

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

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 24, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

United Empire Loyalists Day

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate United Empire Loyalists Day, which will officially be commemorated on June the 12th by the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.

The United Empire Loyalists were, for the most part, settlers in Thirteen Colonies who chose to remain loyal to the British Crown at the outbreak of the American Revolution.

The Loyalists came from every class, occupation and economic status. There were English, Dutch, German, French Huguenot, First Nations, Scottish and African.

In 1783, the Treaty of Paris recognized the independence of the United States of America and, as a result, Loyalists were now faced with an outdated belief system and were therefore exiled from the society. Loyalists who remained in the third colonies during the revolution were considered traitors and were threatened and stripped of their property if they were too vocal in their beliefs.

Of the approximately 70,000 Loyalists who left the United States, about 50,000 went to the British colonies of Quebec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

The Loyalist tradition and commitment to the parliamentary system of government and the

common law legal system influenced the passage of the Constitutional Act of 1971, now known as the Canada Act. This framework laid the foundations for the future development of Canada as a nation.

Today, we are reminded of the spirit of these early pioneers who, because of their loyalty to the British Crown, sacrificed their lives, homes and professions to migrate to a new land with hopes of building a new life for themselves and their descendants.

I encourage all Manitobans to join me in acknowledging United Empire Loyalists' Day in Manitoba on June 12th, 2018, and to recognize these historic contributions that the United Empire Loyalists have made here in Manitoba.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I thank the minister for her statement.

In May of 1783, the first United Empire Loyalists arrived on the shores of Canada to take refuge under the British Crown in Parr Town, Saint John, Nova Scotia. After approximately 50,000 Loyalist refugees were settled throughout Canada, their arrival profoundly altered our nation's development. Upon Confederation in 1870, many of these Loyalist settlers immigrated into our province of Manitoba and were known as the United Empire Loyalists.

They arrived in Canada seeking a new beginning and represent a part of the mosaic that makes up both our nation and our province. Through their hard work, they established a vibrant economic and multicultural community in Manitoba, and their descendants continue that tradition today.

United Empire Loyalists Day also speaks to the importance of honouring our ongoing commitment to the path of reconciliation where all peoples can come together to respect and honour each other's origins and human rights.

I would like to recognize the United Empire Loyalists for their incredible important contributions they have had in building Canada, in creating a unique aspect of our country, our province and our cultural heritage.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Next month, we will commemorate the ancestors of 6 million Canadians, the Loyalists, who fled the colonies during the American War of Independence and remained faithful to the Crown. These refugees who sacrificed their homes and communities over 200 years ago had their lives forever changed, and thus many indigenous peoples suffered terribly.

Madam Speaker, it's incredibly important that we remember the faults of our collective past and move towards a future of understanding and reconciliation. This House often talks about residential schools and the scarring acts that have affected generations of indigenous families. We need to move forward by recognizing our collective past and work towards this reconciliation.

With that, we also cannot forget the spirit in which our indigenous people first welcomed us. Madam Speaker, we must carry this attitude with us forward today, especially because of the anti-refugee rhetoric that is being spewed by leaders all around the world. We, as Canadians, know that this is not the way.

I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward this ministerial statement and thank and welcome those who have joined us today here in the gallery.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'd like to ask leave to speak to the ministerial statement.

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

Mr. Fletcher: Seneca, 'caguya', 'okanaga', Oneida, Mohawk, Tuscarora: these are six of the confederate nations that helped the Empire Loyalists during the second British civil war, sometimes referred to as the War of Independence for the United States and American Revolution. But what it was was, I would argue, a mistake.

Seventeen seventy-five–1776 was a long time ago, but I'd like to recognize the–these–the deceased provinces of New Hampshire, Massachusetts,

New York, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and I could go on.

But, Madam Speaker, United Empire Loyalists, I think, have been proven correct: Canada is a better country.

So I ask my American cousins, it's not too late. Join the club. Join the Commonwealth. You could be 60 provinces in North America and be loyal to the Queen. You'd—we could have a great army, great social structure. Our politics would be so much better if we just do what the United Empire Loyalists wanted to do in the first place.

And, by the way, Madam Speaker, the Americans wanted to separate because they don't want to pay their taxes for the military expenditures of Britain incurred to defend them from the French. That's right, they didn't want to pay their taxes. Some things never change.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

Manitoba 4-H Spring Highway Cleanup

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): On behalf of Manitoba Agriculture and Manitoba Infrastructure, it gives me great pleasure to inform the House of the 32nd annual Manitoba 4-H spring highway cleanup. The cleanup will take place this weekend, and therefore I urge motorists to demonstrate caution when travelling our highways.

Manitoba Agriculture and Manitoba Infrastructure are proud to partner with the Manitoba 4-H clubs in this event. The province-wide campaign will take place on Saturday, May the 26th, weather permitting. In case of rain, the alternate date is set for June the 2nd.

All areas are supervised by adult volunteers and are marked with safety signs; 4-H participants will be wearing safety vests and cleanup will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 3 p.m. to ensure clear visibility for our motorists.

Last year, more than 400 volunteers cleaned 264 kilometres of roadsides and ditches, collected 863 bags of trash. Recyclable bottles and cans were also delivered to appropriate locations. Through their

efforts, participating clubs earned \$6,745 to support their programs.

* (13:40)

We will all benefit from the dedication of these young people as they raise money for their programs by collecting unsightly trash along our highways. We're pleased to applaud their resourcefulness while learning about civic pride and environmental stewardship.

Great things can happen when we work together as a team. This is just another example of Manitoba's great teamwork.

We applaud the efforts of Manitoba 4-H clubs and urge motorists to be extra cautious this coming weekend.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Madam Speaker, 4-H's annual highway cleanup is here once again this Saturday. This initiative is among a number of great initiatives organized by 4-H, an organization that helps teach young people leadership, communication skills and self-confidence.

Our NDP team knows that Manitobans take pride in our beautiful landscapes and value clean communities. In previous years we have had around 2,000 bags of trash collected and 425 kilometres of roadside cleaned through 4-H's efforts. All plastics bottles and aluminum cans collected are picked up for recycling.

Madam Speaker, 4-H's annual highway cleanup is an important tradition that teaches our young the value of environmental consciousness and community service. These types of initiatives are an integral part of teaching important skills and values, like civic engagement and leadership, that have inspired many of today's leaders.

Drivers are asked to use extra caution this weekend while on the roads. All work areas are supervised by adult volunteers and marked with safety signs. All 4-H participants will be wearing a safety vest and the cleanup takes place only between the hours of 9 a.m.–

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for the member to speak to the statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, 4-H clubs are a tremendous asset to Manitoba and they are very important in our young people learning skills like leadership, like teamwork, like communication.

My daughter Pauline was in a 4-H club and found it a tremendous learning experience. She got to spend some time on a farm and have a granny mentor who helped her understand what it was like to be on a dairy farm, is where they were, and it was a great experience for her.

The MLA for Kewatinook, her children spent time in 4-H clubs, and I imagine if we circled the MLAs here we would find many more children, leaders who had been in 4-H clubs. It's tremendous learning experience.

This Saturday is the annual cleanup along the roads all over Manitoba. It is a tremendous effort, contributes to our environment, making us an attractive province and attractive roads. It's important for drivers to be aware that the 4-H kids and young people will be out there and to watch out for them.

So I thank, once again, the 4-H teamwork and their wonderful work on behalf of all Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

Wildfire Update

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Safety and security of Manitobans is our continued first priority. I wish to provide the house with an update on the current wildfire fighting activities in the province of Manitoba.

The Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, or EMO, is currently monitoring the provincial wildfire situation. There are a number of wildfires burning in various locations that are impacting multiple communities due to the proximity of fires and related smoke. Multiple provincial, federal, and local authority agencies and non-governmental organizations are engaged in responding to the fires.

Increased fire behaviour observed with warm and windy conditions extending into the night, challenging control efforts on existing fires; joint response efforts continue in many areas. Safety of residents and first responders remains the priority.

The following resources have been deployed throughout the province: nine water bombers—four from Quebec—20 helicopters and approximately 20 bulldozers. The use of these resources are co-ordinated through the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, in accordance with mutual aid agreements.

In addition to our crews we have 100 emergency firefighters, 80 out-of-province initial attack firefighters and an additional 40 arriving today, all from Ontario. Madam Speaker, total fires as of today: 173. The average for this date is 105.

Indigenous Services Canada has engaged the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Armed Forces to assist with evacuations in the following communities.

Little Grand Rapids First Nation has now almost been evacuated entirely. The Canadian Red Cross is working with stakeholders in the city of Winnipeg to ensure continuity of health care, provision of social services and evacuation supports for evacuees when they arrive.

In the Pauingassi First Nation, the community of up to 300 residents located adjacent to Little Grand Rapids First Nation is also being affected by fire and smoke, and the federal government, with the Red Cross, are beginning evacuation procedures.

Sapotawayak Cree Nation: starting May 21st, 660 people were evacuated due to multiple fires in close proximity to the community. Evacuees were sent to hotels in The Pas and Swan River. Evacuations are being co-ordinated by the Canadian Red Cross.

Kinonjeoshtegon, or Jackhead, First Nation: due to increased smoke in the community, evacuations of 100 priority health individuals and others at risk in the—community members took place on May 22nd, and they went to Fisher River and Winnipeg. And conditions have improved so these evacuees will return home today.

Evacuations are being co-ordinated by Canadian Red Cross. Also, Indigenous Services Canada requested assistance of the Canadian Armed Forces

to support the evacuations from Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations.

Indigenous and Northern Relations has co-ordinated the evacuation of Pelican Rapids. Starting May 21st, 38 people were evacuated due to fires. Evacuees were sent to hotels in Dauphin. Evacuations are being co-ordinated by Manitoba Indigenous and Northern Relations.

In the RMs of Grahamdale and West Interlake or Ashern, fires near Ashern continue to move with swift—with shifting winds and are currently moving away from Ashern. This has reduced the threat to Ashern since Monday and fire protection continues.

Fire crews are also continuing to work to protect properties near Mulvihill, south of Ashern, and Madam Speaker, Highway No. 6 is currently open.

The expected hot temperatures and winds continue to be factors with these fires.

The RMs of Grahamdale and West Interlake each have a state of local emergency in place and evacuation contingency plans are in place.

Manitoba EMO will continue to monitor the ongoing situations across the province and co-ordinate teleconferences and the agencies involved.

We wish to thank all agencies, governments and individuals who are involved in this very important work that is being undertaken under very challenging circumstances. They're doing so to ensure the safety and security of all affected by the current wildfire situation.

We wish to remind everyone to please obey all fire bans and to keep their properties clear of any combustible materials to reduce your risk. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): As this crisis continues to spread across Manitoba, fire crews continue to work tirelessly at all hours of the day to protect residents' homes, prevent new fires from starting, and current ones from spreading.

* (13:50)

Efforts in Little Grand Rapids have protected a third of the buildings and many homes in the community. With the fires only being a short 4.5 kilometres away from Pauingassi First Nation, I know that efforts from those fighting fires from the air and on the ground will not slow down.

Fires near Sapotaweyak First Nation remained under control, with no homes being lost, and thanks to firefighting efforts, the evacuation order has been lifted for Kinonjeoshtegon, or Jackhead, First Nation.

And as the 11,000-hectare fire near Ashern, Manitoba, continues to leave residents on evacuation standby, they continue to face fear and uncertainty as flames encroach on their community.

Though conditions of heavy smoke prove difficult, the Canadian Red Cross, Canadian Armed Forces and Indigenous Services Canada and many independent airlines continue to work together to ensure the safety of all affected communities.

Our hearts and thoughts continue to be with all the evacuees, families, communities and first responders who continue to face the wildfire devastation. We can only hope that with the forecast that some relief is in sight.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: I want to thank the minister for his update on the fire situation. I also want to thank the Canadian Armed Forces for their incredible efforts to evacuate people from Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi. I hear from the MLA for Kewatinook, who's keeping in very close touch with people on the ground, that it's hoped that everyone will be evacuated from the two communities by the end of the day. I hope this will be the case, and I want to thank all those who have been part of this really important effort.

I would ask the minister if the updates to the fire map could be made twice a day instead of just daily, particularly when it's close to communities. I think this is important to have that information in the morning and in the evening in terms of where we are. I was disturbed, for example, this morning to find early on that the latest map was from Tuesday, and I think that we can do better in terms of making sure that everyone is ready and prepared. I know that the map has now been updated to the situation from yesterday, but when we're faced with a quickly moving fire, I suggest that updating the map twice a day would be very useful.

The images that we have seen of families and children and elders wearing masks to protect themselves from breathing in toxins from the smoke are vivid, and they emphasize the need to have fire plans which result in the evacuation of people before conditions deteriorate to the extent that they have done at Little Grand Rapids.

I want, in this context, to thank the minister for his offer yesterday to provide the fire plans for the affected communities. I look forward to receiving copies of these fire plans as soon as possible and I thank the minister for his efforts in this respect.

It will—when the acute crisis is over and, as is normal—be important to review plans so that we're ready for future situations and to make sure everything is updated and in the best possible planning environment.

I thank everyone for their concern about what's happening and hope that we have no lives lost and that these fires can be effectively kept under control.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to members' statements, because I'm not sure how long our guests are going to be here, but I do want to introduce to you some special guests that we have in the Speaker's Gallery today.

We have with us Ms. Ana Beltrame, the consul general of Brazil in Toronto, along with Mr. Gustavo Zentner, the honorary consul for Brazil in Manitoba, newly appointed.

And on behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Billie-Jo Thompson

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Madam Speaker, recycling has come a long way in our province and I'm happy to say it continues to grow in the North.

The growing public awareness of the positive impacts and differences recycling can make in helping to preserve our environment can be attributed to the hard work, dedication and determination by people who genuinely care about the environment and want to make a difference.

People like Billie-Jo Thompson, manager of the Thompson Recycling Centre, and their board members and staff, who in early January 2017—or,

sorry—in early December 2017 celebrated the milestone of diverting 1 million kilograms of materials from landfill within a one-year period.

In 2017 the centre went on to set a personal best record of diverting 1,022,000 kilograms of material from landfill and are on pace to exceed that number this year.

Billie-Jo moved to Thompson in 1989 and originally started her career through volunteering at the Thompson Recycling Centre nine years ago. Today, she's still working there, managing the centre and contributing to setting recycling records in the North. Her goal is to make the Thompson Recycling Centre a northern hub and expand it by promoting recycling in surrounding First Nations and remote communities, cottage areas and hydro stations and camps.

Thompson Recycling Centre operates with two management and six staff positions and continues to increase productivity with the same number of people.

And this is also made possible by the volunteer efforts of 2017 Thompson Recycling Centre board members, Jeff Fountain, Anthony McInnis, Milt Goble, Peter Aarinola, Linda Horner, Saima Aziz, Tim Gibson, Prasad Bhattarai, and City of Thompson liaison councillor, Duncan Wong.

