

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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

Vol. LXXI No. 50A - 10 a.m., Thursday, May 17, 2018

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 17, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): I rise on a point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Ms. Fontaine: So I just rise on a point of order.

So today we are debating Bill 208 from the honourable member from Assiniboia on a Thursday rather than a Tuesday morning. While private members' hour falls both on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, it is clear the intent of the rules is to have debate on independent members' bills on Tuesday morning. There is no support for the ability to require debate on a Thursday morning rather than Tuesday in the rules.

Rule 24(2) does not provide any ability for an independent member to force debate on a bill; rather, it solely concerns votes. Rules 22(2) and (3) seem to solely concern voting. Section 24 in its entirety concerns voting rather than debate. More importantly, Madam Speaker, when we look to rule 33(11), it's clear that the intent of providing independent members with the option of forcing a vote or having a debate on a bill or resolution should come on a Tuesday morning. That is the only direction our rules provide as to when the debate should take place.

Madam Speaker, I do also want to respectfully point out that certainly this is a break from our

practices thus to date. We have actually never had a debate on a independent private member's bill during what is the opposition's time to debate our private members' bills.

We have enough time to debate independent members' business, including bills on Tuesday mornings, as has been the practice.

I respectfully request that the debate be immediately rescheduled to next Tuesday morning in accordance with our rules.

And also, Madam Speaker, I respectfully request that this be immediately sent to the rules committee for review and for clarification.

Miigwech.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): Clearly, there is no point of order. A request that a debate scheduled for this morning be rescheduled is not a point of order. We think we should proceed as has been agreed and planned.

Madam Speaker: I thank members for their thoughts on this matter.

Let me say first that the rule regarding selected bills does require some clarification, and I believe it would be useful for the rules committee to consider this rule soon to make the purpose and function of the rule more clear. For now, though, we must consider the rule as it is written and interpret it to the best of our ability.

The member is correct in noting that rule 24 does not explicitly reference debate on a selected bill, only that the question shall be put at the scheduled time. I will reference part of the rule for members' information: 24(2) Each independent member may select one member—one private members' bill per session to proceed to a second reading vote, and despite rule 69(1), an independent member will not require a seconder to move each reading motion for their selected private members' bill. 24(3) Written notice of each bill, indicating the sitting time—day and time when the vote will occur, must be provided by the—must be provided to the Speaker by the House leader or the independent member no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled end of the fall sittings.

Regarding the member's assertion that subrule 33(11) provides direction on the scheduling of selected bills, I must respectfully disagree. I will quote that rule for members' reference: "33(11) One resolution submitted by each independent member will be scheduled for debate on a Tuesday morning and announced by the Government House Leader."

This rule clearly deals solely with the scheduling of resolutions and makes no mention of bills, and is therefore not relevant to the consideration and interpretation of selected bills.

All of this leaves us with the following: (1) rule 24 grants each independent member the right to select a bill for a vote at second reading; (2) rule 24 does not specify whether these votes should occur on a Tuesday or Thursday morning. On this point, the rules are silent.

Given this, as your Speaker I am required to interpret these rules and develop a reasonable solution on how to proceed.

Accordingly, I have concluded the following: (1) subrule 48(1) states that motions for the second reading of a bill are debatable, which means that a selected bill cannot be voted on unless it is moved in the House and a debate ensues; and (2) in the absence of any stated prohibition of this in the rules, independent members' selected bills can be scheduled for either Tuesday or Thursday mornings.

Accordingly, the member does not have a point of order, but I thank her for raising this as it allowed me to clarify the rule.

Once again, I would strongly recommend that the rules committee turn their attention to this and other rules requiring clarification.

I thank members for their attention.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 208—The Conflict of Interest Act

Madam Speaker: As previously announced, the honourable member for Assiniboia has indicated that Bill 208, The Conflict of Interest Act, will be his selected bill for this session and that the question will be put on second reading of this bill this morning at 10:55 a.m.

Accordingly, I will now recognize the honourable member for Assiniboia to move his second reading motion to begin this debate.

* (10:10)

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move that Bill 208, The Conflict of Interest Act, now be read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: I would, however, ask—the member had indicated that he wished to raise a point of order at this time. I would ask him to proceed with that point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, we've dealt—you know, we've used some important debating time in the hour on points of order already. I'll just say that if the House would want to delay the vote to next week, I'm fine with that.

Anyway, that's my point of order.

Madam Speaker: The member does not have a point of order, and I would indicate if he's asking for leave for changing the time he could put forward a leave request, but he does not have a point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Does the member wish, now, to proceed with his debate on his own bill?

Mr. Fletcher: Maybe I will ask for leave because that will add a few minutes to the debate.

Madam Speaker: Could the member indicate what his leave consists of?

Mr. Fletcher: The simple request is to ask the House for leave to have the vote Tuesday, next Tuesday.

Madam Speaker: At 10:55? [*interjection*] Is there leave of the House to have the vote considered next Tuesday at 10:55?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

* * *

Madam Speaker: Now, the honourable member for Assiniboia, to debate his bill.

Mr. Fletcher: What were we talking about? No, no, I'm just kidding. I'm kidding.

Madam Speaker, this is a very serious issue. My bill deals with conflict of interest. The—it's an amendment to the—or it's a replacement of The Conflict of Interest Act as it pertains to Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner recently, just as a few days ago, came up with 84 recommendations on how to improve the conflict-of-interest legislation. I will table those right now. The Conflict of Interest Commissioner accurately described the legislation as being—the current legislation as being the worst in the country and inadequate. It hasn't been changed for a long time.

And, Madam Speaker, I hope that people in the loge there, can just tone it down a little bit. The—yes, moreover, when—in 2006 when the Harper government took power, the first thing that they did was they brought forward a legislation called the accountability act and they did it for a lot of really good reasons, so they could make sure that the rules of accountability were clear and it did two things. It gave Canadians confidence that there would be a higher standard than the previous government. But a good conflict-of-interest legislation actually protects MLAs and their families from being accused of, you know—*[interjection]*

Point of Order

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the people in the loge here, I don't know if it's a tactic to distract or not, but I find it very distracting. They're—it's like they're talking in my ear.

Madam Speaker: The member has indicated he's raising a point of order and asking members in the loge to not be speaking so loudly that he could hear. I would ask the members that are sitting in the loge if they could just maybe move to the other loge if they would wish to carry on the conversation, as it is distracting to the member who has the floor.

And I would indicate that he likely does have a point of order, in order to be able to hear himself in debate.

* * *

Mr. Fletcher: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So a good conflict-of-interest legislation protects not only the public interest, but it also protects the elected representatives from innuendo and other suggestions of impropriety. But we don't have that legislation in Manitoba; we have terrible legislation.

The—in fact, it became apparent very early that the government has no intention of updating the conflict-of-interest legislation, and I will table the Minister of Justice's (Mrs. Stefanson) mandate letter to support that and the fact that the government has done nothing on this matter.

The commissioner's report itself was an ask from LAMC. It wasn't initiated by the government. And then, when—*[interjection]* Okay, well, that is my understanding—it was initiated by the House leader and it was to be reported to LAMC. And then LAMC felt it was a decision that—at least, this is what the letter from the commissioner said. If it's true or not, I guess will tell. But I will table that letter, as well.

Madam Speaker, the legislation falls far short. And, in the time that we have, it is difficult to get into all the details of the 84 recommendations. I introduced a bill in March of last year, a 35-page bill that received a lot of institutional pushback to such an extent that I had to pay, myself, to get the bill translated by a technical translator to allow it to be tabled in this place. So that is \$1,500 of my own resources I put into getting this bill on the floor, because it is that important.

And, Madam Speaker, let's take a scenario like this. Just so the general public can—the major regulatory change of the last few years has been in the area of cannabis. It's going to go from an illegal substance to a legal substance. That debate—that train has left the station. What hasn't been decided is how is that product going to be produced and distributed, and there's a lot of money in the air around that. If an individual knew what company was going to get what contract around cannabis, that would be very valuable information. Even knowing what company is not going to get a contract is valuable information.

