

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

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
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	PC
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, Hon.	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	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
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	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 31, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 214—The Family Maintenance
Amendment Act**

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that Bill 214, The Family Maintenance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: When a relationship breaks down it's often the children's relationships that are most affected. This bill will make things better for Manitoba children by first making it clear that the best interests of children must be the most important consideration for judges and, second, requiring parents to act in a way that minimizes conflict, promotes co-operation and meets the best interests of their children and requires them to try to resolve their differences by negotiations or other alternatives to court.

I encourage this House to pass this bill to support Manitoba's children. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion. [*Agreed*]

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs

Fourth Report

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Fourth Report—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on October 27, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 15) – The Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Act (Advanced Education Administration Act and Private Vocational Institutions Act Amended)/Loi sur la sensibilisation et la prévention en matière de violence à caractère sexuel (modification de la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire et de la Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés)**

Committee Membership

- *Hon. Mr. FIELDING*
- *Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. KINEW*
- *Ms. KLASSEN*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Hon. Mr. MICKLEFIELD*
- *Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE*
- *Hon. Ms. SQUIRES*
- *Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON*
- *Mr. SWAN*
- *Hon. Mr. WISHART*

Your Committee elected Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE as the Vice-Chairperson

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following four presentations on **Bill (No. 15) – The Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Act (Advanced Education Administration Act and Private Vocational Institutions Act Amended)/Loi sur la sensibilisation et la prévention en matière de violence à caractère sexuel (modification de la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire et de la Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés):**

Michael Barkman, Canadian Federation of Students Manitoba

Laura Garinger, University of Winnipeg Students Association

Janelle Curry, Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberty

Rosemarie Gjerek, Klinik Community Health

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 15) – The Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Act (Advanced Education Administration Act and Private Vocational Institutions Act Amended)/Loi sur la sensibilisation et la prévention en matière de violence à caractère sexuel (modification de la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire et de la Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mrs. Guillemard: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Second Report

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- April 9, 2013 (2nd Session – 40th Legislature)
- October 2, 2013 (2nd Session – 40th Legislature)
- September 24, 2014 (3rd Session – 40th Legislature)
- September 15, 2015 (4th Session – 40th Legislature)
- October 28, 2016 (1st Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016

Committee Membership

Committee membership for the April 9, 2013 meeting:

- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Ms. CROTHERS (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. EICHLER
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. EWASKO
- Mr. FRIESEN
- Mr. JHA (Chairperson)
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mr. SCHULER
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mr. WIEBE

Committee membership for the October 2, 2013 meeting:

- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. EWASKO
- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. JHA (Chairperson)

- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Hon. Ms. MARCELINO (Logan)*
- *Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall-Park) (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mrs. STEFANSON*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN*

Committee membership for September 24, 2014 meeting:

- *Ms. ALLAN*
- *Mr. BRIESE*
- *Hon. Mr. CHIEF*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Mr. WIEBE*
- *Ms. WIGHT (Vice-Chairperson)*

Substitutions received during committee proceedings on September 24, 2014:

- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK for Mr. WIEBE*

Committee membership for September 15, 2015 meeting:

- *Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Mr. BRIESE*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. JHA (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Hon. Ms. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. MARTIN*
- *Hon. Mr. ROBINSON*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. SARAN*
- *Hon. Ms. WIGHT*

Your Committee elected Mr. ALTEMEYER as the Vice Chairperson at the September 15, 2015 meeting

Your Committee elected Mr. MALOWAY as the Vice Chairperson at the September 15, 2015 meeting

Substitutions received during committee proceedings on September 15, 2015:

- *Mr. SCHULER for Mr. MARTIN*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK for Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Mr. CULLEN for Mr. PEDERSEN*

Committee membership for October 28, 2016 meeting:

- *Mr. ALLUM*
- *Mr. LAGASSÉ*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. MARTIN*
- *Mr. JOHNSON (Interlake)*
- *Mr. JOHNSTON (St. James)*
- *Ms. KLASSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. SMOOK*
- *Mr. SWAN*

Your Committee elected Mr. SMOOK as the Vice Chairperson at the October 28, 2016 meeting

Your Committee elected Mr. MARTIN as the Vice Chairperson at the October 28, 2016 meeting

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the April 9, 2013 meeting:

- *Mr. Scott Thomson, President and Chief Executive Officer*
- *Mr. Bill Fraser, Chair of the Board*

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the October 2, 2013 meeting:

- *Mr. Scott Thomson, President and Chief Executive Officer*

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the September 24, 2014 meeting:

- *Mr. Scott Thomson, President and Chief Executive Officer*
- *Mr. Bill Fraser, Chair of the Board*

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the September 15, 2015 meeting:

