collaborations among music educators and between educators, parents, music industry, educational

leaders and other stakeholders are fundamental to the future advancement of music education initiatives.

Second graders who were given music lessons scored 27 per cent higher on proportional math and fraction tests than children who received no special instruction. Research indicates that musical training permanently wires a young mind for enhanced performance.

*(13:40)

These are among the many reasons why we believe the government should be investing in music education at our schools. Instead, the Pallister government has backed out on plans to fund a music room expansion at Gimli High School, and last year the government forced Sturgeon Heights Collegiate to cut a music teacher and two band programs. We believe music education should be available to all students in our public schools.

Thank you.

Shoppers Drug Mart Reopening in Tuxedo

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge the grand reopening of Shoppers Drug Mart at Tuxedo Park Shopping Centre that occurred on May 5th.

Shoppers Drug Mart in Tuxedo has been an anchor retail location in our shopping centre for many years. I had the great privilege of meeting pharmacist and owner, Arnold Chew, when I was first elected as MLA in 2000. I still have a photograph from that original meeting in my constituency office.

Arnold was born in Victoria, BC. He is an alumni of the University of British Columbia with a bachelor of science degree in biochemistry and in pharmacy. He has been the proud pharmacist and owner of his Shoppers Drug Mart location in Tuxedo since 1994 and is a true pillar in our community.

Arnold is a committee member of Mood Disorders Manitoba. He is also actively involved with the juvenile diabetes foundation, the Health Sciences Centre children's foundation and KidSport. He regularly hosts events in support of these foundations in his store location.

I also know for a fact that Arnold, like many Manitobans, is an avid Jets fan, and he regularly has the players into his store to support these various charitable causes.

Thank you, Arnold and all of your staff, for continuing to provide our community a location that nurtures the health of so many families in Tuxedo through your services and philanthropic activities.

Madam Speaker, I would like all members of the House to join me in congratulating Mr. Chew as well as his pharmacy manager, Mr. Zachary Kroeker, who are my guests in the gallery today.

Thank you.

Third Language Lessons in Schools

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I rise in the Chamber today to say how proud I am to live in this multicultural hub. Manitoba historically has nurtured multiculturalism as a means to cohesive community and peace-building. Aligning with Manitoba's multicultural principles and ideals, I state my position for the introduction of compulsory third language lessons in the Manitoba–Manitoba's school curricula.

Learning new languages is essential for our students to expand their horizons of communication. Command over third language training will make Manitoba students more skilled in their respective areas of professional capacity-building. It will enable them to access published resources and knowledge systems of other languages.

It will also support our students to become transformative global citizens. Through new languages, youth will gain acceptance and respect for other cultures. Language increases understanding between people. It connects us.

Manitoba's indigenous communities speak in their languages. Immigrants also bring their languages to our province. This is of enormous cultural significance that Manitoba can offer to all students.

Many multicultural communities currently operate informal language learning, but on a voluntary or small-scale level. They lack necessary resources, language teachers, trainers, administrative structures and systemic lesson provision in the schools.

However, children, like adults, are generally enthusiastic and eager to learn the languages of their forefathers and other communities. Therefore, this government should make the effort to introduce third language as a required course in school curricula. And this will enable elementary and high school

students to learn a language of their interest and choice.

As Manitoba prides for her diversity and inclusiveness, I present this statement in the House for positive reflection and analysis and urge exploring options towards third language learning at school.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Brandon's Bee City Campaign

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I'm not sure if my light's not-working or not. It's—

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon East.

Mr. Isleifson: There seems to be a buzz in the air, Madam Speaker.

You see, Prince Hamlet once stated, to bee or not to bee; that is the question. Well, Shakespeare had a different response back in 1599, and the answer in 2018 is quite simple. Brandon's own Assiniboine Food Forest Inc. established a Bee City Brandon committee in response to the national Bee City campaign that was launched in Canada in 2017.

The committee consists of a number of citizens of Brandon, including Sherry Punak-Murphy, a biologist; Melanie Dubois, a biologist; Mireille Desilets, an artist; and Lindsay Hargreaves, the environment co-ordinator for the City of Brandon.

The national Bee City committee has engaged cities across Canada, and on Tuesday, May the 7th, 2018, Brandon City Council unanimously approved a resolution to become Manitoba's first Bee City. We know that the province of Manitoba is home to over 200 native bee species and over 700 native butterflies and moths which pollinate our flora.

The national Bee City committee was established due to recognizing, and recognition of internationally, that the well-being of bee populations are in 'jeopardy.' Population is integral to the healthy ecosystems, and for the city of Brandon, they are important in pollinating our trees, our flowers and our vegetable gardens.

With the City of Brandon resolution now passed, an application to Bee City Canada is in progress and I understand, as of this morning, has been approved and that plans are now underway to celebrate the first international Pollinator Week in Brandon during the third week in June.

Ultimately, this initiative fosters efforts to educate Brandonites on an issue that is recognized worldwide but can now be addressed locally. Brandon has committed to hosting public education and habitat establishments and restoration activities each year so that they can continue to look towards the future of being connected with the protection, promotion and celebration of pollinators while enjoying the benefits of our healthy ecosystems.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing committee 'manner'-member Melanie Dubois who is here joining us today in the gallery.

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.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today from the executive of the Manitoba-Northwest Ontario command of the Army, Navy and Airforce Veterans in Canada: Rosemary "Rosie" Towers, command officer; and Gord Kent, president of the Manitoba-Northwest Ontario Command, who are the guests of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes).

And also seated in the Speaker's Gallery is former MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka, Alberta, Mr. Rod Fox, who is the guest of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mental Health and Addictions VIRGO Report Recommendations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): My family and I welcomed a new little one into the world this past week—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kinew: Thank you. And baby's healthy, mom is healthy, and so I'm very happy and it was very sweet to watch my wife love up the little one on Mother's Day yesterday, just a few days after the baby was born.

I also wanted to just put on the record that the health-care professionals, the nurses, the doctors at the Women's Hospital were amazing. Not only did

they deliver high-quality care, but they also did it in a compassionate way and with good humour, and so I wanted to tip my hat to them, as it were, and to thank all of those—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kinew: —thank all those good people in the health-care system and everyone who's dropped off food and presents for the baby—including the Premier and his wife, gave us a blue blanket, a blue card and a blue gift bag. So I'm drafting my note in that orange thank-you card as we speak. So I just wanted to acknowledge the occasion and just say we're very grateful for having been blessed once again.

We know that today the Province released the VIRGO report into mental health. One of the recommendations is to see increased investment.

So I'd ask the Premier: Are they going to fulfill that recommendation?

* (13:50)

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Belatedly, a happy Mother's Day to all who deserve that congratulations, and also personal congratulations to the member for Fort Rouge on the birth of his son. I assure him that the choice of blue was strictly related to the sex of the young man and had nothing to do with partisan politics whatsoever. I want him to understand that. But congratulations are in order, obviously, and for Lisa as well on her first Mother's Day, to be able to celebrate that in this way and at this time is a wonderful thing. So we're all very happy for the member for Fort Rouge.

In terms of his question, Madam Speaker, we're also very happy to be making progress in improving our health-care system in every respect given the situation it was in. We are striving to make sure we have the most improved province in Canada at the end of our first term in terms of improving health care to all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: Just before my wife's water broke, the day before, I had a chance to walk with the Bear Clan in Brandon. And while I was out with them I got to see, up close, a lot of the issues people in Westman have been talking to us about over the past year, in particular, a lot of people addicted to meth, but, of course, as the report reflects today, also continues to be a lot of issues with alcoholism in our province.

Now, we know that use of these substances, addiction in general is soaring. It's sky-rocketing. It's having this huge impact on people who work in the front lines of our health-care system. Now, we know that, you know, resources on their own are not the only answer. However, this report released today does clearly state that there is a need for additional investment and there was some comments as to the level of investment needed.

So I'd like to know whether the Premier will commit to real new investments that will be seen to make a difference for people on the front line in Brandon, in Winnipeg, right across the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: Well, certainly, Madam Speaker, this is an area of emerging concern and Manitobans, of course, are not the only Canadians who are seeing the tragedy in respect of increased evidence of addiction in a number of areas.

The member alluded to alcohol, which, of course, was related to, sadly, a number of accidental deaths this year alone. And we see our accident rates on a faster pace than they have been and that concerns all of us, of course. So this is an area where we have made significant investments and have refocused our investments.

Rapid addiction—rapid access to addictions medicine with five rapid-access front-line clinics, mental health beds at the Health Sciences Centre just opened in January, six new mental health beds reserved specifically for people who present themselves at emergency departments with drug-induced psychosis and many of that—many of those cases related to meth, and many other services, Madam Speaker, give evidence to our very focused concern and our willingness to address, as a government, these concerns.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, any approach to tackling addictions challenges or to deal with mental health issues in our society has to be informed by harm-reduction approaches, also has to be evidence based. That's reflected in the VIRGO report.

Now, one approach that many experts have been talking about in the province here is to add a safe injection site. Now we have the government's report in hand and, in fact, the VIRGO report itself recommends the creation of a safe injection site here in Winnipeg.

Madam Speaker, this, of course, would be a harm-reduction-based approach that would meet people where they're at and could potentially push them into treatment and recovery programs later on but, most importantly, take drug use off the streets and prevent dirty needles from being out in the streets where our kids are playing.

Now, I was pleased to see that and hear that the experts have spoken. We also know that there is a proposal for Main Street Project on having a safe injection site created in downtown Winnipeg.

So I would ask the Premier: Will he implement all the recommendations of the VIRGO report, including the recommendation to bring in a safe injection site here in Winnipeg?

Mr. Pallister: Well, the member is in error in his reference to such a recommendation being contained in the VIRGO report, though I recognize it as a recommendation he himself has made. It is not one which is in the VIRGO report.

I would also emphasize to the member that Dr. Rush, who was the central preparer of this document, actively consulted, as is our government's custom, reached out, received over 5,000 different submissions, input which was valuable in the preparation of this report.

Members opposite have decried this government's willingness to listen, its willingness to use outside experts in other areas—economic development strategies, fiscal reform, medical health reform—and now in this. We believe that listening to the advice of these experts and encouraging consultation at all levels are valuable strategies in terms of coming up with ways to make improvements in our system, and we will continue to act on the advice we hear.

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

Teachers in Manitoba Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Madam Speaker, it's right there in black and white in the VIRGO report itself. On page 226, recommendation 2.18, it recommends more harm reduction, but including a safe injection site in Winnipeg. So this is the expert advice that they've sought, that they've been delaying action on, in the name of, for many months. Now that it's clear right there in black and white, I wonder why the

Premier won't take action on something that's based in the evidence, based in harm reduction and will help families in our province.

Now, we also know that contracts for teachers across Manitoba are set to expire on June 30th. It appears that, once again, the Premier is attempting to interfere with collective bargaining in Manitoba, and the people that will eventually be impacted are the students themselves.

So I'm asking the Premier: Will he commit to the House today that he will not interfere with any bargaining process with teachers in Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I would encourage the member to understand that disinterest in the collective bargaining process is by no means the action of a responsible government. And so, of course, we're interested in making sure that the bargaining process is fair to all concerned workers as well as taxpayers, generally, or ratepayers, as the case may be.

For that reason we don't support the idea of continuing with three or four dozen different tables of bargaining, because it takes teachers away from their students and the teachers, for many, many years now have been advocating for that same position. It's a position we support because we want to make sure that we deal effectively with our bargaining processes, as is done in every other province in the country, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Manitoba Teachers' Society has rebutted the claim that the Premier has just made. They are, in fact, against the moves that the Province is making.

Now, we know that their threat to proclaim bill 28 at any point is casting a chill over fair, free and open collective bargaining here in the province, and my concern is that, if teachers lack certainty over their financial future, over the stability of their employment, that they're going to bring that stress into the classroom and it's going to impact the education of our children.

So we know that at the end of the day, that the Province is creating chaos when it comes to the relationship with labour, but it may be students and parents in our province who are the ones who are going to feel the real impact.

So I would again ask the Premier whether he will ensure that the actions of his government do not interfere with the bargaining that teachers have a right to in Manitoba.

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, that comes dangerously close, that preamble, to an accusation that teachers are not capable as professionals of differentiating government policy making from their work as professionals in the classroom with their students. And I would disagree; I would strongly disagree, in fact.

Under the previous administration, for example, the government brought in a PST which it promised not to. I don't think that that impacted negatively on the teachers' ability to communicate with their students in the classroom, nor will this. I think teachers have the ability to differentiate, and they understand that they want to spend more time with their students in the classroom and less time in duplication and activities which are, frankly, not positive, and this has been the position of the Manitoba Teachers' Society for a long time.

And so when the member says it's changed, I'd be interested to hear from Norm Gould, the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, as to when that happened and why.