In recognition of the efforts, progress and accomplishments of board members, management and staff of the Thompson Recycle Centre, please join me in welcoming Billie-Jo Thompson, who is in the gallery today, and in thanking them for making a difference in the North.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson.

Mr. Bindle: Madam Speaker, I request leave to have the names of the 2017 Thompson Recycling Centre staff members included on the permanent record in Hansard.

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

2017 Thompson Recycling Centre staff: Manager Billie-Jo Thompson, Wesley Dick, Lance Keam, Kayson Klatt, Darby McKie, Ross Munroe, Donald Muskwagon and Ronnie Weenusk.

Midwestern Legislative Conference

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): Madam Speaker, I'm—I rise here to acknowledge the 2018 Midwestern Legislative Conference being hosted in Winnipeg from July 15th to the 18th.

Manitoba very much appreciates the honour of being the host province for the Council of State Governments Midwestern Legislative Conference's 73rd annual meeting.

The Council of State Governments is the US's only non-partisan association of state officials serving for three branches of governments in all 50 states and US territories. CSG fosters their interstate exchange and insights and ideas to help states officials shape public policy, offer opportunities for state and provincial officials to collaborate and create problem-solving partnerships and assist in advocating for beneficial Canada-US trade and policy.

CSG Midwest, through the Midwestern Legislative Conference, focuses on meetings that needs for state and provincial policymakers and leaders in North America's heartland, which includes 11 Midwest states as well as four Canadian provinces that participated in the MLC for the past 14 years. We've been offered—we've often realized that US states can carry our messages and concerns forward to the US federal government. The MLC resolutions are one of the most—major examples of this approach.

The importance of these relationships and mutual understandings cannot be overstated. That is why MLC is such a great opportunity to share ideas and work together and strengthen our region. Manitoba's involvement with the MLC has allowed us to forge many friendships, and my colleagues note that excitement of opportunities to get together to share ideas, generate consensus on items and share importance and, in a bit of having fun, exploring each host state and province has to offer while we do so. MLC only occurs in Canada every decade almost, and we also are very pleased that we're hosting—this province is—in 2018.

Planning for the 2018 Midwest is well under way. We have put together a collection of interesting venues that we believe is a great showcase of our beautiful city of Winnipeg.

The opening night's reception will be hosted in the Legislative grounds on the southern plaza, inside the Manitoba Legislative Building, where we will

offer a unique Manitoba welcome with samplings of made-in-Manitoba food and beverages. After dinner, guests will be invited to tour the amazing Legislative Building and attend a very special legislative session featuring our US colleagues demonstrating a question period helps advance governance in Manitoba.

On family night, we will be showcasing award-winning Journey to Churchill exhibit, home of our polar bears and northern species, where our visitors will experience a nose-to-nose with every-real-life polar bear.

Last but certainly not least, the state dinner will be taking place inside the Canadian museum of human rights, the first museum solely dedicated for the evolution and celebration of future human rights.

* (14:00)

In closing, Madam Speaker, I am encouraged—*[interjection]*—fellow members—of the—promote the 2018 MLC Manitoba to many contacts, as many as we can. Promotion of the Manitoba and Canada as a friend, ally, partner of the US and is most important. So Manitoba, where I have—I'll finish off that and—we've come a long ways since the loyalists and we want everybody to enjoy it.

Thank you. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I did give the member a lot of latitude—a lot—with the encouragement of members from all sides because we are involved, all of us, in that conference. So I just want to know that I didn't do that on my own. I was looking at everybody nodding to let him go ahead.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: And before they leave the gallery, we do have seated in the public gallery from Garden Valley Collegiate, if they're still here, 75 grade 9 students under the direction of Brent Giesbrecht, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen).

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

Recognizing Indigenous Midwives

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): In the past, midwifery was a common practice among First Nation communities. In the last 100 years this

practice has begun decreasing due to colonization and changes in the health-care system. As a result, many rural and first-remote First Nations are forced to leave their communities to access the care they need.

Despite the challengers, there still remain four incredibly strong midwives here in Manitoba: Darlene Birch, Nathalie Pambrun, Sandi Howard and Melissa Brown. They all provide essential services and care to women and their children throughout pregnancy, birth and postpartum.

These indigenous midwives are primary reproductive health-care providers. They believe that the overall health and well-being of indigenous communities begins with the reintegration of values and teachings that reflect their cultural identity. Indigenous midwifery is a catalyst for positive change through ceremony, healing and reproductive justice.

Darlene has practised indigenous midwifery for 35 years and was instrumental in developing midwifery legislation here in Manitoba that was inclusive of indigenous midwives. Her work assisted in the creation of UCN's Aboriginal midwifery baccalaureate program.

Sandi and Melissa both graduated from this program, which was sadly cut by the current government in 2016. Sandi currently serves northern families in Thompson and surrounding areas. In addition to supporting families, Melissa is the current founder of Zaagi'idiwin, an organization that trains indigenous doulas and reconnects families with traditional birth knowledge.

Nathalie is a Franco-Manitoban Metis midwife who has practised nationally, internationally and now practises at the Birth Centre in Winnipeg.

Darlene, Melissa and Nathalie are founding members—or co-chairs of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives who advocate for the restoration of midwifery education and services.

Today, I want—I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking them for their incredible work that they do as indigenous midwives, for the heartfelt work that they continue to do here in Manitoba on behalf of all of us.

Drought Preparedness

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, Manitoba needs a plan to deal with the drought. With climate change we will have increased

wet weather some years and increased dry years at other times. Just as we've prepared with a floodway for Winnipeg for a one-in-700-year flood, we need a plan to deal with the one-in-700-year drought.

The drought could be multi-year. Yet the provincial government has not yet presented such a plan. It needs to.

Such a plan needs an aggressive approach to storing more water on the land in wet years so we are ready for dry years. A drought will initially disproportionately affect farmers. We need a drought plan developed together with agricultural producers.

There also needs to be a plan for community water supplies. Which communities will be most affected? What will happen if the Red or Assiniboine river dries up? How will communities manage if they do?

Addressing wildfires will be a priority. Do we have an adequate plan? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Though we have experience tackling wildfires, there are gaps. Last year a small fire in the Island Lake area wasn't put out quickly when it was small and the result was a very large fire which required large-scale evacuations.

Planning with northern communities, including First Nation communities, needs to be further advanced, especially after what happened at Fort McMurray in Alberta.

A plan for Manitoba Hydro in the case of a drought is needed. Extended dry weather could have severe consequences for our largest Crown corporation and for the electricity supply. I suspect we're not fully prepared for a multi-year drought.

Water is the stuff of life. We need to be ready not just for floods, but for a drought. It will come. Will we be ready?

Madam Speaker: I just want to revert back the honourable member for Point Douglas, who did have a request.

Mrs. Smith: I ask for leave to include the names in Hansard.

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

Jordan Brown, Sage Brown, Shilo Brown, Gena Boubard, Gene Boubard, Gerri Boubard, Nuna Mauro, Nathalie Pambrun, Cecil Sveinson

Provincial Government's Achievements

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I didn't get finished yesterday when I was talking about some of our government's achievements so I'd like to continue today.

The NDP left Manitoba—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Micklefield: —with annual deficits approaching a billion dollars a year because they spent millions more every day than they brought in. We are fixing the finances; we've reduced the annual deficit by nearly half. For the first time in a long time, every government department is managing within its budget.

Manitoba's private investment in property is the second highest among all provinces. Housing starts are second highest among provinces. Statistics Canada predicts capital spending growth in Manitoba to be the highest in Canada this year.

Last year saw the largest agriculture sales in Manitoba history, the largest vehicle sales increase in Canada and we have the highest population growth rates in the country.

People earn more today in average weekly earnings than they have for four years. More people are starting businesses. Substantially more Manitoba products are being exported to the USA and overseas markets. Manitoba is blessed with the largest employment gains in 15 years and the lowest unemployment in Canada.

Last year Manitoba had the highest number of births since 1972. Two years ago we were the child poverty capital of 'canya'-Canada, but today we are fifth out of 10 provinces. *[interjection]* Madam Speaker, that is no laughing matter.

It is our goal to be Canada's most improved province. Madam Speaker, there is much more to do, but we are well on our way.

We're benefiting from a health budget with a half-billion-dollar increase over the last two years. We are benefitting from record numbers of doctors. We're benefitting from 60 more paramedics, from a new pediatric heart unit, from a new children's epilepsy unit, from ambulance fees 30 per cent less than two years ago and from emergency room wait times down 18 per cent from last year.

We are building seven schools. We are building five RAAM rapid access to addictions medication

clinics. We're increasing university scholarships five fold from \$4 million to \$20 million—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Order.

It sounded like there was a request for leave for the member to continue?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, we have some further guests in the gallery.

We have seated in the public gallery from Parkland Christian School nine grade 5 to 9 students under the direction of Ron Friesen, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski).

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

* * *

Madam Speaker: And it is our tradition when we have our pages that are here for the last day, we have a little bit of a farewell speech to make to them, and I just wanted to tell you a little about Lydia.

Lydia Gork is a grade 11 student who will be graduating from the international baccalaureate program at Kelvin High School in 2019. She would like to become a parliamentary or Senate page in Ottawa following her graduation.

*(14:10)

Lydia hopes to pursue post-secondary education at Western University for their integrated biochemical engineering and law program. She has a strong interest in writing and speaking in both French and English. She aspires to use her skills to advocate for others.

Lydia is a flight sergeant in the air cadet program and has the parade position of squadron commander at 176 Boeing of Canada Air Cadet Squadron. She spends her summers working for the City of Winnipeg at a day camp with special needs youth.

The page program is one of Lydia's most valued experiences. Her appreciation for democracy has been strengthened as a result of her time in the Chamber. The Legislative Assembly has demonstrated the power of politics. It opened a door for Lydia and constantly inspires her. She will always seek more opportunities to become engaged.

And on behalf of all of us, Lydia, we wish you all the best.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Western Canadian Premiers' Conference Wildfire Prevention Discussions

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, people in Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nation have been through a lot these past few days. We know that the images and video that we've seen coming from the community, those images are very harrowing. They show severe and dangerous wildfires. They also show the pain, the concern of those being forced to leave their communities and the feelings that they have.

When fire strikes we know that we all have to come together to support those in need, whether that's in Kinonjeoshtegon, Brandon, Sapotaweyak, Little Grand Rapids or Ashern we should all be there for one another.

What the evacuees need now is the support and attention of the government as the blazes are being battled, but also to take care of them in their time of need.

I would ask the Premier if he can update the House whether collaborating on fighting wildfires was discussed at the Western Canadian Premiers' Conference.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, collaboration is, of course, essential at this time and at all times, Madam Speaker. That's why we are working diligently not only with other provincial governments and with the federal government on a number of fronts, but also co-ordinating our efforts as best as possible during these challenging times with respect to the fires that have occurred and that, unfortunately, are likely to occur, given the realities of climate change, in the future.

That is why we have developed, with the co-operation and involvement of a great many Manitobans, a climate change plan, a green plan for our province that we're very proud of.

And I appreciate the member's comments about the need for co-operation. We will stand with all of our agencies and work together in co-operation with other provincial governments and the federal government, and their resources are appreciated as well, Madam Speaker, as we face this important challenge together and offer support and encouragement to all Manitobans directly and indirectly affected.

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

Northern Manitoba Wildfires Communication Procedures

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, it's clear from some of the comments that we heard out of the Department of Sustainable Development yesterday, and the leadership of Little Grand Rapids that there was some sort of breakdown in communication regarding the evacuation that was taking place of that community.

When a crisis or disaster strikes, communities should know that there is a plan in place, but also that there is a necessary back and forth to ensure that such a plan can be executed. This should look at, you know, ways of transporting people out of the community, the firefighting in the ground, but also, of course, all the logistical consideration that needs to be taking place behind the scenes. Now, these plans should be communicated to everyone. Everyone should be on the same page.

Given what we've heard over the past day or so, can the Premier tell us what steps he will take to improve communication between his departments, First Nations, municipalities and all those who may be affected by wildfires this year?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Frankly, Madam Speaker, we've had the opportunity in Manitoba for some time to learn through our own failures and experience improvements as a consequence. I expect that that will be the reality here as well. There are always opportunities for improvement; continuous improvement is what we are about and what we will pursue.

We will endeavour, of course, in the midst of these trying circumstances to offer total support and encouragement to all agencies as they co-operate with the best interests of Manitobans at the centre of every decision that is made.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, this is the second year in a row where hundreds and even thousands of Manitobans have been forced to leave their homes because of the threat of wildfires. Now, it's a sad fact of life that these wildfires appear to be getting more and more common.

Now, I remember last year I had the opportunity to tour some of the evacuation centres with people from the Bear Clan and from the Red Cross, and there were many criticisms, there were many issues that arose during those times that people were away from their community. Some had to do with safety and security; others had to do with the conditions and, you know, access to some of the, you know, necessities of life that people had in those areas.

I understand that the government conducted a review of some of the evacuation procedures and the support to evacuees that was conducted last year.

I'm wondering if the Premier can tell us what steps the government has taken to improve the supports and the services that will be provided to Manitobans while they are evacuated from their communities this year.

Mr. Pallister: Having been in this elected role for a little bit of time, Madam Speaker, I have had some experience going back, even into the 1990s, of working as part of teams to address the needs of those who have been victimized by nature's abhorrent behaviour.

Whether it was evacuees because of rail-line disasters or northern fires or floods, there are always incredible stresses endured by the people who are affected. And it will be imperative that in the follow-up to the handling of this event, as has been the case for years in our province and in others across the country, that we use every opportunity to learn how we can do a better job in future such occurrences, because nature has a way of repeating this kind of unacceptable behaviour, Madam Speaker.

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

Bureau de l'éducation française Assistant Deputy Minister Position

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Aujourd'hui, on va présenter des pétitions qui incluent plus que 1 500 noms de

Manitobains et Manitobaines qui sont opposés aux coupures du Bureau de l'éducation française du gouvernement Pallister.

Canadian Parents for French ont aussi fait un sondage de leurs membres : il n'y avait aucun parent qui a appuyé la décision d'éliminer le poste de sous-ministre adjoint du BEF. Quinze cent parents qui appuient le poste, et zéro qui appuie la coupure du gouvernement. Les francophones et francophiles de cette province crient à haute voix.

Quand est-ce que le gouvernement va rétablir le poste de sous-ministre adjoint?

Translation

Today, we are going to present petitions that include the names of more than 1,500 Manitobans who are opposed to the cuts made to the Bureau de l'éducation française by the Pallister government.

Canadian Parents for French also did a survey of its members and there were no parents who supported the decision to eliminate the BEF's assistant deputy minister position. There are 1,500 parents who support the position and none who support the cut by this government. Francophones and francophiles in this province are being very vocal.

When is this government going to reinstate the position of assistant deputy minister?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): J'apprécie la question de l'honorable député, madame Speaker. Il est important de se souvenir et de respecter des volontés des Manitobains.