* (10:20)

And, Madam Speaker, I want to table the financials of—or the stock price of a company that has gone public in the last year in Manitoba. It went from 20 cents to over \$4 in a matter of hours. I'm not suggesting that there had or is anything going wrong or nefarious, but it's really suspicious and because we don't have proper conflict-of-interest legislation, it puts a cloud above anyone who could possibly have known the licensing and distribution of cannabis.

So Delta 9 is the company I'm referring to. I'm tabling the stock price. It went from 20 cents in October 2017 to \$3.20 up to about four. It's come back down again, but that's not a 10 per cent

increase. That's not a 100 per cent increase. It's over 1,000 per cent increase in a stock price overnight. So those in the know could have made a fortune and we'll never know.

Now, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) around this time, and I'll table the article as well, announced that he was going to require the ministers to have proactive disclosure. Well, I don't know if that happened or not, can't find it on the websites. But if it did it was too late and, if it didn't, it should have if we had proper legislation.

This is very—this goes to the integrity of everything that we do here and they—maybe it's not cannabis. Maybe we could talk about licensing for mines or where Bipole III is going to go or licensing of environmental licences. Like, this is all relevant and this government has put people who are not in Cabinet on the Treasury Board, so there's lots of people who don't fall under the current legislation. My legislation tries to capture it. It's comprehensive. It's a heck of a lot better than what exists and it could be improved a lot, too, and that's where it should go to committee.

And the recommendations of the commissioner should be embraced and government needs to say that they will implement the recommendations of the commissioner immediately. Now, some MLAs may say under this, a conflict-of-interest regime, they couldn't be MLAs. Well, maybe. That can be dealt with, but if they're not MLAs or if the conflict of interest is too strong, well, then, they shouldn't be MLAs.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): As we know, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner recently released a report that had been requested by our government. Does the member think it's important to carefully review these recommendations before passing legislations?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, the recommendations are in the vein of common sense and any common person could review it and come up with the legislation. Heck, I came up with a very good piece of legislation and I'm just one guy. So the government, with all its resources, should be able to come up with something pretty fist—pretty fast and without delay.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): You know, I appreciate that we have the opportunity to talk about conflict of interest. I think it's an important topic for all of elected officials to consider.

You know, but the member talks about how he slapped this together. I think there are a lot of key recommendations that our Conflict of Interest Commissioner Mr. Schnoor made that aren't included in this bill. Could you maybe comment on that? Can he comment on that? Sorry.

Mr. Fletcher: This—thank you for that question. The legislation that I've put together is 35 pages long. It's based on the Brad Wall model, which I understand is the strongest that was around or is around, and a lot of thought went into it. It's a million times better than what we have now.

And one recommendation would be, yes, let's disclose all the numbered companies that you have and all the property you own outside—not just inside Manitoba, which is the current rule, but outside of Manitoba, all the property outside of Manitoba. Those are the kinds of things that we need to do, and that is in this legislation.

Mr. Nesbitt: We will soon be convening an all-party committee to reform conflict-of-interest legislation. Does the member think it's important to consult with other parties on this important issue that impacts all current and future members of this House?

Mr. Fletcher: That—the provincial government is two years too late. It should have introduced the legislation immediately, go through a legitimate committee process and then have—and bring it forward. They don't seem to understand that because the conflict-of-interest legislation has been so bad, that they're all exposed to allegations of conflict of interest, rightly or wrongly.

That's why you do it first when you form a new government, and that's why I'm bringing it forward. It's because the government wasn't going to do anything about this issue at all ever until I brought forward the legislation, a resolution—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Teitsma: You know, I think the member is going offside with some of his comments, since clearly our government has indicated that it is a priority for us to address this issue, but it is something that we are going to do carefully, that we're going to do in consultation with others.

So my question for the member, because he seems very focused on pecuniary interests and numbered companies and things like that: Does he not understand that a conflict of interest is not restricted to those kinds of things, but rather can be much more broadly defined, just as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's report?

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, and that's why my legislation encompasses that. Not only does it deal with individuals, it deals with the individual's spouses and dependants. It does that because it's not covered—those individuals are not covered now.

It deals with property. Only property in Manitoba has to be disclosed, so if you have a cottage on Lake of the Woods and you know that there's a road coming, or you know that bipole, you know, or some other piece of—something that would decrease the property values, you don't have to disclose any of that.

So, yes, the bill deals with that. The current bill doesn't do anything and—or the current legislation—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Nesbitt: Does the member agree that this process should be thorough and comprehensive and that the subject matter is important enough to merit more work beyond simply reintroducing a bill from last session?

Mr. Fletcher: Well, the bill from last session written by an independent MLA is infinitely better than what the government has done, because the government has done nothing, so. Something divided by nothing is infinity. So it's an infinitely better piece of legislation.

In regard to consultation—[*interjection*] come on, give me a break. All you need to go is look at any other province, any other jurisdiction in the Commonwealth or North America, and you've got a better plate, a better design, better legislation.

We are the worst jurisdiction in the Western world for conflict of interest. It's shameful.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Can the honourable member please indicate if, in the crafting of this particular bill, does he envision any penalties?

Mr. Fletcher: Well, first of all, we have to establish that there's a way people can get caught. You know, that—there—nobody—there's no way, even if someone did make investments in their TFSA on a penny stock in—on mining or whatever, or their spouse did, or, you know, there's just no way to hold—like, they wouldn't be in a conflict of interest, because there's no legislation that says they are.

* (10:30)

That's the—that's one of the major problems. And to the member's question, should there be penalties? Yes, there should be, including ceasing to be an MLA.

Mr. Marcelino: The crafting of any legislation has to be given a very wide range of skill sets, meaning you cannot just put it in and take it as if everybody else can support it. Do you think that you have the support of this House?

Madam Speaker: I would just remind members, when posing questions that they be posed through the Chair.

Mr. Fletcher: I am so touched by the intent of the member in his thought that all the members in this House are involved in formulating legislation. Wow. Isn't that supposed to be the way it is? But it's not. It's not the way it is in this place, not in the Manitoba provincial culture. The—we need to focus on the issue, which is conflict of interest, right away. Sure, be inclusive, but don't take forever. It's already been two years. How much more time does it take?

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Teitsma: You know, I appreciate that the member is impatient, but, certainly, we've seen that demonstrated before and I think it's not surprising to see it now. But what we have to understand is that these kinds of things do take time. They take time to get right, and to take something that's on the back of a napkin and try to say, well, because it's better than what's there right now it should somehow become the new law for everyone. It's just—it's disingenuous. It's inappropriate and I think we can do better.

So my question for the member is: Do you think it would be a conflict of interest to use, for example, resources that are available to you as an MLA, such as signs or other things, to campaign for another elected office?

Mr. Fletcher: What is inappropriate and what is wrong is the government has had two years to introduce conflict-of-interest legislation. If he wants to put that kind of stuff in, fine, but do it. Do something.

Madam Speaker, the federal government, which is much more complex, introduced a much more complex and thorough legislation within a month or two. For this member to claim that the government doesn't have the ability to do this is really just an indictment on the government.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): It's my pleasure to rise this morning to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 208, The Conflict of Interest Act, as put forward by the honourable member for Assiniboia.

Now, we know the member had every good intention when he put this bill forward as he's had a real concern since he was elected that the conflict-of-interest legislation here in Manitoba is not keeping in step with legislation across Canada. Our government also believes that it certainly is time to look into conflict-of-interest rules and modernize them here in Manitoba so they make sense given the connected world we live in today.

Trust and accountability must begin in the Manitoba Legislature, and that means with all elected members. To that end, our government asked the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Mr. Jeffrey Schnoor, to take a look at the current legislation and come up with some recommendations for all parties to have a look at so that we can consider new or amended legislation. To be fair, Mr. Schnoor put his recommendations forward since the honourable member from Assiniboia tabled Bill 208.

I think the member across the way will certainly agree that Mr. Schnoor's recommendations are very encompassing and deserve to be studied closely by all parties and by the independent members in this House. I know our government members will take a close look at these recommendations and see how they match up with the current conflict rules and decide on appropriate legislation moving forward.

Madam Speaker, I want to go through some of the comments in Mr. Schnoor's executive summary.

Now, all members of this House received this report, and I don't know how many have read it and absorbed all the recommendations. I know I have taken a quick look through the report, but I don't pretend to be an expert in this field and have—certainly have many questions.