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

Mr. Kinew: I believe it was actually Bobbi Taillefer, in her letter to the membership in the last edition of the teachers' newsletter.

But getting back to the issue at hand, we know that bill 28 is going to impact teachers in a real way. It's been said that the average teacher in Manitoba will lose out on some \$15,000 in income over the next four years if the government is allowed to proceed with their plan. Now, that will have a big impact on families who've already been, you know, factoring in those increases as they plan to buy a home, buy a car, track their monthly expenses and so on.

* (14:00)

That additional uncertainty, that additional stress put onto our teachers will be found in the classrooms. They will bring that uncertainty into the schools with them. That will impact students; that will impact parents.

The way that it could be avoided is if the government simply backs off their plan for bill 28, if

the government simply agrees that they will not interfere with bargaining for teachers.

So I'd ask the Premier again: Will he commit that no actions of his government will interfere with the collective bargaining rights of teachers in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Well, the member opposite makes two faulty assumptions, Madam Speaker.

First of all, he claims \$15,000 would be lost in teachers' income and, on the other hand, claims he respects collective bargaining. How could he possibly know what the settlements would be four years in advance? He doesn't have any idea of what teachers' salaries might be using collective bargaining processes as we have outlined. And so that is a false assumption.

Secondly, again, attacks the integrity and capabilities of teachers by suggesting somehow—in a bizarre way, Madam Speaker—that our ability to centrally bargain would somehow negatively impact teachers' ability to teach in a classroom. How could that be true?

Madam Speaker, the member is part of a political party that doubled the provincial debt in just six years prior to the last election. Did that negatively impact on the ability of teachers to communicate to their students in the classroom?

Madam Speaker, if \$15 billion didn't negatively impact them, why would the face—the false assertion of \$15,000? Doesn't make any sense.

Mental Health and Addictions Safe Injection Site Request

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, just weeks ago in Estimates I asked the Minister of Health if he intended to track and to make public the tracking of the progress on implementing the VIRGO report, which has just been released today. Yet, the minister refused. And the report describes the importance of mental health and addiction services as a call to action. I think we can all agree.

The question is whether the minister will consent to publicly tracking progress on implementing those recommendations so that Manitoba families will know whether his government is actually making progress on those recommendations.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): First of all, I want to thank Dr. Rush and the VIRGO consortium, which

put together the report and which talked to thousands and thousands of Manitobans: those who are working in the system, those who have the lived experience when it comes to addiction and mental health challenges. Madam Speaker, I appreciate very much that they took that approach of going into the community and spent as much time listening as they did actually putting together the report.

There are many things, of course, within the report that are important. Dr. Rush indicated that it'll take some time in terms of the recommendations and putting things in place, but I very much appreciate the work that they've done.

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

Mr. Swan: And that's exactly why, Madam Speaker, it's important this government is prepared to track and to let Manitobans know how they are moving with those recommendations.

Now, Madam Speaker, I was surprised to hear the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) comments with respect to a safe injection site, because if he turns to page 226 of that report and looks at recommendation 218, it says: Increase capacity for harm reduction services, including a safe injection site in Winnipeg, creation of a provincial program for needle exchange, and a better co-ordinated provincial naloxone distribution program. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Swan: This came about because, as the Minister of Health has just said, the writers of this report consulted in the community and got the best advice from people who know this issue.

So I ask the minister, in light of that, will he commit to building a safe injection site in Winnipeg? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: I also want to note that the report talked about how badly aligned our system has been over the last many years, Madam Speaker. It talks about being decades behind, when I've talked to Dr. Rush, when it comes to the addictions system.

Now, I know that the NDP won't want to take any responsibility for the more than 15 years that they spent in government. But, of course, that system became very misaligned during their time in government.

So, while we, of course, are very much in favour and support bettering the system, they should not try to distance themselves for their responsibility for breaking that system, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm asking these questions because this is important to Manitobans. And we've seen this government's track record so far of cherry-picking certain items out of reports that they've received that best fit their rushed political plans and ignoring all the others.

So we have a very clear recommendation which, again, is contained in the report, which the Minister of Health himself just now has said is based on intensive consultation in the community.

So I ask him: Will he commit to today to opening a safe injection site in Winnipeg?

Mr. Goertzen: So, Madam Speaker, we of course have already moved on one of the recommendations: the RAMM clinics which will be located in five different sites throughout Manitoba, two in Winnipeg, one in Brandon and two others outside of Brandon, but in rural or northern Manitoba. That was a clear recommendation within the report that was released today.

We're glad that we're already able to take steps on that, and we'll be looking at other recommendations in terms of how to fix a system that's been broken over the last two decades, as identified by Dr. Rush. I'm glad now suddenly the member opposite is showing some interest in this issue, but he knows that it was under the—his government, under 16 years, where things started to fall apart.

When I spoke with Dr. Rush this morning, he indicated that they did not have the evidence to recommend a safe injection site. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Education System Inclusion Support Funding

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Children with disabilities or emotional and behaviour needs should not be—should not have to wait to get the supports they need. We even heard in the VIRGO report that mental health supports must start early for children and youth so that they can be successful when they're older.

Will the minister confirm that there is no wait-list for inclusion supports?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, certainly, when it comes to mental health, we've been informed by a couple of reports in terms of the need for additional support that hasn't existed over many years, certainly prior to us coming into government. That was recommended both in the Peachey report, which the NDP don't support, of course, and now also in the VIRGO report, which I'm sort of hearing they might support but maybe not. But certainly we will continue to work on the issue of mental health and resources for those who need it.

Clearly we saw in the report today that there was virtually no work done in terms of aligning the system under the NDP government. We want to correct that record, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Smith: Families and children are waiting for supports from this minister, who sits on his hands and is not listening to families. According to a House book note obtained through freedom of information, the minister has created an internal wait-list. This means that there could be children waiting to get the funding that they need to be successful in school while he sits on his hands.

Will the minister commit that every child who qualifies for inclusion supports receives the funding that they need?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): It was a pleasure to stand up with the federal government to invest close to \$47 million in child-care initiatives and things like the inclusion support.

We know what the NDP did in terms of their support for the inclusion support project in their budget process. They froze the budget from 2012 alone.

Our government has committed more than \$10 million to work with the federal government to enhance a dual system for inclusion to support to make sure that people—children with higher needs have the supports and services.

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

Mrs. Smith: Finally, the minister gets off his hands, but doesn't answer the question.

Parents don't care about federal negotiations or complicated—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —agreements.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: They want their children to get the support that they need when they need it. Parents have protested this government's approach to inclusive support funding in the past. They have threatened to file a human rights complaint. These supports are critical and crucial for these students' success in life.

Will the minister commit that every child who qualifies for inclusion support gets the funding that they need?

Mr. Fielding: Clearly, the member has not done her homework on this subject.

* (14:10)

As I just mentioned, we committed over \$47 million for child-care initiatives. A part of that federal agreement—which is real money, by the way; there's over \$10 million that will be involved in terms of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —will be involved to ensure that we have proactive inclusion support projects.

The problem that we had and were left over from the NDP, it was too complicated. We're creating a dual system. That's more money that's in the system. It can—better supports and, yes, children, that support—and meet the criteria will get the support they need, unlike the NDP.

Manitoba Women and Mothers Health and Education Concerns

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): A belated happy Mother's Day to all Manitoba women who choose motherhood.

It's certainly been a hard year for mothers targeted by the Premier's deep cuts in health care, education, jobs and social services. Mothers who work in the public sector are fighting off a two-year wage freeze while they watch their Premier and his Cabinet take a 20 per cent increase. Minimum wage workers, the majority of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —whom are single mothers, have seen their take-home pay cut by this Premier.

Why is this Premier making it hard for Manitoba women and mothers to support their families?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, a happy Mother's Day to the member.

And I would say this: she's wrong in her assertions. She's wrong in her assertions because, Madam Speaker, this government in its first two years has committed to raising the basic personal exemption by over \$2,000. That will assist mothers. That is more than the NDP did in 17 years.

This government is committed to reducing our deficit and has almost achieved, already, a reduction of 50 per cent in our massive deficits. Those deficits, Madam Speaker, the NDP ran up and doubled our debt were done on the credit cards of Manitoba children and grandchildren. No mother should support that.

Madam Speaker, perhaps if the previous government had consulted with outside people—Manitobans generally—and listened to them, we could have avoided \$10 million a day in new debt in their last five years of office. We could have avoided sending \$15 million to an NDP donor for untendered, sole-sourced orange plastic bags. We could have avoided raising the PST, and that might have helped a lot of mothers in this province, mothers we care about, mothers we'll continue to defend.

Ms. Fontaine: Well actually, the Premier is wrong once again. He actually froze minimum wage for the last two years and has only raised it by a couple of nickels, while we raised the minimum wage—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —every year and we're proud of that record.

This government's cuts—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —to essential health care is putting the care of—that new mothers rely on. We're cutting lactation consultants; that hurts new mothers who rely on learning the skills to be able to nurse their newborns. And for older mothers and grandmothers, Madam Speaker, who relied on the Mature Women's Centre, they now go without treatment for their reproductive health issues.

Children rely on their mothers to be healthy, and why is this government attacking the health that mothers rely on and the health care that we rely on in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Well again, Madam Speaker, we are acting in defence of Manitoba's mothers, Manitoba women generally. We're proceeding with significant and historic reforms to improve our health-care services without layoffs. We have increased our health-care budget over \$600 million more than the NDP record because we value our health-care system and we want to make those kinds of investments. We're indexing our minimum wage to make sure that we maintain a position as one of Canada's lowest cost-of-living jurisdictions, and we're—we've seen the largest gains in terms of earnings of any Canadian province over the past year and we're projected to lead the country.

But when the previous administration was defending women, or claiming to, they were creating the longest wait times in Canada, the highest ambulance fees, the worst educational outcomes and the highest child poverty. That's not a record to be proud of when it comes to defending anyone, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Mothers with school-age children are seeing the classroom supports they rely on disappear because of this Premier's cuts to education. The Premier has abandoned the small class size initiative, despite promising to protect it, and this means less one-on-one time for young children. Mothers going to university, trying to make a better life for themselves and their families, are struggling to pay for the 6.6—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —per cent hike in tuition. This government's decision to slash the education tax rebate means that mothers will now have to support graduate students while they search for jobs.

Madam Speaker, why has this Premier cut the quality and accessibility of education for Manitoba mothers and their children?

Mr. Pallister: Well, perhaps, Madam Speaker, the member's blind partisanship prevents her from seeing the positive aspects of anything, let alone education. But we have maintained the lowest tuition costs across western Canada, second lowest in the country

of Canada. We've done that in part by increasing funding to education by over \$300 million more this year than the NDP ever did.

So the myth of cuts is just that; the myth of layoffs, just that, and the myth of the downtrodden people of our society is also given the lie by the actual truth and the actual truth is that Manitobans are better off than they ever were under the NDP.

Manitoba's Indigenous Communities Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Rights

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Indigenous rights are protected under section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. These are rights that some indigenous peoples of Canada hold as a result of their ancestors' long-standing use and occupancy of the land.

The rights of certain peoples to hunt, trap and fish on ancestral lands are examples of indigenous rights.

What makes this provincial government think that it can take away our right to hunt, trap and fish?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Our government respects the constitution and was very diligent in doing section 35 consultations, in working with our indigenous partners. We're also very well aware of the Supreme Court ruling in 2006, the R v. Morris decision that had provided a framework on indigenous rights.

And so our government is very respectful of the indigenous rights. And we're looking forward to partnering with them on ending unsafe and unsustainable hunting practices here in Manitoba.

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

Ms. Klassen: Minister, whatever this government thinks it has accomplished in alleged consultations over the proposed night hunting ban obviously isn't the case. If that were the case, I wouldn't have had several indigenous leaders contacting me since the First Minister announced that he was going to introduce such legislation.

A year ago, the Premier made his race war comments. The First Minister has had plenty of time to meet with Manitoba's 63 First Nations.

Can this minister table a list of which of those 63 First Nation leaderships this government has consulted with and who have allegedly agreed to this proposed legislation?

Ms. Squires: As the member opposite is aware, she's referring to legislation that has not been tabled in this Chamber yet. And, respectfully, I will provide her with that information, including more details about our consultation on this legislation, when I indeed table the legislation in this House on Wednesday.

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

Ms. Klassen: Last week we were given the opportunity to offer praise to indigenous leaders in Manitoba. I was surprised by this because it was the first respectful statement about our indigenous leaders since this government took power. This was a direct attempt by the First Minister to sweet-talk Manitoba's indigenous peoples before reigniting his race war. It is also very clear that the Premier is attempting to regain votes from his dwindling voter base. Manitoba is better than that.