Translation

I appreciate the honourable member's question, Madam Speaker. It is important to remember and respect the wishes of Manitobans.

English

Manitobans elected this government to fix our finances after a decade of debt, to repair our services, Madam Speaker, after a decade of decay and, of course, to rebuild our economy after a decade of decline. And we are focused on doing that.

Nous concentrons nos efforts d'une façon réfléchie et modérée car les Manitobains apprécient les finances stables, pour eux-mêmes et le gouvernement aussi.

Translation

We are focusing our efforts in a very thoughtful and moderate manner because Manitobans appreciate stable finances for themselves and for the government.

English

I recognize that the member has raised some specific concerns. We have every intention of continuing to focus on making sure that we build a government that is stronger, more responsive to the people of Manitoba, in every respect, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Mais la coupure du gouvernement a créé une situation dans le département où les francophones qui travaillent sur l'éducation française doivent avancer leurs idées en anglais dans le département. Alors, c'est pas vraiment un système d'éducation bilingue.

Translation

But the cuts made by this government have created a situation in the department where francophones who work in the field of French language education have to put forward their ideas in English in the department. So it is not really a bilingual education system.

English

So it's 1,500 Manitobans who have brought this forward today. They're concerned about the cuts to the bureau of education en française [*in French*] here in Manitoba, and again, I would remind the House that the Canadian Parents for French, another organization, they surveyed their members; they found no one supported the government's decision to eliminate the assistant deputy minister position in the French education department.

So I would ask the Premier again: Will he reverse that decision and re-establish a post for the assistant deputy minister for BEF?

Mr. Pallister: I would emphasize the inaccuracies in the member's preamble, Madam Speaker, to any Manitoban, whether a Franco or Anglais [*English*]; it doesn't matter.

* (14:20)

We are trimming at the top. We'll continue to trim at the top because the top of government is far

too big—was far too big. And we have every plan to continue to strengthen front-line services, whether in education for Franco-Manitoba students or for anyone else and we'll continue to emphasize that these changes are necessary and we'll strengthen the quality of services going forward.

The previous government was unfortunately engaged in the practice of building government at the top, not on the front line, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Mais, Madame la Présidente, beaucoup de monde dans la francophonie ici au Manitoba ne comprend pas comment perdre un francophone dans le département—qui pourrait appuyer l'éducation française—comment ça va améliorer la qualité d'éducation française dans notre province. Ça ne fait aucun sens.

Translation

But, Madam Speaker, many people in the Francophonie here in Manitoba don't understand how losing a francophone in the department who could support French language education, how this is going to improve the quality of French language education in our province? It doesn't make sense.

English

So again, people in the French community are wondering, based on the type of rhetoric like the Premier's just shared here, how is it that French education, not only for francophones but also in French immersion schools all over the province, how is it going to be fixed?

How is it going to improve when they lose having a francophone in the department who can take forward their concerns, who can build support for them, who can deal with them in their mother tongue? And that is the question left here.

So I'd ask the minister—I would ask the First Minister, rather: Will he reverse his decision and add again the assistant deputy minister position for BEF?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, the previous administration—and the member speaks in defence of its decisions now—managed to create an unsustainable situation where all departments were under pressure, where we were effectively borrowing \$10 million every single day in addition—over and above—the amounts we were raising in revenue.

Ten million a day handed to the young students of our province to bear that burden.

Ces objectifs d'une plus grand stabilité financière, de sécurité sociale et de solidité économique sont les priorités des Manitobains, et par conséquent, ils sont les priorités de ce gouvernement aussi.

Translation

These objectives of greater financial, social and economic stability are priorities for Manitobans, and as a result they are priorities for this government as well.

English

These are our priorities, Madam Speaker: to create sustainable educational opportunities, sustainable health-care opportunities, sustainable services for the future of our province, to make it stronger, not weaker. Not giant at the top with lowest quality services offered to students and on the front line, but the other way around: stronger at the base, stronger with the students.

That's how we're building our education system and in every other respect, building our government, Madam Speaker.

**Education System
Funding Concerns**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Day after day this minister refuses to be accountable for the cuts that he's making in our education funding in our province. We know that enrolment in our schools is growing. We know that inflation is going up, and yet this government's funding to school divisions has been held flat or cut in absolute terms this last year.

And to add insult to injury, in the last year this minister underspent his Education and Training budget by \$40 million. Yet the minister can't point to one teacher, one expert, one parent who would ever say that cutting education funding will lead to better outcomes. No plan to make our schools and our supports for students better starts with cuts.

So will the minister stand and be accountable for his real cuts to our education system in this province?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for the question. He's been on this theme all week, believing that we are leaving unspent money that was allocated to our department. And we have invested, as per our

Estimates, in all of the items that we have budgeted for.

And we are providing the services for Manitoba students. In fact, we spent a record amount this year: \$1.323 billion on the K-to-12 system in Manitoba, the second highest on a per-student basis of any province in Canada.

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

Mr. Wiebe: According to this minister's department's own documents, last year the minister also cut capital funding by over \$25 million. All the while, every day he stands up here in the House and he says that there's more capital needs than ever.

So if the minister is so concerned about infrastructure deficits, why would he cut the infrastructure and the capital budget by \$25 million? The minister has tried time and time again—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —to claim that giving less to school divisions and building less infrastructure is actually more, but the facts are clear and they're here in black and white. Now teachers and school divisions are sick of the spin, and they want this minister to be accountable for his cuts.

So will the minister admit that he is wrong and apologize for his shortchanging our students and our schools?

Mr. Wishart: I'm actually pleased that the member is finally owning up to the fact that in—when they were in government they left us a record deficit in terms of maintenance of \$450 million.

Our government has focused on safety, security and access issues when it comes to schools and we're making sure that Manitoba students and teachers have the best access to education and, in the meantime, we're investing heavily in seven new schools.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, despite this minister's spin, teachers will not be taking this government's cuts lying down. They're tired of being told to do more with less. Teachers are paying out of pocket for supplies because of funding cuts. They're being told to not just be teachers, but to be social workers, therapists, confidantes, and sometimes even parents

to our students. They're saying that our kids need more supports than ever and yet this minister refuses to listen.

Well, teachers are coming to this building tomorrow, to the steps of this Legislature, to make it absolutely clear to this government that they oppose these cuts to education.

I ask: Will the minister meet the teachers on the steps of this Legislature and tell them to their face why he is cutting education funding in this province?

Mr. Wishart: Actually, I have met teachers already today. I was at their MTS meeting this morning bringing them greetings and good wishes in their annual meeting process, and I will be returning to be part of their meeting again this evening. I continue to have an ongoing dialogue with MTS and respect their opinion.

Yes, we don't always agree. We talked about that this morning. But we certainly have a much better discussion than is happening across the floor here.

Accessibility for Manitobans Act Implementation Timeline

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Barrier-Free Manitoba raised a number of concerns regarding this government's commitment to implementing the accessibility for Manitoba act. They note that the minister continues to miss important dates, deadlines in the implementation of this act. In their words, this is a very discouraging pattern.

We've seen the government attempt to place a wait-list on the inclusion support program, and now, they're ignoring the AMA.

Why isn't this minister making accessibility for all Manitobans a priority?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Ensuring that accessibility is a priority for this government is something that we've focused on. That's something that we have committed to. We recently had a meeting with our advisory council. I asked exactly that question: are we on track? And I can tell you we are on track to hit all of the standards within the time frame that—allocated.

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

Mrs. Smith: Manitoba notes three missed deadlines: the minister still hasn't presented his annual plan, the accessibility employment standards regulation has

not been passed and there's still no progress on the development of a compliance framework.

These deadlines shouldn't be a surprise to this minister, but maybe he's been more focused on cutting housing and cuts to folks on Rent Assist than making Manitobans more accessible.

Will the minister commit to meeting the remaining deadlines on time?

Mr. Fielding: The member continuously puts on false information onto the record.

I can tell you this government has enhanced things like housing. We've built over 487 new units opened, spent money on operating and the rent-geared-to-income; in terms of those, 42 per cent are social housing. We've also made advancements in terms of the Rent Assist program where close to 3,000 more people are supported and over 3,300 will be supported in the year end.

We want to continue to work with accessibilities to hit the targets in terms of the guidelines, in terms of the standards that have been set out, Madam Speaker.

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

* (14:30)

Mrs. Smith: I'll say it again. Our government was building hundreds of housing units.

The MA was an important step forward in—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —ensuring Manitoba is truly an accessible place for all families. But the act alone has not made this a reality. Concrete actions and planning need to happen in order for the vision of the AMA to come into effect.

When a minister misses deadlines to release his annual implementation plan two years in a row—just like the poverty plan—that's not progress. That's inattention. That's ignoring the issues rather than making it a priority.

Will this minister commit to presenting the implementation plan today?

Mr. Fielding: The member brings up two topics in terms of poverty as well as accessibility.

I can tell you, in terms of poverty, we are making progress. Stats Canada has recently brought

out the income statistics and it showed that Manitoba has grown compared to other provinces. At one point under the NDP administration we were last in terms of child poverty. That has grown to about middle of the pack. I call that an improvement in terms of processes that have been.

Recently had a meeting with Jim Baker who heads up our accessibility. We had discussions in terms of timelines. He is of the opinion that we will hit all the targets that are 'acorporated' into the accessibility—the five standards that are in place.

Retirement Homes for LGBTTQ* Seniors Rainbow Resource Centre Proposal

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): For many senior LGBTTQ* Manitobans, moving into a retirement residence can mean having to hide one's true self. It's a harrowing prospect and it underlines the need for a seniors home where everyone can feel welcome and safe.

It's encouraging to see the Rainbow Resource Centre conducting a feasibility study for the LG—for a LGBTTQ* seniors home. The centre needs support. They're asking for funds to conduct this very important study.

Will the Minister of Health support the Rainbow Resource Centre's proposal for funds?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): We know that across Manitoba there has been a shortage of PCHs, of seniors housing, of a number of different models of care for those who are aging, over the last many years, Madam Speaker. That, of course, grew under the former NDP government at a variety of different levels and a number of different communities in a number of different ways.

Certainly we are open in terms of accepting a variety of different proposals. We've gotten many from different communities. Some have already advanced to the planning and soon to the construction stage, but of course we're always open to new ideas in terms of how to fill the gap that was left by the former NDP government.

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

Personal-Care Homes Construction Inquiry

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The minister's record on personal-care homes is really quite poor.

One of his first actions as minister was to cancel the planned PCH projects for Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg. That means that we're even further behind in meeting the need for PCH beds.

In fact, Madam Speaker, FIPPA requests show that since 2016 this government has not built one new personal-care-home bed in two years. All they could accomplish was to put forward a press release on a project that our NDP government initiated.

Why has the minister not built one new—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —PCH bed in two years?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, of course, Madam Speaker, the member's preamble was wrong, but she did make an interesting point within her preamble when she talked about Lac du Bonnet.

And that was an interesting project because you always knew that spring was coming in Manitoba because the NDP would drive out to Lac du Bonnet, they would bring their 45 communicators, they'd set up a big table, they'd have some cake, they'd call all the good people from Lac du Bonnet and the surrounding area together, they'd handle the knife, they'd cut the cake and they'd say, we're going to build the Lac du Bonnet PCH—and it never happened. But, of course, next spring would come, there'd be more cake, more communicators, but no PCH.

Madam Speaker, that's their record. We're going to get things done where they didn't.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The demand across the province for PCH beds is great. FIPPA requests show that in the Southern Health RHA there are 341 people waiting for a PCH bed just this past March. In the Prairie Mountain Health over 200 people were waiting, but this government still has not built one single new PCH bed since taking office.

What they did, instead, was cancel hundreds of planned beds instead. We're further behind because of—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —this minister's cuts.

How many new PCH beds does the minister plan to build in this fiscal year?

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of—
[interjection]

Order.

Mr. Goertzen: And, Madam Speaker, we could take all of those paper plans that the NDP had over the last 17 years that never amounted to anything. If we could have taken all of those paper plans that they announced with the cake and with the communicators, if we could take all of those paper plans and build PCHs with those paper plans, then we might have enough, Madam Speaker.

But we are taking significant action when it comes, particularly, with—to transitional housing, which the NDP voted against, Madam Speaker. We saw that there was a need for transitional housing. Now, they didn't like it because not everybody was unionized who was involved in the transitional housing. But we took the wait-list down for those who were waiting in a Winnipeg hospital to get into a personal-care home down from about 140 to less than 10 last week, and all the NDP had to do—to say about that particular plan is we don't like it because they're not all unionized; we're going to vote against it.

We're going to get it done. They can continue to be ideological on this issue.

Northern Manitoba Wildfires Little Grand Rapids Evacuees

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, this government continues to fail the people of Little Grand Rapids. I'm sure you've seen the photographs of children and elders sitting in a smoking—a smoky gym wearing medical masks as their only protection from the toxins. It is my understanding that a crew working in a water treatment plant in Little Grand Rapids were able to book a charter plane to fly out of the community, yet this government was not able to either use its own planes or charter others to help evacuate residents and had to call the Canadian military in.

We want to thank the Canadian Armed Forces, but we can't help but wonder: Why has this government not been doing everything in their power to help Manitobans?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): I would caution all members, this is a very serious issue, and to bring politics and incriminate individuals in this process is probably not helpful.

I would like to advise the House that insofar as Little Grand Rapids is concerned, we have evacuated 93 per cent of the residents, and we are currently—under the work of the RCMP, they are currently going door to door to ensure that everybody's been evacuated. And this good work is being done through the leadership of the federal government and the Red Cross.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, Little Grand Rapids' Chief Raymond Keeper was quoted in the media yesterday saying it's no longer an evacuation but a rescue mission. His comments are echoed by other indigenous leaders. Councillor Clinton Keeper said, this could have been prevented, all of this chaos; we could have evacuated earlier if people had listened to us.

Madam Speaker, this is not a new issue, and with this government's inability to be proactive, Manitobans are being deeply harmed.

Public safety should be of the utmost importance, so I have to ask: Why is protecting northern Manitobans from wildfires not a priority for this government?

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, I'm not too sure politicians who are trying to drive panic and indicate that people are being harmed in this process is very helpful.

I would suggest to the member that the federal government, who has responsibility for Little Grand Rapids, and their partner, the Red Cross, have done everything they can. The community has been evacuated. Currently in the community are, amongst others, RCMP officers and Emergency Measures individuals, along with individuals that are helping to run the community, and at a moment's notice they, too, can be evacuated.

I don't think driving fear and panic is the right thing to be doing at this moment.

*(14:40)

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

Northern Manitoba Evacuees Protection from Criminal Activity

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, currently the member from Kewatinook is working with the Island Lake residents to help deal

with the crystal meth crisis in their community. The crisis started last summer when residents were forced to flee their homes due to an approaching wildfire, something similar to what is happening right now.