I think the executive summary certainly highlights some of the key points Mr. Schnoor wants to make. He starts off by saying Manitoba has the oldest and arguably the weakest conflict-of-interest legislation in Canada, something I'm sure my honourable friend, the proponent of Bill 208, would agree with.

This report proposes a framework to modernize the legislation. The current act, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act, sets out the obligations of members of this Assembly when they find themselves in a conflict of interest and sets out their obligation to disclose to the public certain assets and interests.

However, Mr. Schnoor recognizes that the act has many anomalies and deficiencies. He says that in broad terms the current act defines conflict of interest too narrowly, requires inadequate disclosure of assets and liabilities, and provides an ineffective method of enforcement of obligations.

Now, Madam Speaker, to be fair, I think Bill 208 that my honourable friend has put forward today also recognizes many of these deficiencies. Mr. Schnoor's report recommends that conflict of interest should be a more broadly defined. He believes that a conflict of interest would arise when a member exercises an official power, duty, or function that provides an opportunity to further his or her private interests or those of his or her family or to improperly further another person's private interests.

In light of the greater potential for conflict of interest, he proposes additional restrictions on Cabinet ministers. Under Mr. Schnoor's plan, unless it is authorized with or without conditions, a minister would not be allowed to engage in employment or self-employment or the management or ownership of a business, to own securities that are not publicly traded, or to be an officer or director of an organization.

Madam Speaker, this recommendation would certainly be a hardship to many members who are currently in this House, including myself. I think this is recommendation that would need further discussion to see how limiting it would be in terms

of how many people would actually want to be an MLA if the restrictions were too onerous.

The current act has no restrictions on members and their families receiving gifts and other such benefits. Their only obligation now is to disclose a gift with a value over \$250.

Now Mr. Schnoor is quite adamant in his report that members and their immediate family not be permitted to accept a gift that is connected with the performance of their duties in office unless it is received as an incident of protocol, custom, or social obligations that normally accompany the responsibilities of office.

Again, Madam Speaker, this is also an item that would certainly need to be discussed and fleshed out by all parties on its practicality.

Mr. Schnoor's report also recommends a major expansion of the public disclosure members must make. Members would have to disclose all their assets and liabilities and those of their immediate family members, as well as of any private corporations in which they have an interest. They would also have to disclose their sources of income and those of their immediate family. All of this information would be filed and then be available for public inspection.

Under Mr. Schnoor's proposal, Cabinet ministers would be required to disclose additional information and to meet with him or her to discuss how to arrange their affairs so as to avoid or minimize conflict of interest.

One interesting recommendation and a major change proposed by Mr. Schnoor is a restriction on employment and activities of members and ministers after they leave office. He is recommending that these restrictions would apply for one year in the case of members and two years in the case of ministers.

Every jurisdiction in Canada except Manitoba empowers its commissioner to receive and investigate complaints where it is felt a member may not have complied with the conflict-of-interest requirements.

The current act, Madam Speaker, places the onus on individual voters to take such complaints to court. Mr. Schnoor's report recommends that this process be changed. He says any complaint should go to the commissioner who should have full power to

investigate, including the power to compel testimony and production of documents.

* (10:40)

Again, Madam Speaker, a major change. If the commissioner finds that a member has breached the conflict-of-interest rules, Mr. Schnoor says he or she should be able to recommend an appropriate sanction. These could include a reprimand, a fine, a suspension of a member without pay, or a declaration that the member's seat is vacant. He proposes that the Legislative Assembly be required to vote to either accept or reject all of the commissioner's recommendations.

The commissioner currently provides advice to members of all parties. Under his recommendations he or she would have to deal with complaints, and will have to make difficult and potentially controversial decisions about people who are in political power. As a result, Mr. Schnoor's report recommends additional measures, and I would suggest to this House additional resources, to better assure the independence of the commissioner.

The honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) would like us to pass Bill 208 today. I submit there isn't enough time today to look at his bill and compare it with Mr. Schnoor's recommendations. All members need to know what effects any proposed changes to the conflict rules would mean. I believe that all members of the Legislative Assembly deserve to have their say on Mr. Schnoor's recommendation before this House jumps to a rash decision to change legislation that has been in effect for many years.

Mr. Schnoor has also provided a timeline for the House to follow, recommending that any new legislation should come into force immediately following the next provincial election or 12 months after it's passed, whichever comes last. He also says that the new legislation should be subject to a mandatory review by the commissioner and the Legislative Assembly every five years.

So, Madam Speaker, I don't understand the rush to consider passing Bill 208. I respect the fact that the honourable member for Assiniboia has put forward his views. I believe that as a seasoned parliamentarian, my friend would agree that a vigorous discussion in this House of changes that are going to affect members now and members that enter this grand building down the road should be held in order that we get this right.

I feel that all members should have a chance to read, absorb and ask questions on Mr. Schnoor's recommendations. I know our government wants to get any new conflict-of-interest legislation right.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'm happy to rise and speak on Bill 208, the conflict-of-interest bill.

Currently, the rules date back to 1987, and they are too limited and ineffective, and apply only to an MLA's activities within Manitoba and while in office.

This new legislation would cover assets owned by an MLA or a member of their immediate family, including stocks, bonds and real estate in Canada. It would also extend any financial holdings and business arrangements beyond Manitoba to anywhere in Canada and would place limits on former MLAs doing business with the government for a year after leaving office.

Madam Speaker, rules would apply to an MLA's spouse and dependent children and cover a wide range of investments, partnerships and involvement in organizations and companies. This would mean MLAs would have to disclose their own investments, including retirement plans, insurance policies and 'renumeration' or of employment for family members. This government says that they want to be transparent and this would be a very good start in doing so.

We support the bill because of the report that was released last month from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner as it showed us that there are some large gaps in our current legislation that is really outdated. It's time to modernize Manitoba's legislation with the commissioner referred to as the oldest—or what she referred to as the oldest and arguably the weakest conflict-of-interest legislation in Canada.

We would also like to see this government create a permanent commission or office to oversee the investigation of complaints.

While this bill is lacking some key features, we would like to see it go forward and, therefore, we are supporting the bill because we think it's a good starting point.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It gives me pleasure to talk a little bit about this conflict-of-interest bill that the member from Assiniboia's put forward.

Find it interesting that the member from, I believe it's Riding Mountain, says, you know, he hasn't had time to read the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's report in full. He hasn't had time to read the bill that was introduced even though it was introduced quite some time ago and they need more time—and they need more time—and they need more time.

Time is somewhat important for introducing the conflict-of-interest legislation. Certainly, we should have it in place before the next election so that people that run in the next election are fully aware of what the rules will be so that they can take that into account.

The member says in his speech that, well, maybe we'll have a hard time getting people to run for MLA positions as a result of too tight of conflict-of-interest legislation. And yet there's nothing earth-shattering in either this bill or in the report from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner because, really, what the Conflict of Interest Commissioner did was looked at what every other jurisdiction in Canada is doing, and so there's nothing that is way out in left field from what others are already doing, and other jurisdictions certainly seem to have the ability to 'detrack' people to run for MLA positions.

There's things that the general public believes that we need to be held to a higher standard as elected officials. And certainly the member from 'Assinisboia's' bill is a good start. It's not the end product that should be in place, but it gives us the ability, then, to move this on to committee and do what the democratic process should be all about, which is listening to Manitobans and hear what they have to say, which would be critical in any conflict-of-interest legislation that we're passing, is to make sure that we're not passing legislation that is just self-serving for us as elected officials.

We need to actually hear from the public. We've heard from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and what he has to say and what other jurisdictions have, but now we need to move this on so that we can listen to the public.

And I realize that, for the government members, listening to the public isn't their strong suit, that they have the illusion of consultation without the reality of consultation. Hopefully, through this process where we have people come to committee, we've actually been able to listen to people who were at those committees. Unfortunately, in most cases the government chose to not listen to the members of the

public that were at those committees, even sometimes when it's their normal friends and allies they haven't listened to. So, by moving this along, we get the whole process moving.

One of the public hearings we had the other night dealing with a separate bill, someone suggested that—to quote someone who—I forget who the quote was initially taken from—but perfection is the enemy of better. We can tinker around with legislation forever before we actually get it right. In this case, the bill that's introduced by the member from Assiniboia shouldn't be the end product. But it should be the step that gets us towards the end product.