Will the Premier announce today that this government will not mess with my people's inherent right to hunt, trap or fish? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Extensive consultation aside, Madam Speaker, common sense says that blinding an animal and shooting it with a high-powered rifle is hardly sport, hardly fair to the animal.

That being said, it's also dangerous. It's dangerous to the people who engage in that practice. It can cause injury. It can cause death. It has.

* (14:20)

People in Manitoba have been killed as a consequence of these unsafe practices, recognized widely as unsafe. They remain unsafe regardless of the race, creed or colour of participants, and they should stop. And so this legislation is designed to make sure that a fair respect for indigenous hunting rights is balanced by a respect for all and for the safety and best interests of all.

Transformation Capital Fund Changes to Manitoba's Public Service

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Our PC government was elected on a promise to repair the services Manitobans depend on. Earlier this year we released Transforming the Manitoba Public Service: A Strategy for Action, a plan to transform the work of the public service to build a culture that is forward-thinking, creative and outcomes-driven. And

last week we heard about an exciting new initiative by this PC government to build the modern and dynamic public service for Manitoba.

Can the Minister of Finance please update the Chamber on what this means for our province?

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

Last week the Premier and I and the Clerk of Executive Council announced a \$50-million Transformation Capital Fund to support innovative initiatives within the government. We're investing in the drivers of transformation, in people, processes and tools that will help make Manitoba the most improved province in all of Canada.

Old approaches to budgeting reinforce traditional behaviours like protecting budgets, maintaining silos and exhibiting no tolerance for risk. This fund encourages civil servants to consider innovative thinking, collaboration and a business-case approach to medium- and long-term planning.

So while the members of the opposition can complain and argue, we know that all Manitobans will understand that they will benefit from improvements to services and more efficient ways of doing business.

University of Manitoba Faculty Association Labour Board's Collective Bargaining Ruling

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): University of Manitoba's recent apology to its faculty makes one thing perfectly clear: the Premier made a mess. The Labour Board's—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wiebe: The Labour Board's findings, Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Wiebe: The Labour Board's findings, Madam Speaker, are straightforward: the Pallister government interfered in bargaining, ordering the university to rescind its offer and to do so without revealing the government's intentions.

The university has stepped up and apologized for its actions. It's now time for this Premier to do the same.

So will the Premier step up and apologize for the mess that he created at the University of Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The member's preamble totally misrepresents the facts and does not merit or deserve a response, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Concordia, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, Madam Speaker, these are the facts: bargaining had started when the Pallister government ordered the university to rescind its offer and to do so without revealing that order.

Last week, the university admitted that they had—that that meant that they had bargained in bad faith. But the real issue here is, of course, the Premier himself. He used the pressure tactics to force the University of Manitoba into these bad-faith negotiations, and it's the Premier who should now stand up and apologize to students, faculties, faculty members and parents for his tactics at the University of Manitoba.

So I invite him to do so today.

Mr. Pallister: This is an excellent opportunity, I think, for the House to join in congratulating President David Barnard for the recent announcement of his appointment to the Order of Manitoba. It's well deserved.

The member completely misrepresents the ruling of the Manitoba 'ladour' board, and, again, because he misrepresents the facts in his preamble, doesn't merit a response.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, students are already on the hook for this government's cuts to funding at their institutions. And now this Premier's interference is costing the University of Manitoba millions of dollars. This is no small matter, Madam Speaker. It now has to pay for the mess that this Premier's interference caused.

We know that it's wrong for any of the money—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —that students have to pay from their tuition to go off—to go to paying off this Premier's debt. It should be the Premier, in fact, who

apologizes for this mess, stands up today, apologizes and apologize to those students.

I'm asking the Premier: Will he ensure that any of the funds that students pay through their tuition won't go to paying off his debt?

Mr. Pallister: It's unfortunate the member can't use actual factual material in a preamble, but, again, he talks about cuts when we're spending \$300 million more this year on education than the NDP ever did.

Now, if he's anxious for an apology, he need look no further than to the NDP. A recent PUB ruling has stated that a political decision by the previous administration caused the loss of billions of dollars because of the bipole west line.

So the PUB has ruled that—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —\$900 million should be paid, but not by Hydro because it was the previous political decision of the previous government that cause that waste to occur. So if he's looking for an apology, apologize for that one. Manitoba ratepayers shouldn't have to pay hundreds of millions of dollars. The NDP should pay it, Madam Speaker.

Project Labour Agreements Government Position

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I've got to ask why this government hates working people. You know, they really seem to have something against workers in this province. First, they cut back on workplace health and safety; then they said that vacancies are due to worker disloyalty—had to apologize for that, of course. Now the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) is trying to convince Manitobans that project labour agreements are going to drive people out of work. Well, that's simply not right. But the facts clearly show otherwise.

Will the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen) reject the comments from his colleague and actually stand up for working people in this province?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, there's a problem the NDP—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —has to face up to, Madam Speaker. You see, working people in the province, if you're standing up for them, do you just stand up for those who are unionized? I don't think so. You stand up for

everyone and you make sure that everybody, every worker has a chance—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —to bid on and work on government-funded projects, not just those willing to pay into a union slush pile. And that's all the previous government forced workers to do.

Whether unionized or non-unionized, Madam Speaker, we are interested in representing and will represent the best interests of all Manitoba workers. We will keep union dues lower, taxes lower and allow people to do the things they want to do in their training and participate in growing our economy. We'll all do that together, not just the unionized workers, all workers. That's how we work on this side of the House.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry

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

These are the reasons for—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —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 death—after her death—the—sorry, pardon me, Madam Speaker—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —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.

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'd 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 arenas—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 considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial areas such as the St. Boniface industrial park, the 200,000 acres at CentrePort or existing properties such as the Shriners Hospital and the Children's Hospital—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: —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 the community input and due diligence and ignores better uses of land which would be consistent with the residential area. *[interjection]*

You know, Madam Speaker, I can't even hear myself give this speech.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please.

We're having difficulty hearing right now, so if we could just have everybody's co-operation.

Mr. Fletcher: There are no standards—(4) There are no standards that would expect—that one would expect for a treatment centre. The Minister of Health, Seniors and family—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 the park and recreational uses concerning the residents of St. James and others regarding the public safety, property values and their way of life have 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 Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as Vimy Arena site.

Manitoba Housing—the Manitoba Housing project and 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 addictions treatment in Manitoba as it currently underfunds treatment centres which are running far under capacity and potential.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take necessary steps to ensure that the Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction 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 Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation of 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 activity neighbourhoods and communities.

This has been signed by Gail Gallant *[phonetic]*, Elaine Mantant *[phonetic]*, Steve Rogowksy and many others, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The petition was not read as printed. Is there leave to accept the petition as printed? *[Agreed]*

TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA:

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 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 locations such as: the St. Boniface industrial park, the 20,000 acres at Centre Port or existing properties such as the Shriner's 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 of Winnipeg. This exemption bypasses community input and due diligence and ignores better uses for the land which would be consistent with a residential area.

4. 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 other 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 Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.*

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 coordinated plan for addictions treatment in Manitoba, as it currently underfunds treatment centres which are running far 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 the 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 of PR2 for the 255 Hamilton Avenue location at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain the land to continue to be designated for Parks and Recreation Active Neighbourhood/Community.*

Medical Laboratory Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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 U.S. company, has acquired Unicity labs, resulting in a monopoly situation for the provision of laboratory services in medical clinics and physicians' offices.

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.

(5) These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served, having to travel significant distances in some cases, waiting considerable periods of time and sometimes being denied or having to leave without obtaining lab services. The 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.

Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all STAT's patients, 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. This 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 traveling 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 interest of better patient-focused care and improved support for health professionals.

Signed by Carolyn Muir, Giselle Budde, Reg Oleski and many more.

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 17th, 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 MMIG 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 the 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 Mark Pangman, Nancy Spence, Rhonda Papoloukis [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Would you call Committee of Supply?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider Estimates this afternoon. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN RELATIONS

* (15:00)

Madam Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations.

As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): We just have one additional staff today to introduce, Vanessa Arrojado. She is the director with the deputy minister's office.

Madam Chairperson: The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Good afternoon, and I'm sitting in today. Our sister Amanda is really the

critic, but there's several areas within this minister's portfolio that affect several things, and representing one of the other northern constituencies, I guess there's questions that we would like to ask. But let's focus a little bit right now on some of the northern health issues and the minister's response to some of those.

So we know that there's a shortage of doctors in most of Manitoba's northern communities. Flin Flon, for example, is down to two doctors, soon to be one. I understand there's shortages in Thompson. There's shortages in The Pas. Snow Lake lost its only doctor, and the minister may wonder, well, what does this have to do with her department. But, certainly, most of the First Nations communities that don't have any doctors rely on the ability to access medical doctors in the rest of the communities that traditionally have had doctors.

So can the minister maybe comment on what involvement she's had in discussions about doctor shortages or health care issues with some of those communities and how they relate to what's happening in the bigger communities?

Ms. Clarke: Well, I thank you for that question, and it certainly is one of great importance, not only to our northern communities but I live in a small, rural community where, as head of council in past years, had to deal with exactly the same thing. And I know that the chaos that it causes amongst residents and the, you know, genuine concern, you know, that there will be medical care when its needed, very significant, and I want to recognize that I certainly understand that it creates fear, and so it's up to the leadership of these communities to try and keep the calm and do the best that they can do.

I have, in fact, had discussions with First Nations as well as our Northern Affairs communities, who are a very small population in most cases, so they don't even have any types of services within their communities and they do have to depend on a hub or an area where they can go for all their services, including health care, and they want to be confident that it is there for them.

Having attended with the Premier (Mr. Pallister) the announcement for broadband to the North, that was something that I certainly highlighted and applauded the partners that had been working for many, many years to get broadband to the North. And we are very, very hopeful that, going forward, this will give them the opportunity for telehealth. And talking to our northern people, you know, the

concern for coming in for just a consultation or a follow-up to surgery or any type of care that requires, you know, additional appointments for them to come to Winnipeg and to meet with a doctor often just a few minutes and then they have to return home, it's very costly and it's an inconvenience to them and something they're not really always comfortable with.

So we have great hopes that the opportunity for broadband in these northern communities will give them a sense of confidence so that if there is a doctor, any type of medical personnel on site at that facility that they can have that direct contact with, whether it's just doctors or specialists or whatever in larger centres so that they can make good diagnosis in the community and get on with treatment immediately rather than for them to having to arrange the transportation to come into the city or other centres even in their own area.

So, certainly, looking forward to getting that in place down the road and, you know, that doesn't mean that the recruitment physicians doesn't continue because it is always ongoing. There's been a shortage of physicians in the province for rural and remote for a very long time and we are certainly hoping to alleviate some of the pressure that this creates within our rural communities.

Mr. Lindsey: I thank the minister for that. We'll explore the telehealth thing in a little bit, but can the minister tell us how often that she, who's responsible, really, for indigenous and northern issues, how often has she met with the minister who's responsible for Health to discuss these very issues. It's all well and good to talk to the First Nations, which certainly I encourage and commend the minister for doing that, but if that information never gets back to the Minister of Health, then it seems that there's part of that conversation that's missing. So has the minister had discussions with the Minister of Health based on things that she's heard from meeting with First Nations or other northern communities' leadership about the state of health care?

Ms. Clarke: I have, in fact. Minister Goertzen has included me in meetings in discussion with certain, I wouldn't say issues, but certain consultations with our First Nations, whether it's group or individual communities and—so that we are very aware of, you know, what their needs are. And that way, too, we hear the minister's responses. And I'm sure that we are all in the same thoughts that we definitely want doctors in these northern communities where there's

meant to be a doctor, without a doubt. And I don't think that recruitment for those positions ever quits; it's ongoing, and if those positions are there, that I'm sure that the Health Minister has an expectation to filling them. It's just not always that easy as the—my colleague would understand.

Mr. Lindsey: I understand that there's challenges in convincing some of these medical professionals that they want to relocate to one of our northern communities. Would the minister agree that perhaps if there was more current, up-to-date medical facilities in those northern communities, more current, up-to-date equipment, like MRIs and diagnostic equipment, that perhaps there would be a better chance of recruiting doctors so that they don't feel that they have to use yesterday's technology to try and deal with illnesses and injuries and sickness that doctors in the south would have different equipment available to them, and if some of those things were available in the North, it would certainly cut down on the travel and the strain and the stress? Now, I realize, obviously, they can't be in every community in the North, but certainly travelling from one of the remote communities to Flin Flon, for example, might be a whole lot less stressful than it would be having to travel to Winnipeg, which would require many more days of travel and less familiar surroundings than one of the other northern hubs might be.