These evacuees were flown to Winnipeg for temporary shelter. It was during their stay in Winnipeg that crystal meth dealers took advantage of them, which resulted in a crystal meth crisis in the communities of Island Lake.

Madam Speaker, we want to know what the plan is to protect evacuees from drug dealers and other criminal activity.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Without exception, in these times, Madam Speaker, whether it's community leaders or citizens of communities impacted directly, indirectly, family members around the province, around the country are exceptionally on edge, to put it mildly.

Political opportunism around disasters is a sad thing when you see it. We're seeing it today. I would not encourage the member to do anything but work effectively to advise, to work with the agencies that are doing their very best in difficult and trying circumstances. To offer that example of teamwork would be the best thing to put on display at this point, Madam Speaker, and always.

Education System Government Investments

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): We have heard a lot of fiction coming from the members opposite over the last few weeks.

Our PC government is working hard to repair the services after a decade of decay and decline under the previous NDP government. Instead of recognizing our record investments in health care and education, there are some that would rather just fear monger.

Can the Minister of Education please share some facts, not fictions, that are having such a positive effect on our students?

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

The fact is that in Budget 2018 our government is spending a record \$1.323 billion on public school education in Manitoba. Madam Speaker, the fact is that school divisions are responsible for their budgets and the province expects them to make the decisions

that are best for the students, the same as we do. The fact is Statistics Canada data shows that on a cost-per-student basis Manitoba spends the second highest among provinces at 12—or \$12,855.

Madam Speaker, the fact is our government is investing in education for the best for students in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mining Sector Government Intention

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Since coming into office this government has sat back and watched as 169 people in Thompson got layoff notices. According to Andrea McLandress of the Mining Association of Manitoba, Province isn't support of the industry. We've seen this government cut about \$1 million from their resource development budget. They cut spending on the geological survey. Now they've abandoned the Mining and Minerals Convention.

Madam Speaker, we're left to wonder: Why is this government abandoning mining in this province?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Our government continues to work with the mining industry to rebuild it from a—after a decade of despair from the previous NDP government.

I should add that we have a excellent working relationship with the industry. I was at the prospectors' meeting last week; we had a great meeting. The previous minister of GET was also there last year, and prior to that the previous government never, ever sat down with the prospectors association in their history.

The mining industry describes Manitoba as an untapped potential. We'll continue to work with the mining industry to build this great natural resource.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Northern Reserve Fund Meeting with Mayor

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): This government talks about collaboration and co-operation—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lindsey: —but this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and this government refuse to actually act.

For example, the minister was in Thompson—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lindsey: —but he refused to meet with the mayor of Thompson to discuss whether or not the mining reserve fund could be used. So you know, they say one thing, they do another; they say they're listening, but they're not; they're refusing to lead.

Will the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade commit to meeting with the mayor of Thompson today to address the jobs crisis in the North and to discuss the mining reserve fund?

Madam Speaker: It's getting very loud in here and I'm starting to have a lot of difficulty hearing the questions and answers. So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I've met with Mayor Fenske a number of times. The Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) has met with Mayor Fenske. The Minister of Indigenous Relations has met with Mayor Fenske. The Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) has met with Mayor Fenske. I can go on and on. The Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Cullen), the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), the Minister of Heritage, Culture—Infrastructure has met. Just last week the Minister of Education was in Thompson to announce further training.

Madam Speaker, where the former NDP government failed, we will succeed. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Contamination of Food Supply Public Reporting Process

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): An informational question, to begin with, for the Minister of Agriculture.

Could he please inform the House what a public citizen should do if they become aware of possible contamination of our food supply and what the consequences could be if that person says nothing?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): Finally, an ag question, Madam Speaker.

But I can tell the House loud and clear that we have the safest food inspection in all of Canada.

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

**Interlake Fisheries Case Concern
Storage Container Contamination**

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): The Minister of Agriculture, then, should probably have a conversation with his colleague, the Minister of Sustainable Development, who we have documentation showing is involved in a cover-up of a contamination of the food supply.

I would like to table three copies of two freedom of information requests which we have finally received answers to. They document quite clearly that fishers in the Interlake received contaminated containers in which they were instructed to store their fish. Those containers had, quote, a brown, sloppy liquid in the bottom of them. This government has known about it since January 31st, and they have said absolutely nothing.

Is anyone going to take responsibility for this fishery fiasco?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Madam Speaker, member opposite is clearly fear mongering and putting false information on the record. I wish he'd found his voice when his government took Lake Winnipeg to being the most threatened lake in the world.

Under our government, Manitoba lakes are open for business. We're seeing record high prices for walleye, record high prices for sauger and new markets for whitefish. We—with the open market we're working with all the stakeholders about the unacceptable delay in payment and we're fully co-operating with other officials who are involved in this investigation.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: False information, Madam Speaker? Well, here's the paper trail from the government's own records showing exactly what has gone wrong and whose fault it is.

In March of last year, the government sent out a public notice that they were no longer having their conservation officers track down fish exports effective immediately. How well has that worked out for us?

* (14:50)

Then, on December 2nd, the very second day that—after they had got rid of the single desk in the fishery, that's when the contaminated containers arrived. That's when the fish from Manitoba was put in them. That's when it was sent to the United States. January 31st the government knows about it. It doesn't go on the public record until February 15th thanks to a paper in the Interlake.

Who is responsible for this fiasco and why is the government not doing anything to protect the food supply on either side of the Canada-US border.

Ms. Squires: Well, fear mongering and putting false information on the record is really what this member's speciality is. I only wish that he had cared about the fisheries when Sea-Watch had warned people not to consume products out of Lake Winnipeg, Lake Winnipegosis or Lake Manitoba. Where was his voice then?

We're fully cooperating with all the stakeholders. We're getting to the bottom of the unacceptable delay in payment from—with four fish sheds and we're working towards—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: —a resolution.

Madam Speaker: Time for oral questions—[*interjection*]—the time for oral questions has expired. [*interjection*] Order. The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Bureau de l'éducation française

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Oui—[*interjection*]

Translation

Yes—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Je désire présenter la pétition suivante à l'Assemblée législative.

Voici les raisons de la présente pétition :

(1) Le Manitoba fait la promotion d'un système éducatif dynamique en français et en anglais depuis plusieurs décennies. Au niveau national, les Canadiens ont depuis longtemps démontré leur engagement envers un système éducatif dans les deux langues officielles et le Manitoba a depuis

longtemps exercé un leadership de premier plan en matière d'éducation de la langue française.

(2) Le Bureau de l'éducation française (BEF) développe, évalue et administre les politiques et les programmes relatifs à l'éducation en français. Il offre une gamme de services et d'appuis pédagogiques aux écoles et aux enseignants du Manitoba, et gère tous les programmes provenant de l'Entente Canada-Manitoba relative à l'enseignement dans la langue de la minorité et à l'enseignement de la langue seconde. Il offre également du perfectionnement professionnel aux enseignants et aux directions d'écoles.

(3) Le sous-ministre adjoint du BEF apportait et défendait—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —les questions importantes touchant à l'éducation en français au Manitoba à la table de négociation du gouvernement. Sans cet accès direct, les parents et les parties prenantes ont perdu leur voix à la table de négociation.

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

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

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

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

Et cette pétition a été signée par Liliana Ardiles, Bading Bessi Kama, Cindy Westra et plusieurs autres Manitobains et Manitobaines.

Translation

I wish to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition was signed by Liliana Ardiles, Bading Bessi Kama, Cindy Westra and many other Manitobans.

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Je désire présenter la pétition suivante à Legislative—l'Assemblée législative.

Voici la raison de la présente pétition :

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

(2) Le Bureau de l'éducation français développe, évalue et administre les politiques et les programmes relatifs à l'éducation en français. Il offre une gamme de services et appuis pédagogiques aux écoles et aux enseignements-enseignants du Manitoba et gère tous les programmes provenant le-de l'Entente Canada-Manitoba relative à l'enseignement dans langue de la minorité et l'enseignement de la langue seconde. Il offre également du perfectionnement professionnel aux enseignements et aux directions d'écoles.

(3) Le sous-ministre adjoint du BEF apportait et défendait les questions importantes touchant à l'éducation en français au Manitoba à la table de négociation du gouvernement. Sans cet accès direct, les parents et les parties prenantes ont perdu leur voix à la table de négociation.

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

Nous demandons le-à l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba que-qui suit :

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

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

Translation

I wish to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

English

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Vimy Arena

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of St. James and other areas of Manitoba are concerned with the intention expressed

by the provincial government to use Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

* (15:00)

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial locations such as the St. Boniface industrial park, the 20,000 acres at CentrePort or existing properties such as the Shriners Hospital or the old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

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

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

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by the Province of Manitoba changes the fundamental nature of the community, including the park and recreational uses. Including concerns of the residents of St. James and others around public safety, property values and their way of life are all not being addressed.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

(6) Manitoba has failed to implement—to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports

and recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous people and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Signed by Destiny Van Ryckeghem, Jeremy Mason and Cameron Duchmann and many, many other Manitobans.

Medical Laboratory Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) With the creation of this monopoly there has been the closure of many laboratories by Dynacare in and around the city of Winnipeg. Since the acquisition of Unicity labs, Dynacare has made it more difficult for some medical offices by changing the collection schedules of patients' specimens and changing some medical offices for collection services.

(5) These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served,

having to travel significant distances in some cases, waiting considerable periods of time and sometimes being denied or having to leave without obtaining lab services. This situation is particularly critical for patients requiring fasting blood draws as they may experience complications that could be life-threatening based on their individual health situations.

(6) Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all patients requiring immediate results, STAT's patients, such as patients with suspicious internal infections, be directed to its King Edward location. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the patients who are required to travel to that lab, rather than simply completing the test in their doctor's office. This new directive by Dynacare presents a direct risk to patients' health. This has further resulted in patients opting to visit emergency rooms rather than traveling twice, which increases cost to the public health-care system.

* (15:10)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

Signed by Heather Doty, Leslie Dzogan, Lynn Whidden and many others.

Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Signed by many Manitobans.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Sarah Allum, Susan McMurrich, Hilary Allum and many other Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider Estimates this afternoon.

The House will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

JUSTICE

* (15:20)

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

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

The floor is now open for questions.

Hearing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department.

I will now call Resolution 4.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$59,913,000 for Justice, Crown Law, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,006,000 for Justice, Legislative Counsel, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.1—[interjection]—oh, sorry—4.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$474,527,000 for Justice, Community Safety, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.5: RESOLVED that there be granted Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$62,953,000 for Justice, Courts, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,530,000 for Justice, Consumer Protection, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$2,850,000 for Justice, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 4.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,090,000 for Justice, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for Estimates of this department is item 4.1.(a), the minister's salary, 'condained' in—contained in resolution 4.1.

At this—okay. The floor is now open for questions.

Resolution 4.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$38,798,000 for Justice, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for Justice.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of Committee of Supply is for the Department of Agriculture.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement? Does the official opposition critic have an opening statement?

Under Manitoba practice, debate of the—on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of 'lite'—line item 3.1.(a), contained in resolution 3.1.

Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Global.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been suggested that we have a global discussion. Is that agreed? [Agreed]

The floor is now open for questions.

Hearing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department.

* (15:30)

I will now call resolution 3.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,160,000 for Agriculture, Policy and Transformation, for the 'fiscal' year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$135,717,000 for Agriculture, Risk Management, Credit and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$17,366,000 for Agriculture, Stewardship and Assurance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$17,953,000 for Agriculture, Production and Economic Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$342,000 for Agriculture, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$685,000 for Agriculture, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for Estimates of this department is item 3.1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 3.1.

The floor is open for questions.

The member for Tyndall Park has a question?

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): No question.

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,511,000 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for Agriculture.

SPORT, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Mr. Chairperson: The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of Committee of Supply is for the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Brief statement.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay.

Mrs. Cox: I would like to take this opportunity to put a few words on record and indicate that it is an honour and a privilege to serve, you know, in this capacity and in the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage, where we recognize the importance of heritage and our background. And, really, Manitoba is such a diverse and, you know, very diverse province where we really, really do cherish individuals' ability to proudly display their heritage and their background. And I am very proud to be able to promote that within the province of Manitoba.

As well, with regard to the sports area that I represent in that department, you know, we saw the Canada Summer Games, which were the very hottest summer games ever that we've seen hosted in our wonderful country, hottest summer games—we saw over 5,000 individuals volunteering their services to ensure that all of the athletes were well prepared for the competition, to ensure that all of the athletes as well were provided with support services that they needed and to ensure that all of the guests and the visitors who were here in Manitoba were welcomed with open arms. We are really the most generous province in Canada, and we know that we are also, as well, the most open province and welcoming province when it comes to welcoming newcomers and immigrants here to Manitoba. So we're so proud of our ability to welcome all individuals to our province.

And also, when it comes to culture, we know that, you know, we have such a vibrant cultural sector here in Manitoba. We're proud to support the Winnipeg Art Gallery—just recently announced a \$10-million contribution to the Inuit Art Centre, which is the largest Inuit art display in the entire world.

Looking at a \$10-million contribution as well that we made to the Royal Aviation Museum, which

is very significant and will, you know, ensure that we can have the story told, the story of flight and our background and where we originated from with regard to our very, very diverse and important aviation industry. So that's very important as well.

And then another important area in my department was the \$5-million contribution that we just made to the heritage trust, and that is \$5 million that is going to be provided to community museums and archives so that they will have the ability to invest in their own community museums. We know that museums really are able to tell a community's story, and we know the importance of that.

I've had the opportunity to take my granddaughters to many of the museums here in Manitoba, and it really does provide them with that opportunity to learn about our background, learn about our rich history. Even when I was up in Thompson—and I met with Mayor Fenske when I was up there, actually, had the opportunity to talk to him about our rich history and talk about the museum and all of the very, very important things that they do out there with regard to promoting their history and their culture. So it really was a wonderful experience when I was there.

Also, taking the two little granddaughters to the aviation museum, as I said, a fantastic opportunity for them. And it, you know, it really is a hands-on experience for them, so it's wonderful for them to be able to experience that.

And, of course, the Manitoba Museum, when we were there recently, and they love the diorama of the buffalo there. They love the—to see the Nonsuch, which is really, really something to see, especially when we were able to go into the bowels of the ship, actually, where they had the cargo. They kept it open for a little extended period of time, so we had the ability to actually go down there and see it. And they were so impressed by the ability to see how those individuals travelled across that very, very vast ocean and came here with all of their treasures. So, you know, it really was a really very humbling experience them to—experience for them to be able to see that, to participate in that experience. And I am so looking forward, actually, to seeing the changes and the renovations that are going to take place when they open the Nonsuch again very soon.

So, you know, our government really does invest, and we know the importance of our culture and heritage sector. We're investing, making investments just this week. We invested another

\$5 million in the alarm system at the Centennial Concert Hall because we know that safety is important for all Manitobans.