And we need to make that step. We can sit and study things forever and never actually get anywhere. Just, this will allow us to listen to the public. It will allow us to make amendments that we think would make this piece of legislation better, that will allow us to look along with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's report to make sure that anything that isn't in this legislation that should be, we can amend it to make sure it gets in there so that at the end of the day we land up with the best piece of legislation possible that actually does what it sets out to do.

Now, I've heard the members talk a little bit about, well, people that are Cabinet ministers might be concerned that they have a two-year restriction on what they can do after they're no longer in the government. And I think if you talk to most members of the general public, they would think that's a good thing because it generally makes people somewhat upset when they see someone that was the minister of something all of a sudden show up in the private sector working in the field that he was the minister. And there are presently restrictions on when that can happen, but the two-year restriction is certainly not unreasonable.

* (10:50)

So, again, just to reiterate, is the piece of legislation that the member from Assiniboia put forward, is it the perfect be-all-and-end-all that will get us where we need to be with conflict of interest? No, it's not, and we on this side recognize that, at this point, it's an imperfect solution to the problem but it allows us, as I've said, to get to where we need to go and it allows us to get there in a more timely fashion, rather than studying and studying and studying and never getting there because as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner quite rightfully put out there that we

need to have this legislation in place before the next election so that everybody understands the rules going forward, that if they choose not to run because there is a conflict, then so be it.

And, certainly, in this House, we've spent a lot of time talking about some people's potential conflicts of interest and disclosure of certain holdings that weren't, in some people's opinion, public—shouldn't have been public knowledge. Other people thought they were.

Certainly, by proceeding down the road of clearing up some of the mystery as to what sort of holdings need to be reported publicly will clear up the mystery and the confusion and will save a lot of debates in this Chamber as to what that should be.

So we'll support this piece of legislation, recognizing full well that it is not what it will be at the end of the process where there will be, no doubt, amendments made to make this better. But it's a good starting point and therefore we, in fact, will rise in support of it.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I will end my comments and thank you.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): I do appreciate the opportunity to speak, if only for a few minutes. I do want to thank the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) for wrapping up early so I had more than just a few seconds to speak.

In any case, you know, I think when we had that question period, there were some things that were not said and some questions that were not answered that really belie the heart of this debate and I think we should give some attention to that.

I just want to make a few points. First of all, the member who introduced this bill feigned indignation that our government was taking the time required to get it right.

Here we have the members for the other parties even saying, oh, they'll support this bill, even though they know it's wrong. They know it's missing huge sections. They know it's not adequate, and yet they'll support it. That's their decision. I can't necessarily—I certainly don't agree with that decision.

But, in any case, he feigns indignation and yet ignores the very fact that, even in his conflict-of-interest report, it's very clearly laid out that whatever new rules come into effect wouldn't come into effect until after the next election. We have the time. We

have the time to get it right and that's what we need to do and that's what we will do.

Now, I think one thing that we should all ask ourselves, and especially the members opposite should be asking themselves, is, you know, why did we end up with a Legislature that looks like this in terms of such a historic Progressive Conservative majority. Why did that happen? And that's important to think about because we all know why it happened. It happened because a lack of integrity.

So here we have a Conflict of Interest Commissioner, or integrity commissioner perhaps might be a better name for it. We have to understand that ultimately the electorate are the ones who decide. They're the ultimate arbiters of what they perceive to be conflict of interest.

Now, I will agree with the member who introduced this legislation that what we do need is transparency, and so I thank him for that, and we also need teeth—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

In accordance with our rule 24, and as previously announced, I am interrupting debate to put the question on the honourable member for Assiniboia's selected bill.

The question before the House, then, is second reading of Bill 208, The Conflict of Interest Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the motion defeated.

Recorded Vote

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I call for a recorded vote.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have the support of three other members to request a recorded vote?

A recorded vote—he does have the support of three other members. A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the House is second reading of Bill 208, The Conflict of Interest Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Altemeyer, Fletcher, Fontaine, Gerrard, Klassen, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

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

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 13, Nays 32.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The hour is now past 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. However, prior to moving on to the resolution, I do have a statement for the House.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I'm advising the House that I have received a letter from the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) regarding her selected bill for this session.

As a reminder to the House, rule 24 permits each independent member to select one private members' bill per session to proceed to a second reading vote. Rule 24 also requires written notice to be provided to the Speaker regarding the date and time of the vote. This notice must be provided no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled end of the fall sittings.

Accordingly, Bill 229, The Intoxicated Persons Detention Amendment Act, has been selected for a second reading vote for Tuesday, May 22nd, 2018, at 10:55 a.m.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 15—Protecting and Promoting French Language Services

Madam Speaker: The resolution before us this morning now is the resolution Protecting and Promoting French Language Services, being brought forward by the honourable member for St. Johns.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Merci, madame la Présidente. [Thank you, Madam Speaker.]

I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe),

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has made cuts across the province to French language services, including health care, that make it harder for francophone families to access the front line services they deserve while maintaining their language rights and ensure Manitoba preserves its vibrant, strong francophone communities; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government shuttered the bilingual St. Boniface Quick Care Clinic, which actively offered an essential health care service in French to St. Boniface families and seniors; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut nearly \$60,000 in funding for Actionmarguerite personal care home, cutting supports for quality care for St. Boniface seniors; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is closing three emergency rooms across Winnipeg, significantly increasing pressure on the St. Boniface Hospital ER and increasing wait times for St. Boniface families; and

WHEREAS access to French education is a source of pride for the community and represents a history of fighting for French language rights, and the Provincial Government's cuts indicate a deprioritization of French language education in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut the Assistant Deputy Minister's position for the Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF), which undermines the BEF's ability to provide strong French language education supports; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's cuts forced post-secondary tuition to rise by 6.6% for universities in Manitoba, including the Université de Saint-Boniface, and cut an education tax rebate that helped new graduates pay off student loans and find a career in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut funding by more than \$50,000 for Centre Flavie-Laurent, which helped low income families in St. Boniface and East Winnipeg access housewares, furniture, clothing and other basic necessities of life; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's regressive Bill 8 would severely limit revenue for community newspapers, including those that serve the French speaking community; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government slashed funding for the World Trade Centre and Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to reverse its cuts to French language health care, education and community services and to make real investments that support and strengthen Manitoba's Francophone communities for now and the future.

Motion presented.

Ms. Fontaine: Merci, madame la Présidente. C'est un plaisir de parler de cette résolution ce matin

Translation

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure to speak to this resolution this morning.

English

Our colleagues on this side of the House certainly value and understand the importance of entrenching and lifting up Manitoba francophone communities not only here in Winnipeg, more specifically in St. Boniface, but certainly across the province.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

On this side of the House, we know that language, cultural preservation and education are the keys to keeping the Manitoba francophone community strong and proud and vibrant. I'm pleased to be able to put forward this resolution today that supports the francophone community across Manitoba.

I think it's important that we also recognize that the French community, the francophone community in St. Boniface, deputy House speaker, has the highest concentration of French speakers in our province. And certainly I know that any of us in this Chamber, when we have the opportunity to go to St. Boniface, and you go over the bridge, there is a certain—a different spirit and feel in St. Boniface, and certainly I think that if you are attuned to it, you can feel the pride of the francophone community in St. Boniface. And I do find that when I find myself going to St. Boniface, I try to practise my French a little bit more when I'm there. I feel that I have the permission to use what is, essentially, my broken French. I have forgotten a lot of my French language because I haven't actually had the opportunity *pour parler en français beaucoup* [*to speak French very much*].

We know that St. Boniface prides itself on being able to offer front-line services to Manitobans in both official languages, something that was certainly strategic and fought for and adhered to for many, many years. And the reality is, and why this resolution this morning is so important, that St. Boniface's, you know, uniqueness and essentialness of providing services in—to Manitobans in both official languages is actually becoming more difficult under the Pallister government and under the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and under the francophone minister.

I would suggest to you, deputy—House—speaker, that the lack—the Premier's lack of consideration, and consideration—is showing disrespect to francophone Manitobans when we look at the cuts that the Premier and his minister have done in respect of French language services and those front-line services that Manitobans, francophone Manitobans, can access.