Ms. Clarke: It sounds like equipment will fix this, and, in fact, I had the opportunity, I was appointed by the previous government to sit on a task force to meet with physicians, immigrant physicians, to discuss why they weren't staying in communities in the province of Manitoba, because, as I indicated, this is a concern not just in northern Manitoba, just not in remote areas, but in the rural areas of Manitoba. So we actually had several meetings with a variety of physicians from across Manitoba to discuss with them first-hand what we could do as a province, as communities and leaders in our communities, to ensure that that they were happy in the community, that they would stay with their families, bring their families, and actually, you know, stay longer than even sometimes a year or less or whatever.

And it's interesting because not once did any one of those physicians ever bring up equipment. Never, ever was equipment brought up as the reason that we can't retain physicians. The No. 1 issue was climate and cold weather because many of our foreign doctors and other staff, other medical staff, come

from warm countries, extremely warm countries, and they just could not take the cold.

The second one being the availability of international airports, and Winnipeg they don't consider an international airport. They travel back to their homelands as often as possible because very often they do leave family home or behind in another country. So location to—and availability of an international airport was very significant, and that's why they often ended up in Toronto or Vancouver, not—they wouldn't—didn't consider Winnipeg accessible and it was costly for them to fly to their homeland.

Interestingly enough, mosquitoes and bugs was a very significant reason why they are not staying in Manitoba. Having people of their own culture and their own religion was also a significant difference. They could not access, even in rural Manitoba, let alone northern and remote, the food that they generally would consume—big issue.

*(15:10)

But, you know, these are all issues that were brought forward. Never, ever did one physician bring up that they just lacked equipment. I think it goes without saying that we can't have an MRI in every medical location and, you know, those types of equipment. But the issues brought forward by not being able to retain physicians were nothing to do with equipment ever.

Mr. Lindsey: The minister's focused a lot of her answer on the ability to attract and retain immigrant physicians. So perhaps, maybe, she could tell me what she, as the minister for northern and indigenous affairs, has done to try and encourage and attract people from the North to actually get that kind of training and education opportunities so that people from the North become doctors, nurses, health-care practitioners that won't have those same issues that the minister's pointed out about travelling back to their homeland and the North would be their homeland.

And so can the minister can tell us exactly what thought she or her department, excuse me, has put into trying to figure out education opportunities for people in the North?

Ms. Clarke: Well, in fact, there is training going on, and I was at a graduation just on Friday—Thursday—for graduation, and it was all indigenous women that graduated from the enhanced nursing program. Sixteen completed, very happy, two-and-a-half-year

course, and—but they have the same opportunities as all individuals who train for a job to go where they choose to go, and it's really encouraging.

We're seeing young pilots. I've noticed indigenous pilots, female included. I've noticed announcements for indigenous paramedics from the North and, you know, it's continuing. That training is available and I think you'll see, through the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart), that there's more and more availability, and working with our federal government as well so that we can cohost or co-fund opportunities for these individuals so that—and that is the desire. And that was the desire when they were talking about, you know, physicians for—whether it's rural and remote so that they can get them into their areas. And that was the main focus: to ensure that, you know, if they were born and raised in that particular area that, you know, hopefully, that they would go back. But they found very often that they did not go back.

And nursing is one area in particular, if they're to take their BN or whatever, that they would have enough—when they're done their training it's not unlike a lot of professions. You've taken the physical training, you've taken the educational part, but as we all know learning the skills and the physical on-jobs is significantly important. And I would think, and as we know, in the northern part of our province they do work with limited staff even if they're at a full staff capacity. You know, one of their health units within a small community may have only two, three, four individuals there at any given time, and sometimes they fly in and out and replace each other.

But they have to have the confidence that they can deal with whatever they're—whatever is brought to them on any particular day. So, you know, even this young group of licensed practical nurses on Thursday, when you talk about them going into the workforce—and there are lots of jobs for them. I mean, there's lots of vacancies. So, hopefully.

But even in the southern part of the province we don't have those health units on reserve or within their communities, so they often have to go to another community. So, you know, this training is becoming more and more available, and I think that's really encouraging overall. So absolutely made-in-Manitoba medical staff or any other types of apprenticeship training are certainly something that we are striving for.

Mr. Lindsey: So, just out of curiosity, could the minister tell us how many people from the North

graduated through some kind of medical school through RN training, health-care aide courses, all those type of issues—but what kind of graduation numbers would we be looking at? Is it a significant number? Is it a small number kind of for each category, if you—minister could, please.

Ms. Clarke: Of course I don't have those numbers because I'm not the Minister of Health and I'm not the Minister of Education and Training, so, you know, I don't carry those types of statistics with me, but I'm sure with those ministers you're able to get those questions answered.

Mr. Lindsey: Okay. You are—this minister is the minister responsible for northern and indigenous issues, so I would hope that she's—the minister is making sure that her department is fully cognizant of what's happening with the other departments that are going to impact issues in the North and in particular with some of the indigenous communities that—obviously there has to be some kind of financial incentive to keep some of the health-care people available in the North. People may not like the mosquitoes, they may not like the cold, but some extra green in their pocket might help convince people that staying in the North for an extended period of time might not be such a bad idea.

So, just—has the minister had any conversations with her colleagues in Cabinet, the other ministers, about how to attract people to the North, particularly in the health-care field, and how to encourage them to stay?

Ms. Clarke: I do know, in fact, that our Minister of Education and Training works very closely with the northern colleges and ensuring that there are adequate courses going on there for all the different trades, including—I don't know what the number of medical classes or courses that are offered there, but I do know that our minister of northern—or, pardon me—our Education and Training works very closely with the training that goes on in northern Manitoba.

And I know that we have a meeting with the Frontier School Division coming forward, too, and I know that he has a lot of great conversations with them about ensuring that the students reach that level where they can actually go into these courses. So that's very significant as well, you know, to make sure that they get the—not only the courses, but they get the level of education in their—in K-to-12 so that they're ready for post-secondary training and education of their choice.

Mr. Lindsey: Brings up a good topic of conversation, I guess: is Frontier Collegiate Institute and some of the really good work that it does throughout the communities in northern Manitoba, specifically their facility in Cranberry Portage—they've got a giant master plan laid out which has certain things phased in and some of the things that they're talking about needing in the short term is a cafeteria because the cafeteria that's there was built, I believe, 1945-ish, somewhere back during World War II era, and if they want to expand so that they can offer more courses and attract and keep more people then they obviously need to be able to feed them.

So is the minister aware of any of those funding requests for Frontier Collegiate, particularly for the campus at Cranberry and what the minister is willing to, I guess, go to bat for FCI, recognizing the good work that it does and really help push some of those things that they need to go forward.

Ms. Clarke: Well, I'm not aware of Cranberry Portage, of their request for funding for this particular project or expansion, whatever it is that they require within their school. They have never contacted me, and I'm not aware through the Minister of Education and Training, (Mr. Wishart), but I do know that we have a meeting coming up in the very near future with Frontier.

*(15:20)

But I was at Norway House, their high school facility—or their Helen Betty Osborne memorial school just a couple of months ago, and we spent a fair bit of time in the school with the staff and some of the students reviewing some of the programs that they offer in their school there, and were really pleased to deliver a cheque for \$16,000 for their gardening program that they are doing with the students. And they showed us the facilities where they have their hairdressing courses and everything right within the high school. And they also are looking at expanding their number of courses and post-education courses, you know, within trades that they're hoping to offer. And it was really exciting to see the amount of work that they do.

I was also at an event last year with Minister of Education and Training with the Frontier School Division, with their staff. And they had displayed a lot of their projects that they were working on or future projects that they were envisioning. And I have to say, they brought forward some fantastic material that just showed the level of education that

they're receiving there, but also the opportunity that they have to present where they want to be and what they want to do. And it was really supported by the staff of Frontier. And it was a remarkable opportunity to see what they've accomplished and the pride that they take in what they're doing.

And, as our government has always indicated, we want to work with these types of education so that they do get that great first years foundation so that they can go forward and, you know, go through for whatever it is that they want to pursue in their life, too. But very often, you know, post-secondary, depending on what it is they want, they may not be able to achieve that in the northern part of the province. But we're seeing many of them coming to Winnipeg or even going to other provinces to take their post-secondary. And they are really exceeding. And that's good news because, as you indicated, you know, as parents, and I think as leadership within our communities, when the children that are raised in our communities—whether it's indigenous or northern Manitoba, wherever—you know, to see the children succeed and be successful and then decide they want to bring that back to the community, that's true success, without a doubt.

Mr. Lindsey: Certainly, the minister doesn't have to convince me of the benefit of Frontier Collegiate Institute and some of the good work it does in the North. A couple of times in the House I've honoured some students that were in Winnipeg to take part in the trades competition, and they've done very well—unheard of, a number of years ago, that anybody from the North would have ever—certainly from the indigenous communities like South Indian Lake and Nelson House, places like that, would have ever showed up at something like that.

Just last week, there was a couple of young ladies from Nelson House that are on their—in fact, they're in Ottawa this week taking part in the national science fair representing students in the North. So there are some things happening there. I just want to make sure that the minister understands how important it is to keep investing and growing some of those facilities so that those good news stories become the norm, that it's not just the one-off, that that's the type of education that people in the North can expect to have similar education than as what somebody living in any other part of the province would have.

So if the minister has the opportunity to sit down with the superintendents of Frontier Collegiate, I

would strongly encourage you to do that. As the Minister responsible for Northern Affairs, certainly I think there's a worthwhile conversation to be had there, that what they envision the North can certainly help the minister in conversations that the minister has in what her department should be doing or what the ministry of indigenous and northern affairs should be doing. So I would encourage the minister to reach out to those people and have that conversation, if she hasn't already.

Let's just—before I forget, the community of Nelson House in the NCN there are planning some sort of event in Thompson—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

A formal vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

The committee recessed at 3:25 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:33 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: I would like to call the Committee of Supply back to order.

This committee will resume its business where we left off prior to the recess.

I believe the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) was in the middle of posing their question.

Mr. Lindsey: What was the question? Nelson House. Talking about the fatalities that happened there with the three young people and there are—is a group that is looking at doing some fundraising to try and have a memorial built to memorialize, obviously, the kids that died, and I was wondering if the minister was aware of that and if the government would be amenable to contributing towards that memorial, although I don't know if they've ever actually asked for any government assistance or, in fact, if they want any government assistance with that project.

Ms. Clarke: Well, I think we need to start by saying that the tragedy of those three young lads is unbelievable. I have grandsons the same age and to lose them would be beyond grief that I could probably endure, especially when you think of them just young kids out having a great time, and this happens.

Without a doubt, you know, in hindsight, you look back—how do we, first of all, avoid these things from happening again, I think is the question that keeps getting asked. And I've reached out to many of the First Nations in the last two years when there have been tragic events, some where there's been loss of life, others when there's been loss of business and those types of things, and understanding how the community copes with it, first off, including the families, and what needs to be done first and foremost.

And, typically, I try to reach out in a very timely fashion, one that allows, you know, for the family and the community to grieve, but also not to leave it too long to the point where, you know, it doesn't have any meaning.

And I have to really commend Nelson House for the efforts that they took in the most expedient way to ensure that there was help there for their family and help for the community in dealing with this, because as we all know, you know, in our First Nations, the families are—many of them are related. So it affects them so significantly.

And, you know, we've heard of these types of memorials before. I was, you know, I've really been interested in the one that was done by a couple of students for Tina Fontaine, a metal piece of art that was inspired by the sad life of Tina Fontaine. And you know, I can certainly understand this community wanting to do something.

To date, no one has—from the community has asked for any kind of assistance, financial or otherwise, in regards to this memorial and I know there have been memorials in the past done in other communities where there's been—where they felt significant loss, and typically this is something that they've done internally. I have seen some of these initiatives funded through the GoFundMe, which is becoming really popular.

And I think, too, I think the thing that we have to reference is when there is a decision to go forward with a project such as this, to, you know, remember these three young lads. It is just amazing, if there is a need for financial support, how people in Manitoba and beyond come forward, and they support it.

Whether it's indigenous, non-indigenous, doesn't matter where the community is, the outpouring of financial support for many of these things is pretty amazing. I've seen headstones for cemeteries actually

donated. There's been companies that step up to the plate.

So I'm pretty confident that the chief and council and families alike—I'm certain that they'll be supportive. But there has been no ask of the provincial government for this.

Mr. Lindsey: No, I didn't suggest that there had been. I—was just an email that I received on the weekend that it's still really early in the planning stages for the whole event. I guess I was just wondering if there was to be a request, if the government would entertain something.

And I don't know, even, if the community or the people that are trying put on this fundraising want government funding. They may not. It may be more of a gesture towards building support in the community and the larger community outside of Nelson House itself. So I don't know, like I say, whether they ever will want government support.

There were some other things that have been talked about after that tragic accident, that perhaps the community will need some government support on things like bike paths and paving the road, for example.