- *Mr. Darren Rainkie, Interim President and Chief Executive Officer*
- *Mr. Bill Fraser, Chair of the Board*

Officials from Manitoba Hydro speaking on the record at the October 28, 2016 meeting:

- *Mr. Kelvin Shepherd, President and Chief Executive Officer*
- *Mr. H. Sanford Riley, Chair of the Board*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013*

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016*

Mr. Smook: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Tom Cochrane Highway

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I rise today—

Madam Speaker: Oh, pardon me. Before the member proceeds, I just would like to indicate that the required 90-minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Mr. Pedersen: I rise today to honour an extraordinary Manitoban, Mr. Tom Cochrane. Tom was born in Lynn Lake to his parents Violet and Tuck. At age 11, Tom sold his train set and bought his first guitar. Since then, his career has spanned the decades with numerous hits, and Tom remains one of only three Canadian male artists to have a record certified diamond.

First as a front man for the band Red Rider and throughout his solo career, Tom has travelled the world and accumulated numerous hit records and accolades. Tom is a member of the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, an officer with the Order of Canada, a member of the Order of Manitoba, a member of Canada's Walk of Fame, an honorary colonel in the Royal Canadian Air Force and has received an honorary doctorate from Brandon University.

Tom is also an eight-time Juno award winner and received a Grammy nomination in 1993.

As the Minister of Infrastructure, I had the honour today, alongside the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the mayor of Lynn Lake, of renaming Provincial Road 391 from Thompson to Lynn Lake as the Tom Cochrane Life is a Highway. This was done in recognition of the milestone 25th anniversary of Tom's landmark album Mad Mad World. The national concert tour honouring this milestone will make a stop in Lynn Lake on August 20th, 2017.

We invite everyone to come and visit one of our jewels of the North, Lynn Lake, and listen to some great Canadian music. Northern Manitoba is a vital part of our province. Our government is pleased to welcome Manitobans to the North, including Lynn Lake, as we celebrate a decorated and incredibly talented Manitoban.

We are proud to celebrate Lynn Lake's most famous product and an important part of Manitoba in Canada's 150th year.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Manitoba government I am so very proud to honour Tom Cochrane today. Manitobans, through our cities and all our towns, are full of pride for our very own national treasure.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, this morning, an official announcement was made to honour someone who's made a big difference across Manitoba and the world through his artistic and charitable work.

Tom Cochrane, a musician who has rock and rolled his way into many of our hearts, is having a highway in our province named after him. Tom was born in Lynn Lake, Manitoba, a place that reflects the beauty of Manitoba's North, and a strong community of people that work together and depend on one another.

Tom Cochrane highway will stretch from Thompson to Lynn Lake. This announcement reflects the wonderful contributions Tom has made to our province over the years. Tom has played countless concerts to raise money for supports and research for ALS, World Vision and Parkinson's disease. His charitable work in Manitoba, Canada and internationally has not gone unrecognized.

* (13:40)

Tom has clearly made it to the big leagues by receiving an honorary doctorate from Brandon University, by being a member of the Order of Canada, and received a star on Canada's Walk of Fame. More recently, he received the keys to the city of Winnipeg. He has a great spot in the Canadian Music Hall of Fame and he's received the Order of Manitoba.

When I heard about this announcement, I was hit hard by the light so bright it burned. It highlighted how important both honouring this man for his incredible contributions to our province, but also to draw attention to the issues facing communities around this highway.

Our NDP team always supports initiatives that improve access for people in the North, and maintaining this highway is a major part of access to the North and from the North.

It is our hope that by renaming it after this honourable Manitoban, this will bring attention to this highway and the needs of the people living in Lynn Lake and the rest of northern Manitoba, and we look forward to Tom Cochrane lending his voice to northern issues.

Thank you.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I wish to ask for leave to respond to the ministerial statement.

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

Ms. Klassen: What a treat to have Manitoban's own Tom Cochrane perform his iconic song Life is a Highway, as well as Big League. I can't wait to go home and tell my 12-year-old son, who is still a huge fan of Pixar's Lightning McQueen, that I met the singer of Mack's song.

Tom Cochrane was born in Lynn Lake and he has long been a Canadian music living legend, and he is dear to the hearts of Manitobans, not only for his music, but for his involvement in many humanitarian causes.

Manitoba is truly rich in its talent, and it's important to acknowledge the fact that he is from Lynn Lake, a northern town that has seen more than its fair share of challenges. Several months ago I had the opportunity to attend a forum for all parties in Lynn Lake. I found that people there work-welcoming and proud of their hometown.

I also found that the residents are deeply affected from the lack of progress and development. One lifelong resident openly cried as he talked about the issues he and his respective community members faced.