And so let me just list off a couple for the record here. So, certainly, I think one of the ones that I would imagine we can all agree in this House is the closure of the St. Boniface QuickCare Clinic, which offered their services in French to individuals that came to their clinic seeking those services in French. And I would suspect, and I know this to be true, that anybody in this House that, you know, finds themselves having to go to a QuickCare clinic when they existed or, you know, a walk-in clinic or the hospital, at the best of times, going to the doctor when you're in a physically vulnerable state, trying to navigate language to be able to kind of figure out and share with and disseminate with your health-care

provider what's going on with your body, particularly when you're really sick, is, at the best of times, difficult.

* (11:20)

So imagine, then, when we have Manitobans that their first language is French trying to navigate between not having access to those services in their language to talk about what's going on with them and, again, particularly when they're sick.

I think that everyone in this Chamber can appreciate, really, how frustrating that would be but certainly, actually, how scary that would be that you wouldn't have the language to share what's wrong with you. And when any of us is sick or our loved ones are sick, our children are sick, all we want is the best health care possible. And certainly I would suggest to the House that being able to provide those front-line health-care services to folks in French is—contributes to the best health care that an individual can get.

So that's just one. That's just one thing. So the other thing that the closure of the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic does is that it puts additional stresses on the St. Boniface Hospital ER. And we know that St. Boniface is additionally put under stress because of all the other changes—really fast, egregious changes—that are going on here in Manitoba. So, you know, again, I think I really do want to kind of reiterate that the Premier's actions threaten the success and history and vibrancy of French language rights and education in our province.

I know that we've brought it up several times on this side of the House—Mr. Deputy Speaker, you've heard us many times bring it up—how egregious the Premier's cut of the assistant deputy minister's position for the Bureau de l'éducation française, how, really, that is kind of the quintessential example of the kind of dismissive, disrespectful overall behaviour of the Premier and his minister towards francophone Manitobans.

But we can continue to add to that, and I will add that the increased tuition costs for Université de Saint-Boniface for their students and then, again, eliminating international-student health coverage also contributes to this kind of overall dismissive, disrespectful response to francophone Manitobans.

We can even add—so we've covered health, a little bit of health—just a little bit. But—and we've covered a little bit of education. But even, deputy—

House—Speaker, we can add with Bill 8 in respect of the—sorry, I'm not sure if that was Bill 8—to be able to advertise—yes—in their language. Again, I apologize for that; I wanted to make sure that I was accurate on that—is another example of kind of just this lack of concern that francophone Manitobans actually have access to understand what we in this House or more specifically, what the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his minister are doing by advertising in local newspapers in French language, in the language that they best understand. We heard some really good presentations at committee, and one of the committee—one of the presenters talked about the ability—how it is integral to democracy to be able—for citizens to be able to know what is going on in this province in respect of what the government is doing. And the Premier has taken that away as well.

You know, I think that's why the—today's resolution is so important and that we are urging the Premier and his minister—you know, I would urge the minister to stand up for francophone Manitobans and to reverse all of the cuts that the Premier has done to French language services and instead of cutting, as is what the Premier likes to do, actually make meaningful investments in Manitoba's French community. We all fare better when we have a community that is vibrant and that is secure and thrives and flourishes in their language. We all do better in Manitoba.

And I—you know, I have faith that people will start to see the errors of their way and reverse these cuts and actually stand up for francophone Manitobans, because as I said, that contributes to all of us as Manitobans and what is our collective heritage. Even if you don't speak French or you speak broken French like me, it is our collective heritage as Manitobans, and so je dis merci pour [*I say thank you for*]—

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

Questions

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I wanted to thank the member for bringing this important resolution here before the House. I think it's incredibly important. It's important to us as a caucus and to all members, I think.

She touched a little bit on this: the St. Boniface QuickCare Clinic, health-care services in general. I think this is a perfect example of this government cutting first and then all of a sudden going, oh, wait, this is important to that community.

Could she just expand on that important issue?

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I thank the member for Concordia for his amazing question.

So I did touch on this a little bit, and I think it is important to just reiterate that everybody has the right to access health care in the language that they understand and that they speak. As I said, all of us that go to the doctor have oftentimes a very difficult time navigating the language in respect of what's going on with our health, and I would suggest to this health—this House that our health is one of the most deepest and intimate concerns that we have to ensure that we're there for our families, and so, you know, Manitobans have the right to access health care in their language, which, in this case, is French.

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): Merci, monsieur le Vice-président. Quand le NDP était au pouvoir, les francophones payaient parmi les plus hauts impôts du pays. Mais ils devaient quand même tolérer les temps d'attente pour les services d'urgence les plus longs du pays. Pourquoi est-ce que la députée pense que son parti a maintenant le droit de nous donner des leçons sur comment gérer le système de santé?

Translation

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the NDP was in office, francophones paid among the highest taxes in the country. But they still had to tolerate the longest wait times for emergency services in the country. Why does the member think that her party now has the right to give us any lessons on how to manage the health-care system?

Ms. Fontaine: Well, thank you for the question. I mean it's erroneous on a myriad of different fronts, but you know, we invested in our health-care system. I know that members opposite—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —are going to tout the benefits of the women's health—hospital when it opens up—or, the Women's Hospital and they're going to—

An Honourable Member: They'll be there cutting ribbons.

Ms. Fontaine: They're going to be cutting ribbons and they're going to take—stake claim for that, but that was under our watch—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: That was our commitment. That was our commitment to the—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —Mature Women's Centre. it was our commitment to lactation consultants, all of which they have cut, and you know, I—maybe the members opposite should take lessons from us and that is to invest in health care.

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

Mr. Wiebe: As I said, Mr. Speaker, you know, it was this government that cut those services in St. Boniface, and then all of a sudden when the community said this is an important thing to our community, all of a sudden they said, oh, wait, I guess French language health-care services are important, and so it was this government that once again cut first and then started asking questions and started realizing the importance. And they're doing the same now by closing Concordia Hospital and putting more pressure on St. Boniface and weakening the health-care services.

But what I did want to ask, Madam—Mr. Speaker, is with regards to—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —the senior population, which we know is growing in Manitoba. It's important for them to have services. Can the member expand on that?

Ms. Fontaine: Again, miigwech to the member, my amazing colleague from Concordia. You know, we know that seniors in many respects are actually some of the most vulnerable and isolated and marginalized of Manitoba and actually across Canada and actually across the world.

* (11:30)

And so imagine when you're feeling vulnerable, not to be able to—and not to be able to access those

services that you rely on in your language, in your first language. This is something that we should all take concern with.

I know that as an indigenous woman, we uplift our elders and ensure that they're taken care of, and we have a responsibility in this House—

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I have a question. Before I ask it, this is a pretty important subject and I'd like to have leave to make sure that we have a full hour of debate, and so the debate would go 'til about 12:15.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Has there been leave to go to 12:15?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. I hear a no, so denied.

Mr. Gerrard: My question to the MLA for St. Johns has to do with the shortage of French immersion teachers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member, can you 'repeal' the question?

Mr. Gerrard: I would ask the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) to comment on the shortage of French immersion teachers.

Ms. Fontaine: Miigwech, Deputy Speaker, and I say miigwech to be—merci to the member for River Heights. Certainly, I think that the shortages of French immersion teachers is a reflection, again, on the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the minister's lack of commitment towards French languages.

Instead of supporting and recruiting and retaining French immersion teachers, we—the Premier's created a situation in Manitoba where, actually, school divisions and schools are being forced to cut particular positions.

And here we are—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —talking about French immersion, which, if our children don't have access to their language and contribute to the overall official languages—

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

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Merci, monsieur le Vice-président. Quand le NPD était au pouvoir, le taux de décrochage à l'école secondaire était au deuxième rang des provinces. La députée pense-t-elle que ceci était dans l'intérêt des francophones?

Translation

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When the NDP was in office, the high school dropout rate was the second highest among the provinces. Does the member think this was in the interest of francophones?

Ms. Fontaine: I'm not entirely sure what the member is getting to. Again, I know that the member for—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes) and the member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard) are trying to, kind of, go back and spin what they'd like to do in respect of our record, in respect of support to our health-care system and to our education.