Could the minister comment on her take on some of those potential requests for funding that haven't necessarily been part of the budget process? Although I understand that the road-paving project was on the list, if not the works, and that has since been cancelled.

So is that something that the minister would be willing to talk to her counterparts about getting back on the list?

Ms. Clarke: Well, there—I have seen, through the media, that there have been many, as again, observations, of how, you know, prevention. And that's what we all look to when something as tragic as this happens. What could've we done as a family? What could we do as a community, or you know, from a province perspective, to ensure that this doesn't repeat itself?

* (16:40)

And I've had conversations, as I've indicated, in other communities when there has been tragedies or, you know, people being injured.

It is not uncommon for there to be provincial roads running right through the middle of indigenous communities, and we had a discussion, the

Premier (Mr. Pallister) and I, actually, in a community just a few weeks ago where they discussed the possibilities of lights in certain areas because, understandably—and it's a very common practice on many reserves throughout the province where the community people, they walk. You know, they are confined to a small area and there is a townsite, in most cases, and there are more outlying homes, as such, but there's typically a townsite where, you know, if they're going to have their arena, their school and community centre and the band office and everything where that's located, and to see the community people walking is—there's always people on the roadways, and most often they're children. And, as we know, anybody that's had children, it's really difficult to make them always mindful of the tragedies that can occur, but they grow up with it and typically, you know, this is what they deal with.

But we've had lots of conversations. I know there's lots of communities—indigenous and in non-indigenous, back to my municipal time in municipal ministry in the government. I mean the amount of paving that needs to be done in this province—there's no budget in the past years that were able to, you know, get all that work done. Some of it's backlogged for many, many years, and I think every government in the past probably has done their best effort to make sure that as much roadwork gets done. We deal with communities even further north than that where they just want a road that is passable or a road, period. So those are conversations that happen on a regular basis and there certainly—through our Department of Infrastructure—is priorities and sometimes there can be bridges or those types of things that get damaged and it totally changes the list of priorities for an annual budget.

So there's all these moving targets that we have to deal with, but we do have these conversations with the First Nations as we meet with them, and I think this would be a good time to just tell you, so that you have an understanding when you're talking to your constituents and people in northern Manitoba, that in the past two years the number of meetings that we're having, one on one, with First Nations or the Northern Affairs community is increasing dramatically. They now have a clear understanding and a comfortable feeling for coming to the Legislature, and/or I'm travelling a lot to their communities as well. I've got a trip planned pretty much when our session ends to go up to Churchill and Swan River and meet with as many northern

communities as possible. So looking forward to connecting with them once again, now that we're out of session, and having the opportunity to listen, because many of their concerns—roadways and those types of things—definitely are priority, but some of them, their real priorities aren't necessarily the roads. But always a topic of discussion, for sure.

Mr. Lindsey: The minister talked earlier about connectivity with some of the northern communities with broadband Internet. Any timeline on when communities in the North can expect to see that kind of service?

Ms. Clarke: I don't have a date per se, but we are the smaller partner in this connectivity. It's between the federal government, and we had a group of our First Nations leadership that have been working. I think Chief Genaille told me he'd been working nearly 20 years to get this through, he and Chief Crate from Fisher River. Pretty excited when this day happened, when it was actually announced, and I will, in fact, be meeting with Chief Genaille within the next few weeks, and that is probably one of the discussions we're going to be having. He would be able to give me an update, because he's actually one of the co-chairs for the broadband for the northern part of our province. So something that I'm looking forward to for sure.

Mr. Lindsey: So, in this budgetary process, has your department or has the ministry of northern and—Indigenous and Northern Relations—has there been any budget set out to start that particular process, that project, if you will?

Ms. Clarke: Our portion of this project per se is use of lines through—with Manitoba Hydro, that it's in-kind. And that was our commitment and that's where it remains. So within our budget there does not have to be additional funds as such. The bigger portion of this is coming from the federal government.

Mr. Lindsey: So the broadband Internet connections will only be going to those communities that presently have Hydro lines running to them?

Ms. Clarke: I don't have a list of the designated communities where the outreach is to, but it's a significant portion of the northern part of Manitoba.

Mr. Lindsey: Certainly, that would leave out some communities. I know at least one in my own constituency that is still operating off diesel, which is a whole 'nother' conversation that we need to get into, is how to get those communities off diesel. I

know particularly Tadoule had some issues this past winter because their winter road was not in and they were out of diesel fuel. They had to make some arrangements.

But is there any thought within your—within the portfolio of Indigenous and Northern Relations, then, of finding a way to get Internet connection to some of those communities that aren't necessarily hooked into the Hydro lines?

Ms. Clarke: Well, as I've indicated, Chief Crate and Chief Genaille are the chairpersons for this group that is working on connectivity for the northern portion. So—and I indicated I will be meeting with Chief Genaille within the next three weeks, so I don't know—I think their goal is to—it—it's a significant part of the North that they're bringing connectivity to. And, I mean, they have done a remarkable job and have really endured to get it this far. So I think they're going to want to see this project well under way before they're talking about a phase 2, perhaps.

So I think we really have to commend all the people that were working on that and actually got to that finish line for the commitment of the funding. That's huge for them. And now, as you indicate, getting the process done and completed is certainly really significant and they're really looking forward to getting to that point.

Already said, I don't have timelines on that and I'm hoping to get an update on that very soon. But I don't think you can really start talking about the next project until you're into this one. And as you know with any project, it never goes exactly as planned. There's always barriers that seem to pop up along the way. So I'm sure they'll want to be into this process before they're into the planning stage of additional. And I don't know what all the barriers are, but that's a conversation we'll be having.

Mr. Lindsey: I know in some of our non-indigenous communities, if you will—Flin Flon, Snow Lake—we have what's called high-speed Internet; it's debatable whether that's in fact what it is. But we talked earlier about telehealth, and part of the issue from my understanding with telehealth is, even if you have high-speed Internet, doctors in Winnipeg aren't necessarily interested in participating.

So has the minister had any conversations with the Health Minister, or anybody else, for that matter, about how we envision telehealth to work, even if there is connectivity, if nobody in the south wants to participate?

Ms. Clarke: Well, those are very good points, and you're absolutely right. Even with telehealth in the southern part of our province, there are communities, decent-sized communities that would like to have it. But you've got to have that willingness of the physicians to participate, and that's absolutely true.

* (16:50)

And you know, it's not entirely a new concept because it's been there for a little while, but it's just catching on. And I know for the communities that have the availability of that are certainly starting to see a difference, especially with elderly and the really sick people, like I indicated. You know, people with long-term health issues not having to travel, that really can't travel. It's going to be great for the North, I think, the same thing, you know, and they have additional challenges there, without a doubt, as we've already discussed, you know, the smaller communities where they have very limited health staff. You know, having that connectivity is good, but finding physicians to participate—but it would be my understanding that the Minister of Health (Mr. Goertzen) would be very—we'd be very interested and work very hard to ensure a—more specifically in the North that we do have physicians that participate. Because from a community perspective, from all the funding perspective, for the families alone, the savings that can be, you know, for them.

And it's not just—it's not always just the financial part, but for them, you know, many people, as you know better than I, that live in the northern part of the province, for them to come and leave their homeland where they're comfortable and they're safe, to come to Winnipeg is a real hardship. Like, it's really tough for them and they don't want to do it. I know people from my community were like two hours out on a good highway; they're apprehensive. So when you think about the people from the North that have to do it—and sometimes it's children, which means parents have to come or if it's elderly, they have to have family or people come with them. I mean, it is no easy task.

So I can't see any government not working really hard to ensure that, you know, if telehealth is in those communities, that we would make sure that, you know, certainly encouraging the physicians to be a participant in that. That's the only way it's going to work. So I can't see there not being a big push on that.

Mr. Lindsey: Certainly, people in the North with what's happening with northern patient transportation right now, where they're not getting adequate reimbursement for costs to travel to Winnipeg for services that people in the city take for granted, I'm sure would be interested. In fact, a—any number of community events I've been at, that's been one of the big suggestions is to enhance the telehealth.

I guess the—if we have the best system going for telehealth, but nobody wants to participate in it from the south, I'm not sure what the minister would suggest might be a way to convince medical professionals in the city that that is a viable option. I'm told that they get paid more for a physical visit than they do for a telehealth visit. So that may be somewhat of an inducement that—see a patient, whether you see them in person or by telehealth.

So is the minister aware of that and, if so, any thoughts on how this ministry can interact with the Health Ministry or whoever to try and ensure that some of these services become more available?

Ms. Clarke: Well, I certainly don't know the fee structure for a—physicians and I probably don't need to know, but I'm certain the Minister of Health will be, you know, with he and his staff will certainly be looking at every opportune possible. We're very aware that health care in the North is significantly important because they do have a hardship getting not only adequate health care, but timely health care. And I mean that's significant.

But I know our department of northern and indigenous relations, we would certainly support, you know, that if telehealth can be available to them that we would make sure that everything that is required to be there would be available. So I know that the broadband for the northern part of the province, health care was certainly one of the aspects that, you know, would be beneficial.

But it's also about education. You know, it's not just the health care. It will go a long ways for—you know, I talked to a group from northern Manitoba, the chief and council not that long ago and, like, their kids for grade 7, they have to leave home to go to school—to grade 7. And, you know, as a parent and grandparent, I have a hard time comprehending how I'd cope with that, let alone the kids.

So it's not just about health care. I mean that connectivity is going to provide a whole new world for them. There are businesses in the North, as you

know, and this will be the opportunity for them to get their education, perhaps, but also for businesses.

I know, having operated a business for 33 years, if I didn't have the availability of the Internet and et cetera, my business would've not grown to the proportions that it did, and that's in the southern part of the province.

So, when you think of the—well, using Churchill, for instance, that's a tourism-based community, and the opportunities that could be available to them, you know, if they have these enhanced services. And I'm—they've got the Internet, but other communities too. We met with one group last week, and they said the natural resources, in regards to fishing and hunting, et cetera, are the absolute best in their area for the whole province, but they don't have that type of connectivity that they need.

They don't have that access to the outside world, and I spoke to them about the meetings that I'd had most recently with the consul from Germany and the ambassador from Hungary that are actually looking for that northern experience. They want to vacation in Manitoba, in northern Manitoba, with our indigenous people. They're extremely interested in our indigenous people in this province.

Now, for me, that's really exciting news because I love tourism, and I love economic development. So you know, when I listen to these people coming from other countries, and they're excited about northern Manitoba, and they're excited about our indigenous communities and experiencing the lifestyle and experiencing the northern part of our province.

I mean, there again, broadband, it just—to me the ideas just are unbelievable. But it takes time, as you know. It's—this is going to come in steps. Getting the broadband in is a huge step forward.

And getting the education and training, as we talked about right at the beginning of this conversation today, for the younger generation so that, you know, if they want to be a business person or they want to be a health-care assistant.

Even now home-care attendants, you know, to do—to provide home care within their indigenous communities is huge too, because you know, they have a lot of elders. They deal with a lot of diabetes and that, where they can have the skills to do the proper health care for them in the home. That also will alleviate some of the problems of having to deliver them to another area.

So I just see just a world of opportunities for our northern part of our province coming forward. But it's going to take time to develop. This is very new. There's going to be lots of opportunities, and like everything else, it's going to take a certain amount of funding, and it's going to take a lot of partnerships between our governments and our northern communities, as well as our indigenous communities.

So we've already started having those dialogues, and there's some pretty good ideas coming forward. So I'm actually pretty excited about it.

Mr. Lindsey: Yes, just a final quick question. The connectivity of the Internet is part of what's missing, when you're talking about attracting tourists or business or safety in the North. The other missing piece of the puzzle, of course, is cellphone coverage.

Do—are you aware of any—is the minister aware of any plans for increased cellphone coverage? Like, for example, when I travel in my constituency, once I leave Thompson, there's pretty much nothing.

Ms. Clarke: Well, I certainly don't want to make light of that because I know how very important that is, but I have to tell you, for myself, traveling down No. 1 Highway and No. 16 to go home, which is in the core centre of our province, there's two places I lose cellphone service right in those areas, where my phone absolutely cuts out.

One's right on Portage Avenue in Winnipeg. There's a certain area where my phone calls cut out one hundred per cent. There's another area travelling on No. 1 Highway where they change servers or whatever. So, yes. We don't even have it perfected here yet, but there's a long ways to go up North, and I know what you're saying.

There's communities right in my own constituency that have zero cellphone service. So that's—and that's a huge issue for safety, as well as everything else. So totally recognize what you're saying in regards to the northern part of the province, a high priority.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 5 o'clock, committee rise.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

*(15:10)

Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume

consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Executive Council.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I'd just like to put on the record that I apologize for being a little late this afternoon, there was just intense debate over this motion that I'm about to propose here. A lot of people wanted me to bring the Premier's salary down to \$1, and I said, you know, no, he deserves a little bit more than that. I want to be fair to him, so can we do two? What do you—what does everyone think around the table: three, four, or what do we think?