*(15:40)

So we're not neglecting the sports and culture sector, you know, as it has been neglected in the past, and we are ensuring that we put the resources in there so that the capital will continue to be available for other individuals to see, to welcome visitors from all across the country, all across the world, to our world-class facilities and our world-class heritage museum archives that we have here in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for her opening statement.

Does official opposition critic have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: I can make one, if you like.

Mr. Chairperson: The member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): We'll want to thank the minister for that opening statement.

We're mindful of the austerity agenda that's been followed by the Pallister government since April 2016, and it shows up in any number of departments, whether it's Education or Health or in Families, certainly in relation to housing and child care. The list goes on and on. But it is also true in Sport, Culture and Heritage as well.

The minister bragged, frankly, about commitments made to the museum and to the Inuit Art Centre, but we recognize that those are, in fact, cuts from what was actually committed by the former government, quite significant and substantial cuts that have only put the burden back on those fine institutions to raise additional dollars at the expense of doing what government ought to do and should do, which is to fully be a full partner in the construction of these important culture and heritage institutions.

Just the other day in question period, and maybe for—over two successive days, my friend from Logan asked a number of questions regarding a new recreation centre in the south of Winnipeg, but we're mindful that there are other parts of Winnipeg and across Manitoba that need those investments. In the last election campaign, our government had, in fact, committed to investing substantially more dollars

in investments in local communities, be they local to neighbourhoods such as mine; Fort Garry community club was on the list of those that would be rebuilt and—in order to satisfy a growing population in my community. And we're pleased to be able to have so many. But other communities, south end of Winnipeg, as my friend from Logan indicated, but in the northwest part, northeast parts of Winnipeg also growing substantially. And yet there's been no government action in that regard. In fact, we've been met by significant silence.

All that to say, Mr. Chair, that while the minister wants to get up and stand and stand tall around investments made by the Pallister government in this regard, the fact is that they failed Sport, Culture and Heritage in the same manner that they've failed so many other elements of Manitobans' huge and colossal need for real investments to ensure that every Manitoban has a place here in our beautiful province.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member for his comments.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 14.1.(a) contained in resolution 14.1.

Does the committee wish to proceed through Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Global.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it agreed, global? *[Agreed]*

Thank you. It is agreed that questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner with all resolutions to be passed once questioning has concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Allum: Just one, Mr. Chair, because the minister didn't answer this question in question period.

Will they be—will the government be committing funds to build a new recreational centre in south Winnipeg that is so desperately needed?

Mrs. Cox: Well, thank you for that question. Of course, you know, over the last 30 years, my involvement in community centres has been very significant. I've been on the board at Gateway Recreation Centre—which is one of the very

best recreation centres in all of the province of Manitoba, I would say—for, you know, approximately 25 years, and of those years, probably 10 years as the vice-president of programming, so very significant involvement. I was involved in the construction of the soccerplex out there, which had a significant value to our community because it provided individuals the opportunity to actually participate in soccer without having to only be able to participate outdoors, but also to have teams from, you know, different sections of the city, different parts of the province, come and participate. So it was—it's a wonderful, wonderful facility that we have there for soccer.

And you know, while I was also the vice-president of programming, I also was responsible for the convenor for soccer program out there. So for many years I convened the soccer program and not only at the—I guess initially I started out in the soccer program with the mini and micro soccer program and it—you know, it really is a very, very wonderful opportunity to participate with coaches at all levels and to be able to contribute at such an important level to teaching, you know, young children from the ages of 4 years old to 8, you know, the importance of playing soccer, the importance of sport, the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship. So that was something that really provided me with a great opportunity to learn.

Following that, I was actually the convenor of the older program, so it gave me the opportunity to learn about sports at a different level. And I just really enjoyed that opportunity to talk to, you know, younger coaches, to have them mentored as they grew into coaches and moved forward and upward into coaching at different levels. So that was a wonderful experience.

And then also, as well, involved in hockey for quite a long period of time as well. I was—managed a number of hockey teams out there at Gateway Recreation Centre, and, you know, while we didn't play at the very elite level, we had, you know, so much fun, and just the athletes enjoyed it so much. It was actually almost a social engagement for parents.

You know, we participated at every game and had the opportunity to cheer on our teams. It was—it really was a fantastic time in my life and my husband's life and our three sons' lives to be able to participate in those sports organizations at all levels, to tell you the truth.

We had the opportunity to travel out of town a few times and, you know, I would like to just again say a few words of sadness and pay tribute to Humboldt for the significant losses that they saw. I mean, each and every one of us were affected; our lives were affected forever by this very significant loss that we saw. And we know that those poor parents are going to suffer those tragedies forever. So each and every one of us can attest to the sadness that we witnessed as a result of that.

And anyways, getting off of that topic, yes, you know, so I have been involved for a very long time. I really do realize the importance of recreation centres in Manitoba, in the city of Winnipeg, and how they really do build individuals and their personalities and build their self-esteem here in—when they have the ability to play sports. So I would say that, you know, being attached, being connected, being the vice-president at Gateway Recreation Centre, it really did provide me the opportunity to realize the importance of the sports and the teamwork, the camaraderie, the social skills that the athletes learn as a result of participating in sport organizations and sporting activities.

So, you know, going forward, I would say that, you know, recreation centres are an important part of our city of Winnipeg, and we know that they are funded by the City of Winnipeg. And we provide basket funding to the municipality of Winnipeg, and they have the ability to make those decisions where, in fact, they will spend that money for—whether it be for transit, whether it be for recreation services, whether it be for other services that they provide throughout the city of Winnipeg, and we're very proud to be able to fund the City of Winnipeg and provide them with the money that gives them that ability to determine how they want to spend their dollars.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): My questions are very condensed, and I'd appreciate short answers too, if at all possible, just to get through the committee here.

My first question is: What is the status of the cultural policy review?

* (15:50)

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that question. And, you know, it was nearly 30 years since we've had the last cultural policy review. So, over the many years, the

17 years of the former government in power, we never did have a cultural policy review.

And we realized that it was important to reach out to the community, reach out to the artists, reach out to the performing artists, artists from all different sectors. And, of course, you know, now we also look at the digital sector, which is very important. Things have changed significantly over 30 years.

So my former—the predecessor, Minister Squires, did an excellent job, actually, of reaching out. *[interjection]* Oh, sorry.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, I must interrupt. We cannot use the names, we must use—refer to the person by title. *[interjection]*

Sorry, I guess I didn't recognize you, and my apologies.

The Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox).

Mrs. Cox: Thank you. Now, do I start all over again?

Mr. Chairperson: Whatever you want to put on—whatever you'd like to put on record, yes.

The honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage.

Mrs. Cox: Thank you very much, and we'll just back up a bit and start again.

Anyways, it has been 30 years since the last cultural policy review had been undertaken, and that was actually under the former sports—or the Culture minister, which was Bonnie Mitchelson.

And Bonnie Mitchelson actually sat in the same office that I actually am honoured to be able to work from and to be able to sit at that same desk as Bonnie did, because she really was an icon when it came to politics. And she was the longest—or is the longest female MLA in all of Canada, so very proud of that.

But, anyways, so Bonnie did undertake a cultural policy review 30 years ago, and so, as a result of that, we realized that, you know, things have changed significantly within culture in the province of Manitoba and within Canada and the entire world, as a matter of fact.

So, while the former government had 17 years to conduct a review, you know, they never did undertake that challenge, and we realized that it was necessary to do that. I mean, back when Bonnie Mitchelson undertook that review, there were no cellphones. So things have changed significantly.

And then later on, back in the late 1990s, there were cellphones, but they were the size of a shoe, you know, and so, I mean, that's also very humorous, so it's a good way to put things into perspective, how things have really changed so significantly. Now we carry around these devices, and, you know, it's really a mini-computer.

But, anyways, going back to the cultural policy review, yes, the former minister did go out and had significant connection, outreach, with many of the different organizations throughout the entire province. And I did have the opportunity to actually read many of the results that came back from individuals who responded over at those meetings. They also had a survey online. They also had the opportunity to invite people here into the building and talk to them and listen from, not only stakeholders and artists and things like that, but also the major individuals, people from the Manitoba Museum, people from the archives, people from the Hudson's Bay Company, for example, people from the Business Council, people from—stakeholders from very, very different sectors.

And so, as a result of that, we realized that we really did need to make some changes. So what we're doing right now is we've compiled the information and we've actually tried to categorize all of the different areas, developing some pillars, because we know that it's important that we are able to tell—are able to engage with the arts and the culture sector. And, moving forward, we've realized that it's really important to listen to them, to have a dialogue with them, have a healthy dialogue with them.

We do have a committee, and so based on all of these discussions, the dialogue, the results from the surveys, we are compiling a document. And we want to make sure that it is reflective of Manitoba and the very, very warm and important and, I guess, vibrant cultural sector that we have here in Manitoba. We have so many wonderful events that take place here. Nuit Blanche, for example, you know, a whole entire weekend where we have the ability, actually, to, you know, walk side by side with the artists and visit and—am I done?

Mr. Chairperson: The minister's time has expired.

Ms. Lamoureux: The next question I have for the minister is: Will the cultural policy review committee have the opportunity to review the draft version? And a yes or no will suffice.

Mrs. Cox: It—thank you so much for that question. It really is hard to give a yes-or-no answer at this point in time because we are, you know, currently developing the document. And it is a fluid document because, you know, you take a look at the pillars and what is really necessary to be in that document just based on the fact that things have changed so significantly over 30 years.

So I would say that as we develop that document, we will, in fact, make that decision. But, you know, we are an inclusive and open government, so I'm certain that that will be something that we will consider. Thank you.

Ms. Lamoureux: I thank you for the answer.

The next question is: When will the final document be made publicly available?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you so much, and as you can appreciate, I mean, 30 years is a long time. So there's been significant changes that have taken place, and we have to evaluate all of the surveys, survey responses, all of the information that we've been able to learn from those discussions from all of those rural meetings that we had, all of the urban meetings that we had. So we hope to have that out very soon.

Thank you.

Ms. Lamoureux: Recognizing that the film and television productions select filming locations anywhere from 12 to 24 months in advance, will the government act on the recommendations of the tax credit committee in a timely manner?

Mrs. Cox: Yes, and that's a really good question because, I mean, we have seen, you know, significant growth in that sector. You know, we were expecting \$129 million in production, you know—when was that—in 2016, and really went from \$129 million to \$160 million. So it's significant. And they really do provide us with, you know, so much opportunity here in Manitoba for jobs, for tourism. People like to come here and actually just witness the—what's going on here with filming.

And actually, in my community of River East, just down the street from me, they have trailers just—probably 20 of them there right now, and they're actually filming Channel Zero, which is a wonderful Manitoba production. Very proud of it. And I actually had the opportunity, actually, to stop in yesterday and talk to the Manitoba film working group yesterday evening. And, you know, they have all sorts of wonderful ideas and suggestions. They're compiling that information.

And, you know, I really do welcome the opportunity to hear their suggestions. I mean, we have compiled this group of real industry experts here in Manitoba. You know, you've got individuals like Jeff Peeler, Ian—in—Ian Dimerman. We've got Rob from the IATSE. We've got individuals from each and every sector of the film industry.

So it's going to be a wonderful, wonderful product that we expect from them. And so, moving forward, I know that they're going to provide us with something. And, you know, we are going to be able to take a look at the 'directure'—direction that they're pointing us in, you know, that our government realizes the importance of the film industry here. We realize that it is a booming industry.

You take a look in Selkirk, Manitoba, for instance; they had Terms of Endearment, and that has been scheduled for a second year. And the amount of money that they injected into the town of Selkirk was significant. I know I talked to the member representing Selkirk, and we were at the event when they did the opening and the announcement of that TV series. And it's just been significant, what they've provided to the city of Selkirk in—during that filming time.

So, you know, we look forward to hearing the recommendations, hearing from that working group, that very dynamic working group, on how we can point the film industry in the right direction and make it even better than what it currently is.

* (16:00)

Ms. Lamoureux: The newly formed Manitoba 150 Celebration Committee has invited citizens, art organizations and others to suggest activities to mark Manitoba's 150th anniversary. Will this committee be awarded the necessary dedicated funds to invest in the great ideas that are being generated?

Mrs. Cox: As I said, you know, in Manitoba we have so much to celebrate here and our 150th anniversary coming up in 2020. And not only is it Manitoba's 150th anniversary, but it is also HBC, their 350th anniversary, and this Manitoba Legislature's 100th anniversary. So there's going to be a lot of really exciting activities taking place here. And I was really very fortunate to roll that Manitoba 150 Celebration Committee out at the Manitoba Museum, on Manitoba Day, just a few weeks ago. It was a wonderful celebration where we had individuals from all over the province participating, you know, newcomers. We had individuals from the museum itself. We had individuals who actually had projects there on display. We had individuals from the indigenous and Metis communities.

So we are very proud of that working group or the committee that we have compiled. It really is very representative of all individuals from Manitoba, just like Manitoba is such a diverse community, and we wanted to ensure that we had a very diverse and broad range of individuals on that committee. So, absolutely thrilled to be able to co-chair that with Stuart Murray, and I know that he's also very thrilled to do that as well.

As well, we also have—excuse me one moment—as well, we have individuals from all over the entire province. We have individuals from Churchill to Winkler, from Virden, all the way to the Whiteshell. And so we expect to have a very great discussion, a lot of great suggestions, and I welcome everybody in this room, if you have suggestions, we look forward to hearing from them. Thank you.

Ms. Lamoureux: Can the minister tell us how the 150th celebration committee will be compensated for their work on the committee?

Mrs. Cox: You know, Manitobans are so generous with their time and volunteerism. We are really the most generous, I think, in all of Canada. And so, as a matter of, you know, just to relate to that, there is no compensation paid to those individuals; there's no remuneration. They do it out of the goodness of their hearts because it's something that they're absolutely thrilled to participate on.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): We thank the minister for her participation, and I think we're good to go.

Mr. Chairperson: Hearing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department.

I will now call resolution 14.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$75,987,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Sport, Culture and Heritage Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,206,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Information Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$92,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$100,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item considered for the Estimates of this department is item 14.1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 14.1.

The floor is open for questions.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,310,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage. This also includes our consideration of the Estimates in this section—concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255.

I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedication during this process.

Committee rise.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

* (15:20)

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume the consideration for the Estimates for the Department of Sustainable Development. At this time, we invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

Okay, as previously agreed, the question for the department will proceed with a global manner—on a global manner. Now the floor is open for questions.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): We're ready for the question. And I'm the one who's been asking the questions, so, yes, nothing further.

Mr. Chairperson: Nothing further? Okay. No other questions.

We'll proceed with Resolution 2 point—12.2. Okay, RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$71,647,000. I'll just read this over again. Seven hundred—sorry, exceeding \$71,647,000 for the Sustainable Development, Parks and Regional Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Shall the resolution pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The resolution is accordingly passed.

Resolution 12.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,247,000 for Sustainable Development, Environmental Stewardship, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'm just wondering what will happen if someone says no.