The bottom line is that we invest in people. We invest in Manitobans, which includes francophone Manitobans. And, you know, if you see the development when you go into St. Boniface and you feel that spirit and you feel that pride from francophone Manitobans, who do you think invested in that? We did.

Mr. Wiebe: It is unbelievable here that we're talking about important French language services in Manitoba, an issue that we consider very important, and this member wants to talk about other issues, wants to talk about issues that aren't pertinent to what we're debating here today.

I hope that members—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —beyond just asking the questions in French, could actually focus on the issue and focus on what's important to those speakers of French in our province. And apparently they don't want to do that.

I do want to do that, and I want to ask what the implications of the government's cuts to government notices in newspapers have on those French

communities that rely on those local newspapers, like La Liberté.

Ms. Fontaine: Again, miigwech for a really important question. As I stated earlier, when we don't have those notices in community newspapers across the province, but particularly in French, it is egregious to think how are citizens supposed to access information in respect of what is going on in this House, and what the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his minister are doing in respect of the very lives of French francophone Manitobans.

So that is a huge impact on the government's bill right now that is before the House, in being able to disseminate really key information on programs and services and bills that this government is doing, that will certainly affect francophone—

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

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Merci, monsieur le Vice-président. La députée sait-elle que tous les services qui étaient offerts aux cliniques express de Saint-Boniface sont maintenant offerts au centre de santé de Saint-Boniface, un site entièrement bilingue?

Translation

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Does the member know that all the services that were offered at the St. Boniface QuickCare clinics are now offered at the St. Boniface Health Centre, which is completely bilingual?

Ms. Fontaine: So, again, here's an example of members opposite trying to stake claim to work that we did. And actually, I want to talk about, and I want to honour, the former member for St. Boniface who actually was so committed to St. Boniface and actually fought—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —for that. He fought for that—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: So, while they want to try and stake claim on our work, I would suggest to them that they actually be honest and look at the cuts that they're doing and how they're actually undoing all of Greg's work.

Mr. Wiebe: You know—and it's—and I just want to pick up where the member left off, because it was the work of a strong member from St. Boniface in this Chamber who, when this government cut health services—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

There's a lot of heckling going on here. We want to—we're almost going to wrap up the question period here so we can get on to debate, so I would ask everybody to be—for your co-operation to have some decorum in this Legislature.

Mr. Wiebe: And I'd ask these members to take a page out of their Premier's (Mr. Pallister) book when he gives respects—the respect to members, and especially those members who work hard for their constituencies. And when this government cut those health services in French, it was the community, along with a strong member for St. Boniface, that fought to get them back. We're going to get another strong member for St. Boniface to keep doing that here in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, on a question.

Ms. Fontaine: So, well, I want to just pick up on his comment/question. And I think it is so important as we go into a by-election to actually acknowledge the importance of having an—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —individual in this House that is committed to francophone Manitobans. And as I've said, I'm really excited about our amazing candidate who—French is her first language. She is one meeting away from her Ph.D. She is—lives in point—in St. Boniface. She's absolutely committed to francophone Manitobans, and we're so excited that she's going to be sitting with us on this side of the House very soon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for—the time for questions has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for debate. Any speakers?

The honourable member for—who—speakers?

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): Merci, monsieur le Vice-président. Merci aussi aux membres de notre Assemblée législative du Manitoba pour avoir

l'opportunité de parler sur la résolution du membre de St. John—ou peut-être en français, c'est Saint-Jean—en tous les cas, une résolution, une proposition qu'elle veut faire passer.

J'aimerais, avant de commencer, reconnaître que nous sommes sur le territoire du numéro 1 et au cœur de la nation métisse. Et j'aimerais aussi reconnaître la présence de la communauté franco-manitobaine, ce qui est *[inaudible]*

Avec cette proposition proposée et les questions que l'opposition a demandées, ces questions—et particulièrement, cette proposition est trop tard. Trop tard, monsieur le Vice-président. Il y deux mots pour eux, monsieur le Vice-président, deux mots : dix-sept ans. Dix-sept ans que le NPD a fait rien—rien. Ils ont été les experts de dépenser de l'argent—l'argent durement gagné des Manitobains—et rien à montrer, rien.

Ça fait deux ans que les Manitobains ont élu un gouvernement de progressistes conservateurs, et dans ces deux ans, notre gouvernement a fait plus—en deux ans—que les NPD ont fait dans leurs dix-sept ans. Nous étions élus à fixer les finances, réparer les services et reconstruire l'économie. Je répète : à fixer les finances, réparer les services et reconstruire l'économie. Nous faisons ce que nous sommes censés faire.

* (11:40)

Au sujet de la protection et à faire promouvoir les services en français, pourquoi est-ce que le NPD pense moins de ce sujet maintenant? Ils ont eu dix-sept ans, monsieur le Vice-président. Avant de parler au sujet des fautes du NPD et des mesures correctes que nous avons faites comme gouvernement, je voudrais vous dire à tous dans cette Chambre que nous apprécions les contributions que les francophones apportent au Manitoba.

Comme tous les Manitobains, les francophones ont subi une hausse de leurs impôts et une dégradation des services de première ligne en raison de la mauvaise gestion des NPD. Nous ne pouvons pas changer le passé. Mais, monsieur le vice-président, comment et pourquoi les services gouvernementaux sont devenus faibles? C'est parce que les services que dépendent tous les Manitobains et Manitobaines ont été mis en péril après dix-sept ans de mauvaise gestion par le NPD.

L'opposition et la députée de St. John, comme ses amis, sont devenus des experts—experts à créer des mythes. Ils veulent faire avoir peur aux

Manitobains avec ces réductions que notre gouvernement fait et qu'il y a des licenciements des travailleurs de premières ligne, mais c'est tout faux.

Monsieur le Vice-président, actuellement, si vous voyez dans le Budget 2018, notre gouvernement—[interjection]

Translation

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you also to the members of our Manitoba Legislative Assembly for giving me the opportunity to speak to the resolution of the member for St. Johns—or maybe in French it's Saint-Jean – in any case, it is a resolution, a proposition that she would like to have passed.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 1 Territory and at the heart of the Metis nation. And I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Franco-Manitoban community, which is [inaudible]

With this proposition and the questions asked by the opposition, these questions—and this proposition in particular are too late. Too late, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are two words for them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, two words: 17 years. Seventeen years during which the NDP did nothing—nothing. They were the experts at spending money, money that was hard earned by Manitobans, and they have nothing to show for it, nothing. It has been two years now since Manitobans elected a progressive conservative government, and in those two years our government has done more, in two years, than the NDP did in their 17 years. We were elected to fix the finances, improve services and to rebuild the economy. I repeat, to fix finances, improve services and rebuild the economy. We are doing what we're supposed to do.

When it comes to protecting and promoting French-language services, why does the NDP think less of this now? They had 17 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Before I talk about the NDP's mistakes and the corrective measures we have taken as a government, I would like to say to all in this Chamber that we appreciate the contributions made by francophones to Manitoba. Like all Manitobans, francophones have seen their taxes increase and front-line services deteriorate because of bad management by the NDP.

We cannot change the past. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how and why did government services become so poor? It is because the services that

all Manitobans depend on were put in peril after 17 years of bad management by the NDP.

The opposition, and the member for St. Johns, like her friends, have become experts in creating myths. They want to scare Manitobans with the reductions that our government has been making and are saying that front-line workers are being let go, but all of this is false. Mr. Deputy Speaker, right now if you look at the 2018 budget, our government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Reyes: —dépense [inaudible] plus que 10 pourcent dans les départements dans l'éducation, la santé et les familles. Notre gouvernement a aussi annoncé que nous allons écouter aux fonctionnaires comment améliorer les services qu'on donne au public. Parce qu'on a commencé à réduire en haut dans notre gestion, on peut sauver et investir dans nos fonctionnaires.

Je ne vois pas pourquoi nous débattons de cette proposition, parce que nous avons élargi la capacité bilingue de notre gouvernement—

Translation

—is spending [inaudible] more than 10 per cent in the departments of Education, Health and Families.

Our government has also said that we are going to listen to civil servants to see how we can improve services to the public. Because we started to reduce management from the top down, we can save and invest money in our civil servants.