Anyway, with that preamble, I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), that line item 2.1.(a) be amended so that the Premier's salary be reduced to \$50,400.

Mr. Chairperson: Since there's a motion on the floor regarding the Premier's salary, I would ask the First Minister's staff to leave the—or, not the—the table.

It has been moved by the honourable member—or, sorry—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, that line item 2.1.(a) be amended so that the Premier's salary be reduced to \$50,400.

The motion is in order. Are there any questions or comments on this motion?

An Honourable Member: Well, I'd like to make some comments.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable First Minister.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Mr. Chair, I would suggest to the member on this motion that we give consideration to the reality that the previous administration actually doubled our provincial debt and managed to continue to cash their paycheques in full. They added a significant amount of money on a daily basis to the debts of Manitobans in—and continued to cash their paycheques. They added \$10 million a day over the final five years of their mandate to the debt of the Province. And because of NDP overexpansion of Manitoba Hydro and the ongoing carrying charges attributable to NDP debt doubling, we will pass \$50 billion of gross debt in the next year for the first time in our province's history, and yet previous NDP administrations saw fit to continue to accept their pay.

At the same time as that was happening, the previous administration saw fit, while it was adding

these massive debt burdens to our children and grandchildren, to also raise taxes on Manitobans. And so they broadened the PST, for example, on fundamental items like benefits at work and hairstyling and, well, things like home insurance, insuring your properties. So they were adding tax burden and paying themselves while they then went further because they could not get their spending problem under control and raised the PST as well, disproportionately hurting lower income Manitobans. That was the record of the previous administration, didn't seem to be a problem, though, in respect of them being compensated, but everyone else was paying more and getting less as a result.

While this was going on, we were sinking in national rankings on child poverty to 10th of 10; on health-care access, 10th of 10; on educational outcomes for students, 10th of 10; and this was the real record of the previous administration.

Now we are, in this government, working diligently to achieve better outcomes for Manitobans, improving access to health care, improving quality of education, improving services, also reducing the tax burden on Manitobans while reducing deficit. So if—the member in—may wish to reconsider his motion because in considering it, one should consider the results that are being achieved by the government before making such a motion as a matter of habit or as a design on partisanship advantage. Because the fact remains that the outcomes that this government has achieved in just two years are seeing improvement—not in every category, but in many significant improvements for Manitobans, in terms of other issues as well.

We are making progress in restoring our relationship with money lenders by keeping our word, by doing the things we said we would do as opposed to the previous government's habit of overpromising and under-delivering year after year after year and causing us to suffer under three credit rating downgrades as a consequence of that. That's tens of millions of dollars lost to Manitobans, can't go to services for us, just to go to extra payments for interest on debt.

* (15:20)

So this alone, as a measure of progress, is a significant one which is achieved through the work of all government caucus members and should not be belittled or minimized. It is significant in its importance to Manitobans and their future.

In addition, I would also submit to the member that the previous administration did break its promises. I know he wasn't part of that administration and wishes to throw everyone who was under the bus, but the fact remains that the previous administration promised they would not raise taxes. They campaigned on it in the '11 election. They said they would not do it. They did it. And to go even further, they went to court to take away the right of every Manitoban to vote on that. Something they promised they would respect, they did not respect.

Now, we're restoring that right to Manitobans because we believe in trust in Manitobans and Manitobans have the right to decide whether they want a higher income tax, a higher business tax or a higher personal sales tax. These commitments are significant ones. These commitments we have made and ran on we are keeping. The previous government broke their commitments and cashed their paycheques.

And so I would submit to you, Mr. Chair, that we will continue to keep our word and we will keep the promises that we made to Manitobans and that is how we merit our compensation as a consequence.

Mr. Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Kinew: I would like to request a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested by—do you have a seconder with you? A formal vote has been requested by two members. This section of

the Committee of Supply will now recess to allow this matter to be reported and for the members to proceed to the Chamber for the vote.

The committee recessed at 3:22 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:29 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Department of Executive Council.

Are there any questions?

* (16:30)

Seeing none, I will now put the question.

RESOLVED that there be granted Her Majesty a sum of—not exceeding \$3,751,000 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Executive Council.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of Committee of Supply is for the Department of Families.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department?

An Honourable Member: No.

FAMILIES

Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook): This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Families.

An Honourable Member: We're okay for a bit. I think they're making their way down.

An Honourable Member: Let's just wait a moment.

Mr. Chairperson: I won't open the floor for questions.

As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Sure, Mr. Chair, I'd like to table—this is a question that was asked on May 13th—April 13th, because it is May 14th today—that talked about employment and income assistance. There was some question about case load per category and per region. So I'll table this for the committee for their review.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): So I look forward to the little bit of discussion that we have in the next little bit. So I would start by asking the minister, what is the budget for inclusion support services for 2018-2019?

Mr. Fielding: Right. I'm just going to just have you look—and I will say the exact numbers—but the supplemental—the pink book that talks about supplemental funding on page 83 under the Financial Assistance and Grants, and it's a total of 178,977, but the budget for inclusion support is at seventeen million three—\$17.3 million.

Ms. Fontaine: Could the minister—well, the minister actually mentioned \$10 million in federal funding for inclusion support today in question period. Is that part of a bilateral agreement on child care, or can he provide additional information what specifically he's talking about for that \$10 million?

Mr. Fielding: Yes, the 10.6 number which I quoted is based off the three-year bilateral agreement. The bilateral agreement starts in '17-18, goes into '18-19 and '19-20. So it's an additional \$4.8 million per year. So the total is 10.6 over the two—the final two years of the agreement.

Ms. Fontaine: Sorry, just for clarification, if the minister could provide whether or not that \$10 million—is it just federal funding, or what is the—if it's a bilateral agreement, what's the provincial cost?

Mr. Fielding: So the \$10.6 million is incorporated in the \$47-million agreement between the feds and Province, and so the 10.6 is split up in the last two years of the funding agreement. So what happens is the federal government and the Province meets together, they sign—you—what we had to do is we had to sign onto the multi-year framework agreement with the feds, and then after that, over the course of the latter part of the year, we established a bilateral agreement, and the bilateral agreement did the whole overarching money, which is the \$47 million. Incorporated in that \$47 million over the three-year agreement is, I'll say, two tranches of money, where

it's in the latter two years; this is the second year of it. That's the additional 4.8 for the 10.6 over the two years. So they provide the money to us; we appropriate that money in our budget.

* (16:40)

Ms. Fontaine: So, yes. Sorry, you're probably just going to have to walk me through this a little bit.

So it's—the \$10.6 million is part of the \$47 million for child care. Is any of the \$10.6 million any provincial dollars? If it's a bilateral agreement, of the 10.6, what is the provincial contribution? Unless I'm missing something here.

Mr. Fielding: Right, okay. So a part of the inclusion support—what we're spending in inclusion support is 17.3. And that's in 2018-19, so this year as well as the next year. So it's a three-year agreement with the federal-provincial agreement. So of that \$17.3 million, there's \$12.5 million that—I'm not going to—you know, it's hard to say it's provincial money versus federal money because it's a joint agreement, right? If we didn't have a joint agreement with the federal-provincial governments—so I don't see it as federal government money versus provincial government money. It's really bilateral agreement money. So—of the money, the 17.3 that we spend or will be spending on inclusion support this year and next year, you know, there's 17.3 is what we're spending. We're existing—the existing money that the provincial—prior to the bilateral agreement being signed was 12.3 as we allocated in our budget. So with the additional agreement with the federal-provincials in terms of the bilateral, that adds another \$5 million. So the total is 17.5 and change, essentially. So I don't know if that answers your question.

Ms. Fontaine: Not really. But—so you said that you previously identified \$12.5 million for inclusion support services. So what I'm gathering from your last answer is that you rolled that into, then, a bilateral agreement with the feds. And that's not—yes, it doesn't make any sense. I'm trying to figure out what the Province is contributing to this bilateral agreement.

So what—and, again, this is probably like the third time I'm asking this. What is the provincial dollars that the Province is spending, either to inclusion support services—what is the dollar amount—and to the total \$47 million? Unless it's all coming from the federal government, which, in that case, is a very easy answer; the Province isn't

contributing any money. So it's—I'm just trying to make sense of what the Province is contributing to both pots of dollars, actually, now.

Mr. Fielding: Right. Well, I'm—you know, again, it's kind of the finances of this. But I would, you know, I would suggest—and I'll give you your direct answer again. But what I'm saying is that unless there's a bilateral agreement, right, the feds kind of roll out a program. They say, okay, we're going to invest X amount in child care. Some programs, like some areas, if you're in housing, for instance, right, there's a matching component of dollars that are required. Under the bilateral agreement, the agreement that was signed with all the provinces is that there was a federal investment that are there.

Now I would say, unless you sign the bilateral agreement, right, there's an agreement of how you spend the money. The money isn't appropriated to the provinces. So I don't see it as, you know, federal money versus provincial money. I see it as partnership money between the feds and the Province. So, for instance, last year, we allocated in our budget documents close to about \$12 million. So I guess, from the way you're phrasing it, that's the money that was existing in the system. That wasn't enough money to support, kind of, what I'll say is, changing the nature of the program where there's more of a dual stream.

So, with the agreement that we're able to sign with the federal government, that put another \$10.6 million, I'll say, into that program. But what we are doing is we're totally streamlining the program because right now there's kind of a one stream that happens in terms of the supports, so we're making kind of a dual stream of programs where children with more special needs, maybe children with autism, are in one stream versus two. So we think we're allocating—it's going to be a more wholesome program that will provide better supports for individuals. I think it's upwards of 700 children will be supported by it.

So, you know, again, it's—we're spending seventeen-point-some-odd dollars in the program which, from a budgetary point of view, is \$5 million—just about—just under \$5 million more on inclusion support than we did last year.

Ms. Fontaine: Well, I mean, I would probably have to disabuse you of whether or not it's federal dollars or provincial dollars. Clearly, it's federal dollars. Like, if I was coming—if you and I were entering into a bilateral agreement, and the member for St. Johns

puts in \$50, and the member for—[interjection]—puts in zero, then it would be, well, the member for St. Johns put in the dollar, so I'd have to kind of disabuse you of that notion that it's not kind of federal dollars. It clearly is.

But let's move on because we've only got a couple more minutes. But—so, is—if—can the minister advise whether or not there's an informal/internal or formal wait-list for inclusion support services here in Manitoba?

Mr. Fielding: Right. So, with the inclusion support, if you hit the criteria of the program, then you will be supported. There was, obviously—you may be referring—about six, eight months ago, there was a discussion of the types of services and support that were there. What we said is that there will be no people that will be—you know, as long as you hit the criteria, that you will be supported. Sometimes there is a, you know, process that happens to make sure the services and support are there. But that isn't something that's in place. There isn't a waiting list, per se. There is a process; if you hit the criteria, you will be supported.

What we also did say at that point is that the whole program did need to be reviewed. We did that due diligence to review the program. And really what we came up with was, we think, kind of a made—probably an overused analogy, but a made-in-Manitoba type of process to it because we thought that the program was too—it needed to be more streamlined. It was more—there was too much red tape that was associated with it. And I think the child care association has said that as well. So when we reviewed the parameters of the program, we decided we weren't going to have any wait-lists that are there, and we decided to approach the federal government because they have certain criteria of what they would support in the money that they're, you know, essentially partnering with the provinces for.

And that's—and I'll get back more to that point, but that's further to my point. I know you made the point prior, but I do want to clarify because I think it is important point. Is there \$47 million of more federal funding that's brought in the system? Absolutely. But there is also criteria, right? So, the feds have said, you can invest money in these certain areas.

So, without the Province signing onto certain projects or things like, for instance, the inclusion support, kind of streamlining it, or things like the

northern strategy or ECE training, all this other stuff, then the money couldn't have flown, right, to—couldn't have, you know, been transferred.

* (16:50)

So whether, you know, we put in two thirds of the money right now and the feds bring in some more, we're obviously welcome to them bringing more money to table, whether if it's inclusion support or other projects. But the end of the day, they do need the Province to sign on in some sort of bilateral agreement to how we're going to spend the money. It's not just, you know, them putting \$47 million and anyone can apply for it or anything else. There is some criteria.

So I would suggest that, you know, it does only represent—I don't know the exact numbers, but I think it's under 10 per cent of the actual funding that we get from child care. We spend on—in the neighbourhoods of I think it's over—north of \$175 million on child care, which is the highest that we have, really, in the history of the province. So there is some portions that are coming from the feds, but it isn't a overwhelming amount. We appreciate it, but, again, it's not—the vast majority is spent by the provincial government, and we have partnership agreements with the feds to do things together.