Mr. Chairperson: There will be a voice vote and then, potentially, a recorded vote.

The honourable member for Assiniboia? You're fine. Okay.

Resolution 12.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,633,000 for Sustainable Development, Water Stewardship and Biodiversity, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,214,000 for Sustainable Development, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

* (15:20)

Resolution 12.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum—exceeding \$14,465,000 for Sustainable Development, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2019.

Resolution agreed to.

At this time the consideration for the Estimates for the department, item No. 13.1, the minister's salary, as contained in resolution 13.1—or 12.1. Sorry—it should be 12.1.(a), that minister's salary be contained in resolution 12.1.

At this point we—okay, I guess the staff is already out of the Chamber. The floor is now open for questions. Any questions from the member from Wolseley?

Mr. Altemeyer: Just to confer more on the ministerial salary line item.

Obviously, we have some pretty major concerns about what is going on in this department. We also have some very major concerns about what is not going on in this department, the issue that I just raised today in question period being a very serious one, and to be perfectly honest, it didn't get a very serious answer.

We have been sounding the alarm about the way that the government has gone about changing fundamentally the freshwater fishery and the rules and practices surrounding that. The fishers themselves have spoken up on no small number of occasions, calling this government to account, indicating that the regulations, for instance, that the government was all set to impose on them had been done without any conversations with the fishers themselves.

Never mind the glaring inaccuracies between what the government said was going to happen once they eliminated the single desk for the fisheries and what has actually happened. You now have a scenario where, as near as I can tell from the many, many hours I have spent on the phone with fishers and those associated with the industry so far—I'm sure

there'll be many more hours to come—is that they—the only fishers who are not with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation are the ones who ended up selling their fish to a company called Northern Walleye, and they never got paid for their product.

And I can't imagine that they would have signed up to support the government in its move if they knew that not only were they not going to be getting a better price for their fish, they were going to be getting no price at all, and the government has done absolutely nothing to help those four fish sheds. There's been no compensation, there's been no acknowledgment of responsibility, and perhaps the biggest insult of all is the fish dealer in question, Northern Walleye, can still operate in Manitoba, and it says right in the regulations that the—or the law, rather, that the minister brought in, that fishers have to be paid within a set period of time for the catch that they provide to a private fish dealer.

So this company has broken the rules. The government has launched a claims and investigation. They're not saying anything about the status of that investigation. They haven't provided any updates despite numerous requests on who has been contacted, what evidence has been gathered, why they continued to support the fish dealer in question. And this same fish dealer is the one who threatened the reputation of the entire Manitoba freshwater fishery because you cannot have a situation where contaminated containers are used to export product from Manitoba and expect that not to send negative reverberations throughout the entire fish industry.

What does that say to our international buyers? What does that say to the remaining fishers in Manitoba who are wondering just what the heck is this government doing, because it sure as heck is not defending the interests of fishers.

So I very much regret that we do not have enough time under Estimates, or today, to properly call this minister to account. She inherited an absolute mess, which, admittedly, was started by her predecessor, but all she has done so far is to try and cover up that mess, because it would be exceptionally embarrassing for this government if word got out about what has actually happened. And so we will not be bringing forward a motion—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Wolseley.

Mr. Altemeyer: Yes, and this is just one issue of many where this government has completely dropped the ball and actually made things worse for Manitobans, worse for our little part of the planet here than it was when we started. So I very much hope to continue to bring good ideas forward, but this government needs to get its act together.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the honourable member—the honourable minister have a comment?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Sure, I—there were just far too many misinformed allegations in that lengthy and windy preamble from the member opposite to address here. I'm not going to waste time, I'm not going to waste everyone's time in this House to refute the facts that he's—or refute the claims that he's trying to allege as fact. We know that he's got a record of, in this House, of trying to uncover smoking guns that clearly do not exist.

But what—and you—for the record, I don't take offence to this member's petty insults and his personal attacks. But what I do take offence to is when he besmirches the good work of my special investigation unit and our chief conservation officer who has dedicated significant resources and time and effort into this investigation of the unacceptable delay in payment and other allegations relating to one of the dealers involved in this unfortunate situation.

And so I do regret that the member opposite—he doesn't know the fullness of the investigation and he also doesn't know that there are things that we cannot say that are under investigation. We can't put that on the record, because it would impede the investigation, and we are working with multiple stakeholders involved. And, if I were to reveal everything that is known throughout the course of this investigation, well, it would certainly not be a very full investigation. And it would be, certainly, a hindrance to the special investigation unit that is taking this very seriously.

So, again, I don't really care if this member wants to continue to take potshots at me. I know he's possibly filled with envy that he sees our government taking action on things that his government failed to do. They failed to address the environmental issues. They—the Auditor General came forward with a report that lambasted them on their—not only did they not set any targets, they had absolutely no plan in place to achieve any carbon emission reductions. They're responsible for the destruction

of a provincial park. They're responsible for the destruction of Lake Winnipeg.

And I know, member opposite, he's embarrassed about that and he's remorseful about his time in office and that he didn't find his voice to champion the environment when his government was in power and with his former environment ministers. When Gord Mackintosh said, well, you know, too bad, Lake Winnipeg is a lost cause, but we have 100,000 other lakes to concern ourselves with, he said nothing. When Greg Selinger said, you know, I'm going to give these environmental licences to people in my own backyard and then a year later come and say, you know, I really regret what I did. And—but the member opposite, he—where did—where was his voice when his own government was issuing licences to industries in their own—in the premier's own backyard, where was his voice in advocating for the better protection of this environment?

So I get that the member, he's bitter, he's coming to his end of his time here in this House and he's bitter, perhaps, about his legacy. But I take no offence of any of that. What I do take offence to is his criticism of somebody who I find to be personally—he's an admirable, outstanding individual, my chief conservation officer who's headed up this special investigation unit, he is a true public servant in every aspect of the job, and I commend him and I support the work that he's doing and I look forward to the conclusion of this investigation.

* (15:30)

Mr. Fletcher: Okay. Thank you for the opportunity. My questions will be measured and short.

May I make a comment about the previous comments made by the minister, and I think there's a lot of 'validity' there insofar as, obviously, you can't comment on an ongoing investigation, can't comment on court proceedings. The Legislature can't comment on court proceedings, for sure. It's call the *sub judice* rule, or that's the tradition. That's why ministers are asked—when they're asked about a criminal case, like, say, Paul Bernardo, ministers say, no comment, because they don't want to be in contempt of court. Or judges won't comment because they don't want to unduly influence the Legislature. There's a boundary there. Bill 4 violates that boundary, but that's not what we're here to talk about.

My simple question to the minister—look, the minister has inherited a number of nightmares.

Perhaps she's acquired a few nightmares and perhaps there are many nightmares to come, but my question is just this, since we're in Estimates, the funding from your department comes from consolidated revenue: Would that be a correct statement?

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for—you have to conclude it—question?

Mr. Fletcher: Okay. That's part one. Second question is: If it comes from consolidated revenue and the carbon tax goes into consolidated revenue, how much of that carbon tax is the government allocating to her department, if any? Thank you.

Ms. Squires: The member asked a question about the carbon revenue that our government is intending to receive, and as members opposite knows, what we've said in the past is that governments want to put a tax on pollution and other things that we don't want in society and free up taxes on things that we do want in society, such as economic growth and individual prosperity.

So our government is putting a price signal on carbon dioxide to lower consumption of—or, lower the production of emissions going into our atmosphere and I can share with the member that our modelling—and we used two different models. We used the federal model and then we used a model that was used by other provincial jurisdictions to see exactly how much carbon emission reductions we will achieve based on the price signal alone, and we found that the price signal alone would create 1.07 megatons, which is 80,000 tons more in emission reductions than the federal backstop would. So, on the price alone, we're going to show that we're going to be pulling 1.07 megatons of carbon out of the environment over a five-year period of time.

Now, in terms of the revenue from that price cycle—price signal, pardon me, we have also said that we are wanting to give Manitobans a break. We know that Manitobans—when we inherited a government—and the member talked about things that I had inherited that were not so favourable. Let me tell you, when we inherited government, the deficit that was fast approaching \$1 billion and the debt that had doubled under—in the last four years under the previous administration, that was unfavourable. And that was a mess that we'd inherited.

And we know that the members opposite—the NDP government's response to that escalating and unchecked deficit and that ballooning debt was just to jack up taxes. And I know my colleague, the

Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) here, he's typing away beside me here, and he's been working very, very furiously since he became Minister of Finance, very diligently, to bring down that—the debt, bring down the deficit and also reduce taxes.

So what we're going to do is give all those taxes back. The carbon tax, the price signal, will be revenue-neutral. We're going to give that all back to Manitobans over a four-year period of time because we do believe that Manitobans deserve a break.

And the thing that our government is doing is we are reducing carbon emissions; we're reducing taxes; we're reducing the deficit, all at the same time. And when we compare that to members' opposite record, they—carbon emissions grew under their—every year under their time in government. Taxes grew maybe not quite every year, but a good, substantial amount of times during their—well, for bracket creep—pardon me—it did grow every year under their government. And the debt—we know that the debt ballooned from, I believe, \$12 billion to \$24 billion in just a few short years under Greg Selinger's time as premier. And the deficit was fast approaching \$1 billion when we inherited office. So we are certainly looking at going in a different direction.

Mr. Fletcher: Okay. Somehow, we found ourselves in one of my favourite topics, and that is GHGs, particulates, aerosols. And Manitoba's GHG emission estimates vary between 18 and 22. So let's just make the math easy and say it's 20 megatons a year, which is, like, a fraction of what Canada emits as a whole. So, if the plan is to reduce GHGs by one megaton over five years—over five years—that's an—only a 1 per cent reduction.

So let me—let's just confirm this. Five—because we're using 20 as the—so 5 per cent of—like, five—yes, it's 5 per cent over five years. So it's 1 per cent per year. Now, I don't have any notes in front of me, so I could be making a mistake. But that is certainly within the margin of error.

The models that the minister has—I—it would be wonderful if we could get those models. Because even the Liberal—federal Liberal government can't seem to answer the question on how much greenhouse gases or other pollutants can be or will be reduced using the carbon tax. The Liberal—the feds can't even do that.

* (15:40)

Now, so there's a couple of questions there for the minister, which I look forward to hearing.

And I feel sorry for those who are listening, now that we're talking about megaton-carbon-equivalent blah-blah-blah. But it's important because the measurements of these GHGs has always been on the emissions side. It's always on the emissions side. Manitoba gets no credit for the boreal forest, for the tundra, for our farming methods. No, no credit. And that's not fair to Manitoba because we have many, what they would call, carbon sinks, which—that issue alone undermines the entire carbon tax argument—the entire argument.

There are carbon-pricing that may reduce GHGs, an avenue, we ran—her, the minister and I ran on a platform of reducing carbon taxes, or reducing—looking at carbon prices to reduce GHGs. The problem is the type of carbon pricing the government has chosen does not reduce GHGs. Not by one molecule. So, in addition to the standard deviation of any one year, natural influences, man-made influences, the lack of data on carbon sinks and—by the way, I love carbon sinks, and we could really have a good conversation about that—but if the minister could share with us the modelling that, apparently, Ottawa cannot share with us.

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

Ms. Squires: And I really do enjoy my conversations with the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) when it comes to carbon sinks and, generally, the environment as a whole. And what I—we disagree on several key points though. But I do want to assure him that I will get him a copy of our technical background with the modelling that we had used. It is on the website that he can go to. He can go to madeinmanitobaclimateandgreenplan.ca, or I'll get him the website and also get him the copy of that technical background that does show our modelling.

But I do want to share with the member that the price signal, we alone would take out that specific number. Just over a mega-ton of carbon emissions over a five-year period of time. Now that is what we would do if—that is the results that the modelling confirms for us, based on a price signal alone. We know that that's not the extent of our carbon reduction plan. We invested this year \$102 million in a conservation trust, the largest single investment to conservation in this province's history. And that conservation trust, year-over-year, will give money to other green initiatives, such as the restoration of wetlands, which, again, is a great carbon sink, and it

can be used on myriad projects to enhance green infrastructure in the province.

So there's never been in this province's history, under—well, at least in the last 17 years under the NDP—a dedicated stream of funds for the enhancement of green infrastructure. And so that is going to have positive benefits for our environment, and we'll certainly bring down more carbon emission reductions than the price signal in and of itself. We also have \$40 million in green funds to invest in the province, that we are going to ensure that we do investments that are strategic to get us the most carbon emissions per dollar invested. And we'll be looking at initiatives that we can do, to—as we spend that \$40 million to ensure that we're pulling greenhouse gases out of the environment, as we're investing in green technology.

So we're anticipating doing a whole lot more than just what we initially announced and what's being initially discussed here with the price signal. We've got a very robust Climate and Green Plan. In fact, our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan—64-paged document of robust ideas on how to better protect the environment.

Mr. Fletcher: Again, this has turned out to be a much better afternoon than I had anticipated. The—and, for those listening, the questions and answers that we're going to be having for the next hour and a half are going to be done: I'll ask questions, and the minister's going to answer them. But it's going to be done in a respectful way. They're good questions and good answers. None of this is personal.

So let's talk about the carbon tax. I'll argue that the carbon tax will not reduce carbon emissions, especially in a cold place like Manitoba. Now, I think, if I understand what the minister's saying is, that there will be some of that carbon tax invested in a fund that would be designed to help the environment in other ways. But the problem with that is if it's a government priority, it should be done, but it should be done without raising taxes. It's not going to reduce any carbon. I'm interested in the minister's comments on the—because this is related to how and where this minister's getting the funds. Is it consolidated revenue? Is it earmarked? Sounds like some of it's earmarked. But the made-in-Manitoba green fund is \$25 a ton, right off the bat, year one, once it's implemented. And then it is said that that will stay level in perpetuity.

The problem—there are many problems with that logic, not the least of which Manitobans end up

paying 250 times the amount that even Ottawa is asking, on the carbon tax. It also assumes that this will be federal government policy in the future. And it might be, and it might not be. A lot of people think that the federal government composition's going to change in a year, that there will be a Conservative government in Ottawa. So now Manitoba's going to be stuck with the \$25 per ton. Apparently, the associated spending, like this \$100-million fund, which could be found—monies could be found from other places—and there'll be no more carbon tax requirements from Ottawa. And what's even—maybe we'll do this in the next set of questions, but, to give the minister a heads-up, maybe she can try and pre-empt. Ottawa's going to impose 50 bucks anyway. So, if it—if the current Prime Minister stays in, Manitoba is going to be paying twice as much. And, if the alternatives get in, Andrew Scheer, Manitoba won't have to be—won't have to pay any carbon tax, but it'll be stuck with \$25 a ton and a bunch of spending, much of it in this minister's office.

So I'd like to know how the minister plans to cut—axe the carbon tax.