I do not see why we are debating this proposition, because we have increased the bilingual capacity of our government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for—
Order. The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order regarding the translation services. I don't speak French and it's a spotty translation of what is being said today. And I think I deserve to understand what is being said, as a member of this House.

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

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): Yes, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The honourable member for Rossmere.

Mr. Micklefield: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's curious to me how the member is able to discern that the translation is spotty when he doesn't speak the language that is being translated. So seems to me there's no legitimate point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On that point of the order, I would say that to the member from Tyndall Park that we have translators in the—at Hansard, translating the French to English and they're doing the best they can. And they're working hard to make sure that they get translated back to the members. So it's not a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Reyes: Je vais continuer, monsieur le président, et je veux dire merci aux traducteurs ici et aux traductrices aussi. Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Nous allons retourner à la proposition du membre de St. John's, elle n'est pas ici, mais je vais parler.

Je ne vois pas pourquoi nous débattons de cette proposition car nous avons élargi la capacité bilingue de notre gouvernement par l'embauche d'un total de 805 en 2017 comparé 744 l'année précédente—

Translation

I am going to continue, Mr. Speaker, and I would also like to thank the interpreter. Thank you very much.

We are going to return now to the resolution by the member for St. Johns. She's not here, but I will continue.

I do not see why we are debating this proposition, because we have increased the bilingual capacity of our government by hiring 805 employees in 2017, compared to 744 in the previous year—

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member from Tyndall Park, on a point of order.

Mr. Marcelino: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There should be no reference to the absence or presence of a member in this Chamber, at any time,

during the speech of another. So I'm just raising that point. And I'm being mocked by members opposite.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member does have a point of order. We should not be referring to the presence or absence of a member who is—

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Reyes: Merci le vice-président. M'excuser à mon ami de Tyndall Park.

Monsieur le vice-président, nous écoutons aux Manitobains, et notre gouvernement prendra les étapes nécessaires pour assurer que les services publics soient durables ainsi qu'efficaces pour tous les Manitobains, ce qui inclut les francophones.

Les gouvernements responsables prennent des décisions qui sont à la fois difficiles et nécessaires pour assurer la protection des services de qualité ainsi que durables pour leurs citoyens. La conséquence des décisions qui ont été prises par le gouvernement précédent est que notre gouvernement a hérité une dette énorme.

Et comme j'ai dit, nous avons commencé l'œuvre ardue de réparer les dommages, pour corriger la piste et pour diriger vers un équilibre budgétaire durable. Au fur et à mesure de tout cela, nous avons continué notre appui pour la communauté francophone.

Cela inclut des appuis pour la langue française, l'éducation et les services de santé. Nous sommes ici pour défendre les droits et écouter aux concerns de la communauté francophone du Manitoba. Depuis l'entrée de notre gouvernement PC, nous avons accompli plus pour faire avancer la communauté francophone que le NDP l'a en 17 années au pouvoir.

Par exemple, notre gouvernement PC a passé la Loi sur l'appui à l'épanouissement de la langue franco-manitobaine, quelque chose qui n'a jamais été une priorité de Greg Selinger—leur supposé ami et le député néodémocrate. Ce projet de loi était l'œuvre la plus importante pour la communauté depuis la publication du rapport Chartier en 1998 entrepris par le gouvernement Filmon.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

En parlant de l'ancien premier ministre Gary Filmon, je dois vous rappeler—c'était un

gouvernement PC qui a créé le programme des candidats des provinces—the Provincial Nominee Program—un programme copié par les autres provinces et une grande raison que le Manitoba a beaucoup d'immigrants.

C'est une grande raison qu'il y a beaucoup d'immigrants des pays africains – quelques qui sont des nations francophones. Et le NPD, toutes ces années, ils ont dit qu'ils sont les champions de l'immigration. Mais nous savons le NPD qui a créé de grands arriérés des applications, ils ont créé des problèmes et des tensions pour les familles et les candidats à cause de ça.

Heureusement, le grand arriéré n'est plus. Merci au ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation (Monsieur Wishart) pour la promesse continue à améliorer la convivialité du programme Candidats du Manitoba.

Au sujet de l'éducation, nous étions le pire. NPD a failli dans la formation académique dans nos jeunes. Le résultat de cela est que, comparé à leurs voisins provinciaux, la compétence en lecture et sciences des étudiants manitobains était un an de retard, et un an et demi en compétence mathématique.

Et au sujet de maintenir le français dans notre province, notre gouvernement PC demeure engagé envers de l'éducation en langue française et la vitalité culturelle francophone partout au Manitoba. C'est pourquoi le financement provincial de la division scolaire franco-manitobaine a augmenté de 3,2 pourcent cette année.

Quand il s'agit de la santé, pour offrir des services dans les deux langues officielles, le projet des soins primaires a travaillé avec le centre de santé de Saint-Boniface pour assurer la transition des services entièrement offerts par l'ancienne clinique express de Saint-Boniface.

Est-ce qu'on peut améliorer nos services aux hôpitaux? Absolument—et on commence avec l'offre des services dans les deux langues officielles, comme dans le centre de santé de Saint-Boniface.

Finalement, je me souviens du soutien écrasant que notre gouvernement a reçu au sujet du projet de loi 5, Loi sur l'appui de l'épanouissement de la Francophonie manitobaine. Mon nom n'était pas reconnu par les membres du public qui ont participé, mais pour le record, j'étais là, et j'ai écouté à tous les présentateurs.

Malheureusement, le dernier présentateur est mort le 12 septembre 2017. André Doumbé, originaire du Cameroun en Afrique, et il a représenté l'organisation des communautés africaines au Manitoba, aussi connue sous le nom d'ACOMI. Monsieur Doumbé était un grand partisan du projet de loi 5. Repose en paix, monsieur!

Je suis vraiment heureux que j'ai appris le français dans l'école, madame—monsieur le vice-président. Ma sœur était mon inspiration d'apprendre le français. Nous étions, nous deux, dans un programme d'immersion à l'école Sisler. J'ai appris mon—le français, et des sujets en français comme l'histoire, mathématiques, sciences et l'éducation physique, tout en français.

*(11:50)

Notre gouvernement prendra les étapes nécessaires pour assurer que les services publics soient durables ainsi qu'efficaces pour tous les Manitobains, ce qui inclut les francophones. Nous allons fixer les finances, réparer les services et reconstruire l'économie.

Merci.

Translation

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I apologize to my friend from Tyndall Park. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are listening to Manitobans, and our government will take the steps necessary to ensure that public services are sustainable and efficient for all Manitobans, which includes francophones.

Responsible governments make decisions that are both difficult and necessary to ensure the protection of quality sustainable services for their citizens.

The consequence of the decisions made by the previous government is that our government inherited an enormous debt. And as I have said, we have started the arduous work of repairing the damage, changing course and moving toward a sustainable, balanced budget.

At the same time, we have maintained our support for the francophone community. That includes support for the French language and education and health services in French. We are here to defend the rights and listen to the concerns of Manitoba's francophone community.

Since our PC government came into office, we have accomplished more for the francophone community than the NDP did in 17 years in power.

For example, our PC government passed The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act, something that was never a priority for Greg Selinger, their supposed friend and the NDP member.

That bill was the most important initiative since the publication of the Chartier report in 1998 under the Filmon government. And speaking of former Premier Gary Filmon, I should remind you that it is a PC government that developed the Provincial Nominee Program, a program that was copied by other provinces and one of the main reasons Manitoba has so many immigrants.

It is one of the main reasons we have many immigrants from African nations, some of whom are francophone. And all those years the NDP said they were the champions of immigration, but we know that the NDP created a great backlog of immigration applications, and created problems and tensions for families and candidates.

Thankfully, this backlog no longer exists. Thank you to the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart) for his promise to continue making the Provincial Nominee Program more user-friendly.

With regard to education, we were the worst. The NDP got a failing grade with respect to the academic performance of our young people, and the result is that compared to their provincial neighbours, they were a year behind in their reading skills and science, and a year and a half behind in mathematics.

With respect to maintaining French in our province, our PC government remains committed to French-language education and to the cultural vitality of Francophone communities throughout Manitoba. That is why provincial funding for the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine was increased by 3.2 per cent this year.

When it comes to health and offering services in the two official languages, the primary health care project worked with the St. Boniface Health Centre to ensure the transition of services formerly offered by the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic.