So, to answer your existing question, there isn't—if you hit the criteria of the program, then you will be supported. And we are, right now, we'll be announcing kind of the federal portions, although we 'announced' the global amount in our March or February announcement of the global dollars. We are working and we kind of just talked about the, you know, creating kind of a dual-stream funding approach to children with disabilities and things like autism.

So that will be, I guess, brought out or will be announced, you know, over the coming weeks of, you know, how the program will change. But for the most part the program will be more specified in terms of the approach, right. There will be a stream with higher needs and a stream with, like, autism and that sort.

So I don't know if that answers your question. But there isn't a wait-list. If you do hit the criteria for the program, then you will be supported.

Ms. Fontaine: So, we'll just leave it in respect of the \$47 million, because you and I could probably go back and forth on this, and again, I think I will still submit to you that I disabuse your analysis on that.

But you've mentioned several times, in respect of the criteria, you've repeated here that if you fit the criteria you will be supported. Has the criteria—and you did mention that you did a review—has the criteria changed? And if it has changed, how so?

Mr. Fielding: No. No, there hasn't been any change to the criteria.

Ms. Fontaine: Are you able to provide us with a copy of Manitoba's early learning and child-care strategy?

Mr. Fielding: That will be released in the coming days.

Ms. Fontaine: So, to be clear, that's going to be released this week?

Mr. Fielding: I didn't say how many days that was. It's—

An Honourable Member: In a couple days, though.

Mr. Fielding: No, no, no. No, no, no, no. Okay, let me review that. It will be coming in the coming weeks that we'll be announcing that.

What I can say is that based on what we announced for the federal—like, if you looked at the federal announcements we made with the federal government, there's, you know, for lack of a better term, there's buckets of money that we've identified, things like building new funded spaces, things like higher needs, things like northern—these are all going to be components.

So I don't think you're going to see much of difference with the strategy on the criteria and the different segments of the federal bilateral agreement. I think you're just going to see a few more details fleshed out, right, a big part of that in the coming days. You know, the—you'll see things like changes to ECEs and supports for ECEs that's important to the sector.

So, suffice it to say, it's going to follow the same format as the agreement with the federal government, the bilateral agreement that was established through the federal government. Those are going to be the same segments or criteria that will be established in the stretch coming forward.

Ms. Fontaine: So we've had the minister say in the last two minutes that either in the next few days or in the next few weeks we will see the release of Manitoba's early learning and child care strategy which will mirror or parallel the bilateral

agreement but with buckets of money. So that's going to be interesting.

I do want to ask the minister how the minister interprets the regulation 62/86(37)33.1 and 3.2. Does the minister believe it means government will have to cover the entire cost?

Mr. Fielding: Yes, I'm going to probe the question. You know, it's interesting, that subsection, I ran my exact—I had a bumper sticker that was made up on that for my last—I'm being facetious. But just for clarification, could you clarify that one more time for me please?

Ms. Fontaine: So it's part of the regulations, as I understand it, and I'm asking the minister whether or not these sections, if he believes that it is the Province's responsibility to cover the total costs of inclusion support services for children.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*(14:50)

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply was—now resume the consideration for the Estimates for the Department of Sustainable Development.

At this time, I invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

I guess I'll get the minister to introduce her staff as they're settling in.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Sure. Again today, I have with me Deputy Minister Rob Olson. Joining me for the first time is Rathan Bonami [*phonetic*], the manager of Energy Efficiency in Sustainable Development, Energy Branch. I also have Rob Nedotiafko, who's the director of Parks and Protected Spaces, and ADM of Crown lands and finance—that's it—Matt Wiebe.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, Minister.

And does the opposition critic have—introduce his staff.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I think his name is still Chris.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, thank you.

As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Altemeyer: Greetings to the minister and staff. Hope everyone had a good Mother's Day and a good weekend.

Since I—our global time for global discussions on the Estimates this year is winding down, I'll be hitting on quite a number of topic areas today. I understand my colleague, the MLA for River Heights—and also for Assiniboia—are interested in jumping into the fray today, as well, so I'll try and make some time for them.

If I may, Madam Minister, I'd like to maybe close off with some more questions around climate change. We were talking in that area towards the end of last week. Doing some math over the weekend, comparing what I had heard from the Finance Minister, the Infrastructure Minister in terms of money from their budgets that has gone to the green fund and then be repurposed, plus what you shared with me. I'm trying to figure out how much of the \$40 million in the green fund is what we might call new money, and how much of it is money that was doing something—presumably good—last year and is going to continue to do that good work, but isn't an additional allocation that would lead to new environmental benefits for the province.

Ms. Squires: Before I get into this question that member opposite just asked me, I did want to give him information that came up in one of the questions from last week about the vacancy rates, the percentage by department.

So I have those numbers to give right now, and if member—if the member will recall, I did share with him last week that we do have a department-wide 14.8 per cent vacancy as of May the 1st, 2018. That includes: a 17 per cent vacancy rate in the Finance and Crown Lands Division, a 10 per cent vacancy in Parks and Regional Services Division, 10 per cent in Environmental Stewardship Division and a 25 per cent vacancy in Water Stewardship and Biodiversity Division.

I do want to point out for member—for the member that we are recruiting aggressively and looking to fill some of those vacancies, especially in the water stewardship and biodiversity area. This is an area of critical importance to our government, and we're looking forward to hiring new staff.

So, in relation to the money, like our government's commitment to green initiatives, the member rightly points out that our government has committed this year to a \$40-million investment in green—for green initiatives.

And, of course, these might be new projects, new programs coming into government. They might be existing ones. We did go over, last week, some of the existing initiatives that will continue to see a government investment: the climate change fund, the IISD fund, a lot of those initiatives where we're going to be building on our base support for these institutions and initiatives that we certainly do see tremendous value.

And, as we move forward into transitioning to that low-carbon future with all Manitobans, including Manitoba industries, we will certainly be looking at ways that we can invest government money, taxpayer money, so that it would get a really good return for Manitoba taxpayers. And, by that, I mean, you know, good business investments. We want to spur technology. We want to spur growth in the economy. But we also want to get emissions reductions from some of these investments.

So we're going to be looking at the carbon emission reductions as it pertains to these variety of initiatives that our government will carry out and make sure that when we do invest in clean tech, or when we use the expenditure that we have for green initiatives, that we are achieving carbon emission reductions.

* (15:00)

We know that our government has set an ambitious goal of reducing our carbon footprint and achieving in excess of one megaton carbon emission reductions based on carbon pricing alone, is what our modelling confirms. We want to do more than that. We want to get even greater results for the environment. And the best way to do that, of course, is to work with all Manitobans so that we can reduce our carbon footprint and grow the Manitoba economy in a sustainable way so that we can achieve those goals of leaving a better environment for our future generations, our children and our grandchildren.

Members opposite will recall that when we inherited—when we formed government, we inherited a fiscal challenge, to say the least. We inherited close to a \$1-billion deficit; the numbers were—there were a variety of numbers, and when we finally did review

the books, we saw that we were near approaching a billion-dollar deficit. Manitobans were also faced with some of the highest taxes in Canada, specifically, in western Canada; definitely the highest taxes. And so what Budget 2018 committed to was reducing the deficit. We've made substantial gains on deficit reduction and as well as providing some tax relief; the biggest tax relief package offered to Manitobans in contemporary history. And so that is what our government is about, is reducing taxes and reducing carbon at the same time.

Mr. Altemeyer: Thank the minister for those numbers.

I note that they're actually aren't, apparently, any jobs posted for the Sustainable Development Department on the website right now. So my hope and faith would be that we can take the minister at her word, of course, that they are working diligently to get those jobs posted and get people hired, we—particularly, for water stewardship. I would imagine it's a little easier to work on water-related issues when the water isn't frozen, and this would be the time of year to be hiring people as quickly as reasonably possible.

So I did want to just flag that. Vacancies are something that we try to, of course, keep an eye on regardless of which party happens to be in power, and, certainly, the minister relies on good people to help her department achieve its mandates.

Also want to move forward, picking up on some of the minister's own comments about wanting to achieve the megaton in cumulative emissions reductions and reducing carbon footprint. What is Manitoba's annual emissions going to be in 2017? Well, 2017 is passed; we don't know the numbers yet, but what target has the minister set for 2018?

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

Mr. Altemeyer: Just to be clear. This is for annual emissions of the type that the federal government releases the reports every year on.

Ms. Squires: Thank you very much. And the—I would like to share with the member opposite that the 2018 National Inventory Report just released some information, and it did confirm that the 2016 Manitoba greenhouse gas emissions were 20.9 megatons of carbon. That was our carbon footprint in 2016. And as member is probably aware, it's two years behind is what the National Inventory Report reports on. We don't have any more current

data than that. But that is the 2016 profile for Manitoba's carbon footprint.

Now members opposite had also talked about where we're going from here on a go-forward basis and how we're going to achieve some reductions in our carbon footprint. And the member will recall from Bill 16, The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act, we talk about setting our goals in a collaborative approach, and that's something that Manitoba will certainly be doing. Our government will be looking forward—looking to setting goals and developing a framework for the path forward.

That—what I can offer the member right now is that these goals and these targets will be set and achieved much sooner if the members opposite would work collaboratively with us in getting Bill 16 up for debate in the House and for passage this spring session before we rise on June the 4th. And the House leader has shared with me that we could certainly accommodate that. We could make room on our agenda. This is definitely one of the key priorities of our government is to get moving on the climate and green plan implementation.

We do want to act very quickly on reducing our climate—our carbon footprint, and the best way to get to work on that is with the implementation of that very act. And so I'm asking members opposite to get an agreement with his members, with his House leader, with his leader and to stop the delay on meaningful action on the climate.

* (15:10)

We have an ambitious agenda in front of us. We believe that Bill 16 is definitely a good step forward in the right direction, and we were very disappointed to learn about the members opposite's delay tactics on meaningful action on climate change. And I know many of the stakeholders that I've met with, including the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the Prairie Climate Centre and my colleagues in Ottawa, were shocked and dismayed to see the NDP here in Manitoba not taking the issue of climate change seriously and delaying the passage of Bill 16.

So that was a real blow to the environment community and certainly is something that I think the member opposite—we've established here already that we've both got a serious commitment and passion for the environment, and I respect the work that member opposite has done on environmental initiatives and I would hope that he would work with

his colleagues, work with his leader to say delay on climate change is just not a step in the right direction. We want to work with the Manitoba government to helping all Manitobans reduce their carbon footprint and delaying action on climate change is just not something that the NDP should be supporting and moving towards. And maybe the member opposite—I know he's got a credible record as an environment critic and working on the environment for many years, and I would hope that he could use his platform that he has built for himself to work with his leader and his House leader and his colleagues to come to a consensus that it is just downright irresponsible to continue delaying action on climate change, and I would ask today if he would give the commitment to this House, to this Chamber, that he would move towards supporting action on climate change.

Mr. Altemeyer: I'll do the minister one better. I promise some tangible ideas of things she and her department might want to contemplate.

First, just a little bit of context, I have a preliminary copy of the 2016 data set from Environment Canada and, of course, it dates back to 1990 where the Kyoto Protocol formalized the reporting processes worldwide. So in Manitoba, in 1990—this would have been under the Filmon Conservative government—Manitoba's emissions were 18.3 megatons, or a little over 18 million tons a year. Ten years later, 1999, they had grown by almost 2 megatons to 20.2. Our first full year in office was in the year 2000 when they were 20.8, and in 2016, as the minister just noted, they are 20.9. I hope she would join with me in celebrating the flattening out of Manitoba's emissions curve. And the reason why I ask what are the—what's her goal, what's her government's goal, is because that's got to be the first step, right? What's the old phrase? Fail to measure, measure to fail. You know, you got to have a goal in mind.

Certainly—and I've heard the minister speak quite passionately at, you know, the ManSEA conference, Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association. I understand that she gets it in the sense of how the—*[interjection]*—in the sense of, you know, just how urgent the latest climate science indications are.

I mean, we have entire countries now, even industrialized countries—United Kingdom, their Conservative government is talking about bringing in legislation that will mandate carbon neutrality across

their entire economy in not that many decades. The newly elected President of Costa Rica has made a fundamental campaign promise and pledged to his people that getting off of fossil fuels and carbon emissions completely is going to be a central focus of his government. That is where the science is telling us we have to go. That is where we, as part of the world, also have to go. So I would invite the minister to contemplate setting a trajectory. How do we get to net zero and what's the path to guide us in that direction?

So let me try to ask my question, maybe, in a different way. In 2019, regardless of what happens with Bill 16—in 2019 for the full calendar year, the new carbon tax her government has chosen to bring in will be in effect for the whole 12 months. It would, therefore, you know, be something I would hope she and her staff have looked at in having an impact on the emissions of Manitoba. In 2019, where does this minister want our annual emissions to be?