* (15:50)

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

Ms. Squires: Well, thank you very much, and from my perspective it's interesting to watch the member opposite. He talks about the federal election and ears are just perking up all over the place across the way. I know that—lots of interest in that upcoming federal election and lots of people looking to—*[interjection]* I know my friend from Elmwood there, he's laughing. Maybe he's looking to run back to Ottawa himself again in the upcoming election. And I know my friend from Assiniboia also has interest in Ottawa, and I wish him all the best in Ottawa. And I suspect that's not the last that we'll see from members on the opposite way in their desires to go east.

But, in relation to the question that he's asking about whether or not I have a crystal ball underneath my desk and can see what's going to happen in the upcoming federal election, I don't want to even make any predictions or make any speculations as to who's going to be the Prime Minister after the next federal election. Our government was elected on a promise to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy. And we're fulfilling our mandate. We're focused on our mandate here in Manitoba.

My mandate as the Minister of Sustainable Development is to look at implementing a climate and green plan that will reduce carbon emissions. We've done extensive modelling. I will get the member the technical backgrounder with that modelling laid out so he can see how we've done this modelling. And we're moving forward with a plan to reduce carbon emissions in our atmosphere here in Manitoba. And we think that we need to do our part and be leaders in signalling to the rest of the province and the rest of the country and hopefully the rest of the world that climate change is real. Climate change needs to be addressed seriously.

We heard our Premier (Mr. Pallister) talk earlier today that these devastating forest fires are—and the direction of the—the unpredictable nature of some of the fires that we're battling are undoubtedly linked to changing climate here in Manitoba. We're going to continue to see devastating effects of climate change. And we're going to ensure that we do our part to reduce our carbon footprint and to be responsible stewards of the environment.

Nothing is more important when I think about my little grandchildren. I have a four-year-old grandson and a one-year-old grandson. And when I think about the future that they're going to—when I think about their future and the planet that they're going to inherit, I certainly—I want them in 30 or 40 or 50 years to look back and say, you know, that generation made some tough decisions and—but really moved forward in reducing climate change, and we're grateful for that. And so I think about that on a regular basis, and very proud of our government's initiative to be responsible stewards of the environment.

Mr. Chairperson: Any other questions?

Mr. Fletcher: I'd like to thank the minister for her answer, and I agree.

You know what, I just heard a rumour that the minister is running in the next federal election. I just heard it a moment ago. *[interjection]* Well, you know, it's—know what I just heard? I just heard another minister being implicated. And that minister, actually, has a seat open. Oh my God, what party? Maybe it's not even one of the parties—Mr. Chair, I just heard that the Agriculture Minister is planning to run for the Bloc Québécois, and I—the rumours are rife and I—coincidentally, I heard that in my head about a nanosecond before I said it.

And, seriously, I think I'm correct that the minister is responsible for—oh, I know you want to say it—Efficiency Manitoba. Is that—can someone indicate with a nod? Okay. So I have a lot of problems with it, and Manitobans have a lot of issues with Efficiency Manitoba, but I'd like to break this down a little bit.

In part 2, section 4(1) of the legislation, it talks about reducing hydroelectric power consumption in Manitoba by about 1.5 per cent in each year. I wonder—now, this is hydroelectric power, reducing the demand with 100 per cent clean power.

I wonder, and I understand I have other questions, so I'll just leave it at that. What effect does reducing electricity demand, which is the greenest in the world, what effect does that have on the environment, on GHGs?

Lake Winnipeg's the reservoir and the—secondly, what effect does reduced demand have on the finances of Hydro? And it's relevant, because it's Efficiency Manitoba that is reducing the demand for a product that we have too much of.

But—we can go down, clause by clause, in Efficiency Manitoba, but let's focus on the first one, electricity consumption. What effect does that have on the environment, to reduce the consumption of electricity in the Manitoba context, Mr. Speaker?

That is my question. I'm done.

Ms. Squires: I will—I'll seek to answer a part of that question, but I'm also going to seek clarification.

I'm—I believe that the member is asking me a question about something that is under the minister of Crowns purview, and, if he wants to suspend Estimates for Sustainable Development and segue into minister—into Crown Services, I'd be willing to accommodate that.

I think we can seek leave of this House to transition into that, if that is the will of the member. I see some people are shaking their heads. There's people shaking their heads no.

So I'm going to endeavour to answer that question, because it is a serious question that does deserve a serious answer. And, while Efficiency Manitoba is an entity that we all ran on in the last election, including the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), it was a great idea that turned into a great initiative headed up by our minister of Crowns.

And, in relation to greenhouse gas emissions, when we save electricity here in Manitoba, whether we're saving electricity for and creating more electricity available for future consumption within our own province or outside of our own borders, that is a positive aspect for the environment.

* (16:00)

For example, there is a coal plant—one coal plant in Alberta creates more carbon emissions than all of Manitoba. So, if Manitoba electricity, when the future development occurs and we are able to export more of our clean, renewable resource to other jurisdictions, and if we're able to help even one other jurisdiction reduce their reliance on coal, that is going to have a net benefit for the environment because the member knows Alberta's carbon is Manitoba's carbon. Saskatchewan carbon is Manitoba's carbon. Saudi Arabia's carbon is Manitoba's carbon. It works that way. And he knows that.

So, if we're able to export our clean, renewable electricity, and that we—if we have more clean, renewable electricity to export and to make available for people as they're transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable resources, we will be pulling carbon out of the air and reducing our overall greenhouse gas emissions. So, in that end, the more we save, the more we have to use in other sources, and people can switch from fossil fuels to electricity, and they can be assured that that reliable, renewable resource will be available for them. And we're excited about that. So we're moving forward with our legislated targets for consumption reduction.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'd like to move a motion.

I move, seconded by the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that line item 12.1.(a) be amended so that the Minister of Sustainable Development's salary be reduced to \$33,600.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is in order.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Mr. Swan: Yes, well, of course, we have a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who, when he's not hanging around the pool in Costa Rica, tells us it's all hands on deck. But it is a shame that the Premier spends weeks and weeks and weeks of the year and, of course, admonishes Manitobans to try to do more with less.

Of course, that doesn't mean that everybody on that side of the House or this side of the House has benefited. In fact, it's been pay freezes not just for civil servants, pay freezes for backbench MLAs, but, of course, it's meant a 20 per cent increase for those Cabinet members.

So I know as we look around the Chamber, we actually have a majority of those of us taking a pay freeze. And all this would do is to roll back this minister's salary to a very reasonable amount and not have this minister—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mr. Swan: —take a 20 per cent pay increase.

So for those reasons, I would—I'm sure that every backbench MLA, whatever party they may happen to be from, will support this motion, Mr. Chair.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I have a member—I see a no.

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, I'd like to make a few comments, if I may.

You know, it's interesting, that of all the issues that exist, that the only one the opposition brings forward is about ministers' salaries. It's the only one. Like, there—like, we were just in the middle of fundamental principles of discussion, and the NDP just want to cut salaries. *[interjection]*

Yes. That's all they want to do. That's—they could vote on other things, but that is what they want to—you know, I was a minister a long time ago in a land far away. And ministers do a lot that we don't see. We don't see them in the committees that they have to attend. We don't see them often at home because they're out at events speaking. They're asked to do a lot of travel.

So, to just say, well, let's just do—let's just reduce the salaries of the ministers—I voted against every one of these motions and I haven't said anything yet, but for some reason today I am. I am going to defend on the—on principle the fact that ministers have greater responsibility and they have a different level of responsibility which should be 'commensurate' in salary. Like, that is a principle that exists in the private sector.

Now, I love the NDP sometimes. I find them in a public-policy way quite adorable. The NDP just cut everything when it comes to anything—cut anything except things that benefit the NDP, but they don't recognize the fundamental importance of risk, responsibility, that not everyone—everyone is born equal, but that's where the equality ends.

We have fundamental human rights in this country, but life happens, and when life happens, people end up in certain areas of responsibility. And in the case of the ministers of the Crown and the Premier, they have responsibilities and their compensation should be commensurate with that responsibility. Otherwise, why would anyone worth—who could do much better in a private or not-for-profit centre or spend more time with their family, why would people do it? It's an issue of fundamental fairness, and I hope to continue talking about this issue in one second.

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

Okay, now we'll proceed with the—any further questions?

Ms. Squires: I do want to thank my friend from Assiniboia for his questions this afternoon and for this dialogue that we've had. And I can assure my friend that even though this discussion may be coming to a close today we will certainly continue to have healthy and ongoing debate about these important issues.

But I do want to also ask my—the member from Minto who had said—who had made some—cast some aspersions that were false, and I'm just wondering if he can confirm that he gives back his COLA and exactly how the NDP caucus are giving back their COLA, whether or not they all are, whether the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), whether member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), whether the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), whether the members for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) and Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), if they're giving back their COLA, and if they can confirm how they are.

* (16:10)

We—all of our caucus here has committed to a very transparent process where we are giving our COLA back. We believe that the tone is set at the top and have taken that seriously and that we—every year since we formed government, we have given back our COLA.

And I know at the time, if memory serves me correctly, I do believe that the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) and the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) and a few others went out and said, yes, yes, we're going to do the same. The member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) at the time was the acting leader of the official opposition, or the interim leader—pardon me—of the official opposition, and they went out and they had a press conference just to follow—following our press conference and said, yes, we're going to do the same. But then it's been radio silence from them ever since then.

We haven't heard whether or not they really have given back that COLA, and our caucus can confirm, and we've got a very transparent process on how we're giving that COLA back, but it certainly does beg the question, and the member for Minto in his preamble that was less than truthful and less than collegial, reminded me to ask that question about how, exactly, he's giving back that COLA, like he committed to doing so publicly when the member for Logan was his leader. And, if they've rescinded that commitment to give back their COLA, would he come clean and share with this House right now that they are, indeed, putting that COLA in their bank accounts every pay period?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan).

The question. Will—there's one more—the honourable member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Fletcher: Mr. Chair, we're in—like, there were a lot of significant issues the minister did not have the opportunity to respond to, so I'd like to continue with the question.

So, in that spirit, I would like to ask the minister—actually, I'd like to ask the Chair, are we talking about salaries or are we talking about the minister's portfolio, because though they are connected, I would like that—I think we all would like that clarification.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister—oh, sorry. Before we can continue, I want to make that the motion that came forward here, we still have a chance to debate it until everybody has had their—what we're doing right now is we're debating the question for the minister's salary, and you have the chance—the question is asked is debate and the things that's what we're going with is focusing on the performance of the minister for the salary.

Mr. Fletcher: So, Mr. Chair, I have been very critical of some aspects of this government. I don't agree with the made-in-Manitoba carbon tax. I don't agree with Efficiency Manitoba, and I don't agree with what we're doing with Manitoba Hydro. But do I agree that we should throw the baby out with the bathwater? No, I don't.

And this is what we're talking about. Are these ministers—maybe with one or two exceptions—worth compensating to the level that they are being compensated? And I think we have an issue here, and I wonder if we should go through and do an evaluation on each minister. But I have to reflect on that while we find out some clarity about what the rules are.

But, in the interim, this minister has had to deal with a broad portfolio, a lot of crossover, and if we cut the salary for one minister, what prevents the salary for all the ministers to be cut?

Now, in—I—in someone—in some people's view of an ideal world, everyone would be equal. But the only way any—everyone can be equal is everyone had no salary and that everyone was suffering and in misery for a short time, just like Thomas Hobbes said in the 16-1700s.

Now, that may be the philosophy of equalization, equal for everyone. That may be the socialism. But Manitobans, I don't think, prescribe—oh it's socialist. Sorry. I don't think Manitobans subscribe to that type of socialism. And I'm going to say it. I'm going to say it: not all MLAs are created equally after birth. And all MLAs do not necessarily have the same scope of responsibilities, just like in life.

If you go to a hospital, you have the super-specialists; you have doctors; you have nurses; you have health-care aides. They're all important, every single one of them. You couldn't run the operation. But we do have an analogous system that has been tried and true as far back as the Magna Carta, 1215. And the Bill of Rights, 15-1656. And all those things, including compensation for those who have—are charged with the responsibilities of government. It's not unique to Manitoba. It happens throughout Canada.

So why—why—would anyone in this place want to financially disadvantage people who have more responsibility, more accountability—

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

Ms. Squires: I didn't hear the question, so I'm wondering if the member could repeat that.

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, and I'd like to thank the minister. The question is complex—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: —and very deep. And that is probably why I did not have the opportunity to actually present the question. And it goes right back to the Magna Carta, you know, Shakespeare, to be or not to be. You could talk about Coleridge, water, water, everywhere, not a drop to drink.

But what we are really talking about is the value, and one of the few ways we can do in our society, the value of an individual in Canadian dollars. I guess that's something we do. It's not perfect, not perfect by a long shot. But that's the way our society's worked out, because every other method has turned out to be a fiasco.

* (16:20)

So now, let's look at what happens here. What is the value of a minister, of a premier, of a Speaker? It's public—it's a public value. And the public decides in the end. And, in fact, it doesn't matter, in many cases, where you're at; you can get unelected in many ways, and I know that. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) knows that. Members of the NDP know that. It's just part of politics. But that's where the accountability lies.

And the minister—the minister's value is illustrated through a monetary value which is 'commensurate' with other people in her same area of responsibility, just like all our salaries are commensurate as MLAs. So if we go after the minister, what are we saying about ourselves? Oh, let's go after the—there's too many of you to go after here. Let's go after the member in—we'll call him member X. Now, member X doesn't turn up, he doesn't go to committee, doesn't turn out to votes. So let's reduce that member's salary. Or let's flip it over. Let's say we should have compensation based on merit—actually a merit-based compensation system in a legislative chamber. Mr. Chair, I wonder how that would turn out. How would we measure that?

And, Mr. Chair, I wonder if, other than a reduction in salary, I'm interested if the minister has any comments of alternative methods—perhaps a meritorious compensation method. Does the minister have any comments on that?

Thank you. I have another question too.

Ms. Squires: So I think the member's question was, what is the value of a minister, and—but I'm not certain I heard that correctly, so if he could reiterate his question.

Mr. Fletcher: I was simply pointing out that we have the system we have, and unless we change the system, we probably should stick to it—maybe a meritorious system. Or we could be like the unions and just base it on seniority. Who would be that—who would that be? I bet it would be the minister from—the member from Emerson, but maybe not. Seniority—maybe? I'd like to get the minister's comment. Maybe that—maybe we should unionize and base all compensation on service in the place. Or we could do it meritoriously. Or we could do it through a self-regulating organization that regulates MLAs and sets the compensation on a set of standards.

Mr. Chair, my question to the minister is: Can she provide or would she like to be compensated in any other way other than she is and/or maybe there's a meritorious system or a union that we can create to do a better job of compensation? How does this minister feel about that?