Can services in our hospitals be improved? Absolutely, and we are beginning with the offer of services in both official languages as is the case at the St. Boniface Health Centre.

And finally, I remember the overwhelming support our government received for The Francophone

Community Enhancement and Support Act. My name was not recognized by the members of the public who participated, but for the record, I was there and I listened to all the presenters.

Unfortunately, the last presenter passed away on September 12, 2017. André Doumbé was from Cameroon in Africa, and he represented the organization of African communities in Manitoba known as ACOMI. Mr. Doumbé was a strong supporter of Bill 5. May he rest in peace.

I am really happy that I learned French while I was in school, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My sister inspired me to learn French. We were both in an immersion program at Sisler High School. I learned French and took subjects like history, mathematics, science and phys. ed., all in French.

Our government will take the steps necessary to ensure that public services are sustainable and efficient for all Manitobans, including francophones. We are going to fix the finances, improve services and rebuild the economy.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): It's a pleasure to find just a few moments to speak this morning about a very important resolution brought forward by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine).

And it is very important, not just because our caucus has a long-standing commitment to francophone Manitobans, and that could not have been better exemplified by the former member for St. Boniface, who, you know, as I said in my—during the question period, members opposite can say what they want about the former member for St. Boniface, and they certainly have over the years, but I don't think there's anyone in this Chamber that can question his commitment to St. Boniface as a francophone community and as a distinct community within this province. And, in fact, I would argue that even after the former member became—was no longer premier and sat in this Chamber, I think his activism and commitment to that community only increased and only grew bigger.

And I know I spent a lot of time talking to community groups and individuals within St. Boniface, and, I mean, the election results were a testament to that. I think it wasn't so much a

comment on the work as premier as it was of his commitment for that community.

And, again, there's no better example of that than the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic, which, you know, I've talked about in this House because it affected my community, but the member for St. Boniface stood up immediately and didn't make a lot of noise about it, didn't, you know, cause a lot of waves in terms of the politics in this place, but just went to work behind the scenes getting that service restored back in St. Boniface. And I do give him a lot of credit for that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we do think this is so important. It's important now because we need to have that strong voice for St. Boniface back in this Chamber and we look forward to seeing that soon because, quite frankly, the francophone community is looking for a champion, is looking for somebody that can stand up and stand against this government's total disrespect and total disregard for the francophone community. You know, they see it happening in their community, they see it day by day.

And, again, it could not have been more—a better example of this than when this Premier (Mr. Pallister) cut the assistant deputy minister's position for the bureau d'éducation française and failed to act on the expansion of French immersion capacity and the teachers who are able to provide those services.

These are issues that cut to the absolute core of who we are as Manitobans, who the francophone community sees themselves as part of that tradition, and it's just so absolutely vital to preserving that important part of ourselves as Manitobans. It's a source of pride. It is who we are. The history of fighting for French language rights goes back in this province. And it just shows an absolute disrespect when this government deprioritizes those important services.

You know, we had some time with the Minister of Education in Estimates, asked about French language education, talked about French immersion, and he confirmed numbers are going up. There's more interest. There's a growing community, more newcomers coming to Canada, more people who want to see French—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —language preserved in this province. And yet the Education Minister conceded that there

was no additional funding or plans to deal with this growing need in the community. And that's just not right, Mr. Speaker.

We know that BEF has played a historic role in developing this province's French education policy. And in the 1990s, in fact, it was BEF that was responsible for developing Manitoba's first French language education system, the DSFM, which we know has been a great advocate for French language services in this province.

It shows that disrespect by cutting that position of the assistant deputy minister, and again, it was done in a way, just like the French—the health-care services in French, it was done in a way that—and, you know, I think the member's line of questioning or line of comments today, you know: well, we, you know, cut taxes, you know, bottom line—that's all he focuses on. Manitobans didn't say that to them in the last election. What they said was, protect front-line services. [*interjection*] You know what, Madam—Mr. Speaker, and the members opposite are heckling. They're not respecting this—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the members opposite will, you know—you know, they think that if they come into this House, and they won't talk about the substance of this legislation, they'll only talk about the bottom line. That's disrespectful to the francophone community. We are going to stand up for them at every opportunity, and, you know what—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —the members opposite can chirp all they want. They know—I think they're chirping because they know that they're not going to support this resolution because they don't support the francophone community in this province. And, to be honest, Mr. Speaker, I find that incredibly disrespectful and shameful on the part of this government.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Monsieur le président, c'est triste quand nous avons des coupures aussi sévères dans l'appui du gouvernement du Manitoba pour ceux qui sont francophones et ceux qui veulent parler français dans notre province.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, it is sad when there are such severe cuts to the support of the government of Manitoba

for those who are francophone and those who want to speak French in our province.

English

We've built a multicultural society in Manitoba and in Canada in good measure because the francophone community, in our province and across Canada, has been ready to fight for its rights. The leadership has resulted in a Manitoba and a Canada which is much more accepting and understanding of the French language and culture and this, in turn, has resulted in a Manitoba and Canada in which we, as a province and a country, have developed to respect and understand a very broad range of cultures and languages.

From our indigenous cultures and languages to the many cultures and languages around the world, and that has built a society which today is diverse, which is able to reach out and work with people around the world. It is encouraging that more attention's being paid to indigenous languages and cultures in Canada today. It is encouraging when we have a federal government which is paying more attention to the support of French language and culture in Canada.

C'est difficile quand nous avons une province qui coupe les services de langue française et coupe l'appui de la—pour la culture francophone au Manitoba. Après la coupure du gouvernement Pallister, le Bureau de l'éducation française a perdu des personnes. Maintenant, le sous-ministre adjoint qui était responsable pour le Bureau de l'éducation française et pour l'éducation française au Manitoba est parti et n'existe pas. Le budget pour le Bureau de l'éducation française a été diminué par 300 000 dollars. C'est des temps difficiles pour les Manitobains qui demandent un Bureau de l'éducation française qui est fort.

Translation

It is difficult when we have a Province that cuts services in French and cuts the support for francophone culture in Manitoba. After the cuts from the Pallister government to the Bureau de l'éducation française—two people were lost. Now the deputy assistant minister, who was responsible for the Bureau de l'éducation française and for French education in Manitoba, he is gone. That position

does not exist. The budget for the Bureau de l'éducation française has decreased by \$300,000. It is very difficult times for francophones in Manitoba, who are asking Bureau de l'éducation française to a strong representative.

English

There's a shortage of French immersion teachers. Why is this? Pourquoi? [Why?] We've had governments for two decades which haven't provided sufficient attention to ensuring sufficient numbers of French immersion teachers are being trained and ready to participate in promoting French immersion in Manitoba. This, at a time when we have a 4 per cent annual growth in the number of students wanting to attend French immersion.

We have, sadly, cuts to Actionmarguerite. We have a situation where the St. Boniface hospital ER is in difficulties because of premature closures of the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre and the Victoria Hospital ER.

We have a rich history of French language and culture in this province. We have important organizations like CDEM who are doing an amazing job.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sitting down now so there can be a vote.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Merci, monsieur le Vice-président. C'est un plaisir en cette belle matinée de parler avec mes collègues et partager quelques mots au sujet de la belle langue française. Depuis les deux dernières années, notre gouvernement a déjà accompli plus pour cet—

Translation

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure on this beautiful morning to speak with my colleagues and to share a few words with respect to the beautiful French language. In the last two years, our government has already accomplished more for this—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order. When this matter is before the House, the honourable member for Fort Richmond has 10 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 17, 2018

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolutions	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Res. 15–Protecting and Promoting French Language Services	
Second Readings–Public Bills		Fontaine	2391
Bill 208–The Conflict of Interest Act		Questions	
Fletcher	2382	Wiebe	2393
Questions		Fontaine	2393
Nesbitt	2384	Reyes	2393
Fletcher	2384	Gerrard	2394
Teitsma	2384	Guillemard	2395
T. Marcelino	2385	Teitsma	2395
Debate		Debate	
Nesbitt	2386	Reyes	2396
Lamoureux	2388	Wiebe	2400
Lindsey	2388	Gerrard	2401
Teitsma	2389	Guillemard	2402
Speaker's Statement			
Driedger	2390		

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

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