That's going to be a quarter of a billion dollars in carbon tax revenue coming to her government. I would hope we would get something in the way of reducing our footprint from that decision, and I'm wondering what the minister has in mind in terms of what the results will be for Manitoba in the planning.

* (15:20)

Ms. Squires: I appreciate the member's question regarding our ambitious agenda to reduce our carbon footprint, and I know he's well familiar with our 64-page Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan, which is really a blueprint for action that our government is going to take on climate change and achieving results for Manitoba as we transition to that low-carbon future.

Our plan has—is based on the four pillars of all areas in which we can make improvements to reduce our carbon footprint and enhance the environment in Manitoba. There's the water pillar, and I know last week we talked at length about the importance of having a strong watershed focus in Manitoba. No credible climate plan in the province of Manitoba could exclude the provisions for enhancing our watershed and building more wetlands in the province. We know that 70 per cent of our wetlands have been lost over the last century, and these wetlands are invaluable in terms of sequestering carbon and really acting as a carbon sink—and the kidneys of our watersheds and our Lake Winnipeg, in particular, which is facing a variety of challenges right now.

So we do have the four pillars, the water being one of them, nature being the other. We have a great, tremendous opportunity to sequester our carbon in our boreal wetlands and our forests. And our plan certainly addresses that and it—those initiatives to ensure that our boreal wetlands are preserved and that our wonderful areas in Manitoba that are beautiful to enjoy and offer us so many ecological goods and services, but also do act as carbon sinks, that they are preserved and protected for the future.

In relation to the actual emission reductions, what our government did and under—

Mr. Chairperson: Sorry. Excuse me, Minister. I just have—the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) to give us a report.

Report

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255): Mr. Chairperson, in the section of Committee of Supply meeting in room 255, considering the Estimates of the Department of Executive Council, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) moved the following motion: that line item 2.1.(a) be amended so the Premier's salary be reduced to \$50,400.

Mr. Chairperson, this motion was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been called. Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Chairperson: The one hour provided in ringing of the bells has lapsed. I am directing the bells to be shut off.

In the section of Committee of Supply meeting in room 255, considering the Estimates for Executive Council, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition moved the following motion: that line item 2.1.(a) be amended so that the Premier's salary be reduced to \$50,400.

The motion was defeated in a voice vote, and, subsequent, two members requested a formal vote on this matter.

The question before the committee, then, is the motion on the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 12, Nays 34.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: This section of Committee of Supply will now continue with the consideration of the department of Estimates.

* (16:30)

Okay, we'll continue the Committee of Supply for the Sustainable Development, and now we'll invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

Mr. Altemeyer: I appreciate the minister's staff are making their way back here, but I understand some of our colleagues other than me also have questions of the minister, so, maybe if she's willing, she can take some questions from the honourable member for River Heights for a bit.

An Honourable Member: Absolutely.

Mr. Chairperson: The Honourable Minister. Okay. The honourable member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes. My question to the minister: I know that she commented a little earlier this afternoon, favourably, about the International Institute for Sustainable Development, and I presumed that that probably includes Experimental Lakes Area which is part of that. And it is, of course, an international resource and very critical to us understanding fresh water, and I just give the minister an opportunity to give us an update on what's happening and how the funding is going, to ELA, partly, because it wasn't listed as a line item, initially.

Ms. Squires: I appreciate the member's—member opposite's question on the Experimental Lakes Area, and I was pleased to join the member at a reception not too long at the home of Gail Asper on the celebration—the anniversary of the ELA and I was really pleased to join our former premier, His Honour Gary Filmon, at that event where he was acknowledged for the work that he did as premier in the '90s for supporting the work that is conducted at the Experimental Lakes Area, and our government certainly is committed to the research and the work that they do at the ELA and are really pleased to be partnering with the IISD on ongoing research that is conducted there.

I have tremendous respect for a lot of the scientists and was very pleased to have Dimple Roy from IISD attend committee last week on Bill 7 and to provide her comments for The Sustainable Watersheds Act, and she had a lot of comments to say about the ongoing sustainability of our watersheds and the research that is conducted at ELA and how those two really go hand in hand, and we think that the longevity of ELA is integral to the work that we hope to accomplish with Bill 7. And I hope members opposite will support our government's initiative to move towards a more sustainable watershed management approach in the province of Manitoba and will indeed vote in favour of Bill 7.

Ms. Roy's comments, based on their research at ELA, in regards to a variety of topics, including nutrient management, was very significant and worth a lot of consideration, and so I rely very heavily on the work coming out of ELA and from IISD. Our department is certainly refocused to take an evidence-based approach to all of our decisions and our policies, and without the ELA, we wouldn't be able to have the evidence and the science that we need to make those major decisions regarding our water management and particularly our sustainable watersheds initiatives.

So I'm very pleased to be continuing the support. I know my predecessor, the former minister of sustainable development, had gone out to the Experimental Lakes Area early in her mandate and made a fairly significant announcement to commit resources to the ongoing longevity of the ELA. And our government, we're continuing—and as the new Minister of Sustainable Development, I'm pleased to continue on with the good work of my predecessor and have ongoing collaboration and commitment to ELA.

And, to that end, we do provide the support. It does go through our enhanced support through the International Institute for Sustainable Development and that is how we ensure that the funding for the ELA flows. That's the regular initiative, and then, of course, there's other initiatives that have in the past come up as sort of one-offs, and we'll continue to be working with them very collaboratively to ensure that they're—they've been provided with the adequate resources. And to that end, I am pleased to be taking a trip out there myself as—to be going out with the IISD to see some of the work first-hand at the experimental lakes in the very near future, and so I

look forward to going out there and seeing the good work first-hand.

* (16:40)

But I do want to take this opportunity to congratulate everybody who has worked on ensuring the longevity of the Experimental Lakes Area and the good research and work that they do that will really benefit future generations of Manitobans in a very profound way. So we're proud to support all that work that goes on in that very critical area of research and development.

Mr. Gerrard: Moving from the importance of identifying and understanding pollution and other matters in fresh water—I thank the minister for her answer to that question—in St. Boniface, there's a business called Industrial Metals. It basically has—was part of a metal shredder, which, I understand, shreds or breaks cars up into small pieces.

There are a number of issues being raised by local people with regard to this. One is it's very noisy. I wonder if, in the work that the minister's doing, that her staff could work with the business and look at the possibility of some soundproofing. There are apparently some occasional explosions, flying metal scraps, and local residents are concerned about the safety hazard. And I hope the minister would make sure that her staff are looking at that.

I gather there are local high concentrations of copper, lead, zinc and cadmium, which are of concern; lead and cadmium, particularly, potentially very problematic. There is, I gather, some sort of a government report, and I wonder when that's going to be available.

There's a consideration of automobile shredder residue, or fluff, and what's happening with that. I gather there's an Environment Canada detector for air quality, which the federal government needs direction from the Province as to where it's located, and wonder if it's possible for the Province to move it closer to this facility so that the local residents would be able to get better idea of what's happening with the local air quality.

I thank the minister.

Ms. Squires: Thanks. I appreciate the member's question. And in regards to the air and soil quality in St. Boniface, I can say that I have met with a group, the South St. Boniface Residents Association a few times. I've had them in my office and had very productive conversations with them in regards

to how we can ensure the ongoing livability of their neighbourhood and as well as working in conjunction with some of the, you know, industrial organizations that have existed, that have a long history in the St. Boniface industrial park.

And I also have met with the particular organization that the member refers to, Industrial Metals, and I've had them in my office just to talk to them about some of their concerns and really bring in a more collaborative approach and moving away from some of the more inflamed tensions that have been occurring and trying to really get to the root of the challenge and see if we can find some satisfactory resolve for all concerned parties.

And we've had some success in regards to neighbourhood complaints versus the operations of organizations in an area zoned for this type of activity. One particular area in the—in and around Kenaston, for example, we had really good collaboration between neighbourhood residents' association and the industrial entity and got a good collaborative resolve so that we've got a little bit more harmony.

With this, in this particular area, with South St. Boniface Residents Association, there is a spirit of collaboration there, and with the organization, Industrial Metals, we have taken the steps of asking them to take on additional monitoring. And our department did also commit to doing additional monitoring. Those are all under the—the results are either—the one—the results that have come in have been and are being analyzed, and then there will be further analysis being conducted this summer and fall.

The member would probably know that summer and fall is when levels are expected to be at their maximums, so any analysis that we would have obtained over the winter wouldn't have been reflective of the chief concerns that the community was expressing in terms of elevation levels. So we are going to be doing more tests this summer and in the fall of 2018.

With the potential for elevated levels of lead, now, I would like to stress that all the samples that have been taken from the soil in south St. Boniface to date have shown that those lead samples—the lead in the soil—have been within the Canadian council for ministers on the environment guidelines—the CCME guidelines on lead.

And we are going to continue to do the soil sampling, and I would like to congratulate my department for some of the heightened work that they've done. They know that this is an area of significant concern, and I've asked them to be very diligent, and they've responded quite well to getting out there, doing the soil sampling and doing the particulate matter analysis, sampling and analysis on a regular basis. And they've also required additional resources, which our department was able to provide them and look at getting the air quality monitoring equipment that would allow us to undertake this work and respond to the emerging needs of the community as they come about.

* (16:50)

We've also partnered with the University of Manitoba who have been doing some incredible work with the soil samples in that area. We know that the U of M went out and did extensive soil sampling in the summer of '17, and we're working with them to analyze and put out the results.

And, again, I can share with this House that none of the samples thus far have proven to be outside of the guidelines of the CCME for residential and parkland settings. We've also done a lot of testing in and around the—

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable 'minis' time is up.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Time is ticking, so I think the most efficient way to do this is to ask a few bullet-point questions, and, hopefully the minister can reply to each bullet point, and then we can probably all go and watch the Jets game.

First question is: on the website, the minister's mandate letter seems to be the—well, the previous minister, Minister Cox's mandate—I'm just trying to get the framework of what we're dealing with here in Estimates—is the letter that's on the website. I'm just wondering if the minister's mandate letter is different, or if she—if it is, if she could table the mandate letter when she assumed office in her current position.

Number two: in Estimates, I wonder if the minister is able to, in the role of Sustainable Development, tell us, in regard to the Efficiency Manitoba targets, what are the economic costs to the Manitoba economy or Manitoba Hydro for reducing

demand for hydroelectric power specifically while, at the same time, producing and adding massive amounts of supply to the network?

Also, specifically on hydro power, I would like to ask the minister how much greenhouse gases will be reduced by reducing demand for the almost one hundred per cent clean hydro power.

And, finally, I'd like to ask the minister—and this minister's doing a good job, like I—but I—this is an obvious question. The made-in-Manitoba carbon tax, \$25 a ton, exceeds what the—even what the federal government's asking, but there are various types of carbon pricing. A carbon tax has been proven, throughout the world, to be the least effective form of carbon pricing.

And what is the government's plan when the current government in Ottawa changes hands in just over a year, and all the mandates are—that the federal government is sending out now will be gone, as is the trend with Ontario, with who's—and Alberta, when that government changes—and Manitoba's going to be the odd one out? What is the government's plan when the tax is no longer, quote, required, but has incurred all the spending and, at the same time, paying more to reach a goal that is not achievable or does not need to be achieved because of regulatory—what we call regulatory risk, and this is the risk that the federal government's policy will change. So it's a tax-and-spend system that actually undermines the very goal it sets out to achieve, which is to reduce and gain public support for reducing greenhouse gases.

So there is a question about the mandate, a question about Hydro demand-side management. Hydro is posed on the financial side and on the greenhouse side, specifically on electricity generation and, finally, carbon tax.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member's time is up.

Before we pass the answer to the minister, I just want to remind the members here they—this is still an extension of the Chamber, the—and we're in the House and just to refer to people, members—that the ministers or members in the House—by their constituency name or their portfolio, okay?

Ms. Squires: I'd like to thank my friend from Assiniboia for those questions, and I will try to keep them in my memory as I achieve to answer all of them in the time I have remaining.

In regards to the upcoming federal election, I know that some members of this House have expressed an interest in what's going to happen federally in 2019, and I certainly do wish everybody in this House who's got an interest in the upcoming federal election all the best in their endeavours, and I know that we all certainly will be watching what happens in that federal election with interest.

But we also know that, in Manitoba, we're governing. Each and every day we get up and go to work for Manitobans. And that won't change, doesn't

matter what happens in Ottawa. We're not here to advocate for or against Ottawa in any particular manner. We're here to advocate for Manitobans, and that's what we do each and every day. And I want to really congratulate all the members, particularly on this side of the House. We come to work every day and work for Manitobans and—

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

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

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