Ms. Squires: Well, I thank the member for that question, and, when I got elected, in April of 2016, it was a real honour to represent the people of Riel, and, when I was asked by our Premier to serve in his Cabinet, it was a real honour, and I've often said that it's quite remarkable that we live in a country as great as Canada and in a province as wonderful as Manitoba that a woman from an underprivileged background, such as from where I come from, could actually one day achieve public—holding public office. And so it is an honour that I am deeply humbled to have, and it's a privilege.

And so I come to work every day committed to serving my constituents of Riel and fulfilling my mandate as the Minister of Sustainable Development and responsible for Francophone Affairs and Status of Women and serving in this government, and those are the questions that I concern myself with. My compensation is not something I pay a lot of attention to and how I receive my compensation and where—you know, other ways that we could receive compensation, those aren't questions that I have dwelled on. So I'm not really equipped to answer that question.

Mr. Fletcher: I thank the minister for that respectful and thoughtful answer, and I think the minister touched on something quite important, that I think

we would all agree that if we could do this job or have these responsibilities for free without a salary, we would probably all do it, but most of us are from the middle class. We can't afford to spend time not earning an income. Some people think we earn a lot. A lot of people think we earn a little, but it is set at what it is.

There's been a consensus that if you are a premier, a minister or an assistant to a minister, the compensation should be commensurate with the responsibility. So, Mr. Chair, I—it doesn't—now, I haven't decided if I'm going to agree with the opposition or not, if the minister's salary should be reduced, but I just see so many double standards, hypocrisy in that this is what is brought up. This is the motion every time in this place. We really want to get the Premier and council; we're going to go after Estimates, his salary. And we'll do it again for Infrastructure, and we'll do it again for whomever, over and over again. Don't come to highlight anything else—how many hours have we spent doing this over the last couple of years? Ironic. Ironic, indeed, and I can't even imagine—and this is in defence of the NDP, I can't even imagine what you guys went through when you were in government. The—and I'm glad I don't have to imagine. We're in the here and now, and we're talking about the minister's compensation.

* (16:30)

I wonder if the minister can self-declare, implicate herself in some sort of scandal or public policy fiasco or maybe some form of—I don't know, maybe you were late to work one day. I think that's right. If you were one minute late, perhaps that requires a reduction in salary. Well, that's ridiculous. And it's just as ridiculous as the motion that we have in front of us to reduce the minister's salary, especially after she's put in all this work to help, you know, rightly or wrongly, to help the government succeed.

The fact is—oh, and just, Mr. Chair, we did not run on creating a new Crown corporation. That might be a reason, but it wasn't this minister's—I don't think she was a part of that.

So what we do need to do is focus on results, and, by and large, and certainly compared to predecessors, we know it can be much, much worse.

My question to the minister is: Has the minister ever attended an event one second late that would—

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

Ms. Squires: So I believe the question is whether or not I have ever been one second late to an event, and I do believe that the answer for that—to that question is yes. I think all of us have been late at some point—time. So I will try to respectfully answer the member's question.

There was another question in there relating to scandal and fiasco, and I can confirm for the member that I am, by no means, someone who would—I would consider myself—to be well schooled in the manner of political scandal and fiasco. So I can't speak to that. Perhaps there's other more seasoned members in this household that could speak to scandal and fiasco, but I don't believe, in my two years of political experience, have thus far gained and, hopefully, as long as I am in public office, never become an expert in scandal and fiasco.

So that is my intent. I will state that for the record that my intent is to serve honourably and fulfill my duties as best as possible. It is an honour to come to work every day as the member for Riel and as a minister of the Crown, and I will fulfill my duties as honourably as—and with as much integrity as I possibly can each and every single day and try to avoid some of those scandalous scenarios in which the member refers.

Mr. Fletcher: Mr. Chair, this minister has just admitted to all of us that she may have been late by one second to a event somewhere in Manitoba. But is that worth \$37,000 cut? I haven't made up my mind yet. We'll see how the rest of the afternoon goes.

Madam—Mr. Chair, maybe it was something else. Maybe it was a larger mistake. Maybe a regulation was passed that maybe shouldn't have or a Crown corporation that we should never be involved in. But it really doesn't meet the test of having one's salary reduced. It doesn't meet the test.

We could go to two seconds. But I think we will skip that. The other offence that I think would be scandalous is if the minister were to somehow have not supported the Jets this year. I don't believe that's true. If that was true, we would have grounds—not very good grounds, but certainly better grounds than what the opposition is proposing. Because when we go—and this is serious—when the only thing the opposition—after all these Estimates, the only thing is the salaries.

I've been involved in a lot of Estimates in a lot of different places. And Estimates is the most important part, in my view, of the legislative process. I like to make a point, while we're looking at the ministerial salary, if we should cut the salary or not. After how many billions of dollars, this is what it comes down to? This is the best the opposition can do, is go after the government because of their ministerial salaries?

I have disagreements with a few people, but it's policy-based disagreements. It's not personal. Except it's personal with the member from Rossmere, but everything else, it's not personal. And maybe we'll talk about it at another time. If there was a motion to reduce the member's salary, the member from Rossmere's salary, I think that would be worth it. *[interjection]* And I hear a seconder to that. *[interjection]* Oh, and I hear the member from Kildonan's salary should be reduced too. *[interjection]* Yes.

My question for the minister: Does merit, responsibility, risk, away from family—should that be part of a recognition through the only way we know how, through using Canadian dollars—is it a reasonable compensation for the work she or her colleagues do?

Ms. Squires: Well, the member opposite had asked a question about—or he made a statement that not supporting the Jets would be paramount to a scandal, and I agree with him. We have seen such a remarkable outpouring of support for our NHL team, and we know that the Jets are winners and heroes in all of our minds, and they were in all—they captured the attention of the nation.

* (16:40)

And so I tend to agree that it would have been tantamount to almost scandalous to say that, of course—to say that we were not in support of the Jets and that we weren't cheering them on every day. So—and I can assure the member that everybody on this side of the House was in support of the Jets, and we were all cheering them on. We were talking about them. We were celebrating with them. And we're there for the Jets every step of the way.

What I can confirm for the member is that taking free tickets to sit in a box for a Jets game would be scandalous, and we didn't do it.

Mr. Fletcher: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the minister's acknowledgement about the Jets. I am very concerned that the minister, at no time, mentioned our female curling team. Our teams, both of them

coming from Manitoba: now that's scandalous. Now maybe I will vote for the NDP motion.

Mr. Chair, I wonder if the minister can outline the responsibilities that she has that is different than her colleagues? I think that's important, so people who are reading this can see why there is a differential between the salaries of a minister and an MLA.

And I would ask another question while the—and to give the opportunity the minister to explain a little bit more about why there's a tiered compensation model for the various responsibilities.

And I do this, again, to highlight the fact that we just went through an entire Estimates process. Specific issues came up. We didn't get—hey, we didn't get great answers from a lot of good questions—the opposition.

And the opposition should have asked a lot better questions, including personal attacks, which have no place to be in Estimates or, quite frankly, party politics. Focus on the Estimates, so we don't get into these ridiculous situations where we're voting on the salaries of ministers who, quite frankly, deserve the compensation, because they carry a lot of headaches that most people in this place do not have to carry.

And the Cabinet's smaller, too, so that means more headaches to go around to a fewer number of people.

So, Mr. Chair, I give the opportunity to the minister to highlight some of the roles and responsibilities and commitments that the minister needs to undergo that do not or would not necessarily exist for a backbench MLA. That is my question. Can the minister answer my question?

Thank you.

Ms. Squires: I actually didn't hear the question. Could he please repeat it?

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), can you repeat the question?

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, I can repeat the question, and the question is this. Ministers get an increment in their salary because the responsibilities are different than the average MLA. Not only do you have all the responsibilities of an MLA, you have additional responsibilities.

You have Cabinet meetings, you have speaking engagements, you have stakeholder meetings and, in many cases, you don't have a choice, like many other MLAs. I notice that perhaps, some MLAs have left this place. Perhaps they haven't, but if they did, there's only one MLA that has to sit through this, and that is the minister.

So my question is, what responsibilities does the minister have over and above a typical MLA who is not a minister?

Ms. Squires: So, as I said to the member earlier, it is an honour for me to serve as the MLA for Riel, and as well as—it was a huge honour for me to be asked to serve in Cabinet. And I do fulfill my responsibilities and attend all the functions that the member has talked about in his question: going to committee meetings, attending events, and accepting speaking engagements and that sort of thing. And I certainly do agree that there is—I know all the ministers in this government work very hard, and I know that they're out and about, almost every night.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: I'm just having trouble hearing the answer.

Mr. Chairperson: It's not a point of order, but we'll have the minister speak up.

Ms. Squires: Sure, I'll try to speak up as loud as possible. And as I was saying, I know that all of my Cabinet colleagues work very hard, each and every day. If you look at our social media feeds, which, where we often post photos and offer notes of—to raise the profile of various events that we're at. I know yesterday, the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer) and I were at the Louis Riel School Division powwow and we put a little photo on Twitter and—just to raise awareness about the school and its initiatives to really advance the initiatives of reconciliation. And that's what they did through this powwow yesterday for their grads. And the member for St. Vital and I went out to that event together.

If the member's asking me if I think that a cabinet minister works harder, or not as hard as any other MLAs in this House, I certainly couldn't comment on that. I do know that all of my colleagues, whether they're in Cabinet, or on the upper bench, work incredibly hard. And we do attend events in our riding and we go to events and represent the government. We're also in this House—I know that there are several members that the Chair—

our Deputy Chairperson himself is at committee and in all sorts of functions. He's also co-ordinating the Midwestern legislators' conference. And I didn't quite get all the details about that event from his private member's statement earlier today, so I'll ask him to go over that one more time for us. And maybe, with the remaining time I have in Estimates here, he might expound on all the events that will be coming up with that conference.

And these things are very—you know, they take a lot of time and a lot of dedication and a lot of work. And I know all of my colleagues in this House work incredibly hard to serve their constituents, and to uphold their duties as representatives. And so I would not want to make a comment as to who works harder than whom. But what I would say for this member, who is curious about my views on my salary and that sort of thing, I do—again, I really mean it when I say that I'm honoured every day to come into this House and represent my community. And I do—I didn't get into politics because of the salary. I never thought, oh, I'm going to go and get elected so I can get a salary. That's never been my focus. But I do think that it's a huge honour and privilege that someone from my background could achieve the position in society where I am responsible for a community and that I am responsible for the portfolios that I have, and I take that honour very seriously. And every day I'm proud to come here, and my salary's not something that I spend a lot of time thinking about. It certainly is—it's just not a strong factor in my mind when I think about the work that I have to do and the work that my colleagues do.

* (16:50)

I'm very honoured to be part of this team. It's the best team I've ever belonged to. We go to events with each other, we support one another, and it's really like a family here. So, when I come into this House, I'm not just amongst colleagues, I'm here with people that I consider my brothers and sisters.

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

I just want to clarify to the minister that it's a committee that we're part of when it comes to the Midwest legislative conference. So we have a team. So just wanted to clarify that, because I get some looks from the clerk here, so—which is on the team, too, and then also the member from Minto. Yes—*[interjection]* Deputy Clerk, sorry. I'm giving him a lot more credit here.

Mr. Fletcher: Again, we're talking about a motion that has been brought forward to reduce the salary of a minister to that of an MLA.

And I think we need to examine the fact that—and the—you know what, the minister's answer was very good, in the workload. Like, the workload is what you make it and a hard-working MLA can work objectively a lot harder than a minister but there's some major differences.

The minister has responsibilities that a normal MLA would not have. They have staff that an MLA would not have and they have departmental support for issues that MLAs do not have and, interestingly, I've noticed that in the last year, being a solo guy, freelancer, no support, but you make it what it is. So the minister's absolutely right.

But the responsibility, not only in the position, but the responsibility one feels in their soul to the people who elected them—and I'll also point out when people talk about salaries and so on, there's no guarantees in politics. How many people ran in the last Manitoba election? Fifty-seven times three, maybe 300 people, 57 get elected, even fewer will get re-elected. So it's a four-year exit out of your normal life, your career and it's a huge financial risk. People who go into politics most often leave politics badly and much poorer than when they entered it, but that's not their motivation.

Mr. Chair, I recall in 2008, I was appointed—it's a minority Parliament after another—I was appointed Cabinet—member of Cabinet. The financial crisis was happening. Jim Flaherty, Vic Toews, Rona Ambrose, we sat on Treasury Board working almost day and night to try and figure out how the heck Canada should respond to the financial crisis. Not one of us did anything that would get us re-elected or spend time with our families, and actually either did the public servants. And the government could have fallen at any time and, if it did, we would have been in big trouble in—as individuals, but that's not why we're there. We're there for a larger cause.

And, yes, there are situations that ministers find themselves in—certainly federally, and I assume it's provincially—that would blow one's mind, like the flood of the century. Gary Filmon handled what was an impossible situation, and he did it very well. Does anyone suggest that we should have reduced that

salary? No. I think we owe a lot to people like that. Or Duff Roblin. Or even Gary Doer.

My question to the member is perhaps the ministers do not deserve a pay decrease. Do they deserve a pay increase? Pay increase—minister.

Ms. Squires: I thank my friend from Assiniboia for that question. I know the hour is approaching 5 o'clock, and so our conversation is coming to a rapid end here for the day. And I—but I will—on the topic of our salaries and how much do people deserve and how much do they not deserve and that sort of thing, that's really something I've never spent a whole lot of my life focusing on.

The first job I ever had, I was a secretary, and this was back in 1994. I got my first job. I'd already had my son, and I was a single mom trying to just put a roof over my head and bread on the table. And I was making a very paltry wage as a secretary. But it was enough to get by. And I realized in those years, when I was living hand to mouth, that it wasn't about the size of the paycheque that determined my level of happiness or my ability to parent my son.

And then, in—years later, I still found myself living what I would consider hand to mouth when I was a reporter for the Winnipeg Sun. And the Winnipeg Sun is a great institution in our province, and the Sun chain of papers is a commendable media chain across our country, but the salaries certainly weren't robust by any stretch of the imagination. And, when I was a new reporter, I was making a fairly low wage, and, at that point, I had two teenage boys, and both of my boys were in basketball. And I was having to make the decision: Do I buy groceries this month—do I buy those extra groceries—or do I go and buy my sons their basketball shoes? And, of course, we know teenage boys: They go through basketball shoes; they need a new pair every couple of months. And so I was constantly having to make those decisions about do I pay the power bill, do I pay the heating bill, do I buy those extra groceries, or do I get my sons their basketball shoes?

And so I really—I'm grateful that today I don't have to choose between buying my sons their basketball shoes—and, well, actually, both of my sons are gainfully employed themselves, and they're buying their own shoes, and now, they're buying their own sons their own shoes. But I've always

remembered those times and that time in my life. And it taught me that money is not everything.

And I've never concerned myself with the size of my paycheque. I've concerned myself with putting in an honest day's work. I've concerned myself with raising my family with integrity. I've concerned myself with trying to do the right thing for my community and to be a volunteer.

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

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 24, 2018

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