Tom Cochrane is a testament to the great things that can emerge from the North, and we all have to do our part as government to ensure this continues.

It's great that the government named the Provincial Road 391 Tom Cochrane Life is a Highway. As a person who has pulled off alongside that highway to take pictures of its majestic views, I encourage everyone to travel that highway.

Obviously, we don't want visitors to simply turn around when they reach Lynn Lake, so we need to ensure we work with the municipality to further develop the area.

We also need to ensure that the infrastructure is maintained so that Mr. Cochrane himself is proud of his highway.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Benjamin Leung

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): Today, I stand before you and all honourable members on how grateful I am to serve for my province and my constituency of St. Norbert.

To get here, as many of my colleagues would know, it takes a great deal of courage, passion and resiliency. As we all know, doing it alone cannot elect you. You need volunteers and I was very thankful to have many volunteers.

One evening during the last election, when I was out door-knocking in Richmond West, I met a young man who came up to me and told me: I know you, my friend Nico Sanchez knows you and you're the one who's running to become MLA in St. Norbert, right?

I replied to the young man: Yes, I am. My name is Jon Reyes.

He told me he lived just a few houses down and I made sure to let him know to make sure that, hopefully, I could get the support of his family and friends.

His name was Benjamin Leung. He's better known as Ben. Ben was a constituent of St. Norbert and a member of the south Winnipeg's vibrant

Chinese community. Ben would volunteer during the campaign. He'd also invite me to one of the five Chinese New Year's events earlier this year. He would make sure I was able to meet the people from the organization where he proudly volunteered during Folklorama and outside Folklorama, the Winnipeg Chinese Cultural and Community Centre.

The last time I saw Ben was at the Manitoba Chinese Tribune 15th anniversary dinner shortly after I became the MLA for St. Norbert.

Unfortunately, Ben would be taken away from us too soon on June 19th of this year, where he passed away tragically in a car accident. I was shocked when I heard the news of his passing. He was only 30 years old.

Ben shared that characteristic that Manitobans are known for—giving his own personal time to volunteer and, according to his good friend, Nico, he would put others first before him and never expected anything in return.

And that's why I want to show my appreciation to his family and friends who are here with us today in remembering him.

Thank you, Ben, you will remain forever in our hearts.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Nine Circles Community Health Centre

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, today I would like to recognize the incredible work of the staff and volunteers at Nine Circles Community Health Centre, who are with us in the galleries today.

Nine Circles Community Health Centre is a non-profit community-based clinic that provides care for individuals living with HIV here in Manitoba. But that's only a small part of their work. The centre also offers HIV/STI testing, provides supports for those living with HIV and organizes outreach programs to educate the public about sexual health. This past September they were on hand at Scotiabank's annual AIDS Walk with their clients, who shared their experiences living with HIV and help put an end to the stigma.

I know how important centres like this are for our communities and my family. HIV disproportionately affects Aboriginal populations, who represent 8 per cent of Canadians living with HIV. More HIV testing programs is one major solution to

this problem. This is one of the many reasons why the services organizations like Nine Circles provides us are invaluable.

Recently, the federal government has changed its model for HIV funding by combining it with funding for hepatitis C and other sexually transmitted infections through the Community Action Fund. The same amount of funding is now split between more organizations, which makes it difficult for organizations like Nine Circles to continue providing the services they offer. It is our responsibility as legislators to press our federal government counterparts to do better.

I would like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in thanking the staff and volunteers of the Nine Circles Community Health Centre for the incredible care they provide for their clients and the work they do in our communities.

Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): On September 29th of this year I was graciously asked to present the 2016 Interlake Award of Distinction, supplied by the Interlake Tourism Association.

This award recognizes exceptional attributes in community leadership, service, marketing, product development or partnerships of an individual, a business or an organization in the Interlake that realizes distinction as a high quality tourism destination.

The winner is committed to the excellence of the Interlake's—and Manitoba's—tourism industry. This year's winner for the Interlake Award of Distinction was the Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village. With a dedicated group of volunteers seeing a common vision of a working heritage village that portrays insights into the multicultural history of the Interlake, they have a restored community hall, three Icelandic homes, a church, a Polish home, a school, grist mill, two Ukrainian homes, a heritage barn and two teepees. Activities include building of an interpretive centre and office, a workshop, shower and flush toilets, along with planting 250 two-and-a-half-foot native spruce, maple and ash trees, plus 6,000 seedling trees. Situated on 12.9 acres nestled alongside the Icelandic River just east of Arborg is a 21-site campground.

I would like all members of the House to recognize the great accomplishments, not just for the Interlake, but for the Manitoba tourism industry as a whole.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Winnipeg Soccer Federation—Soccer North

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I rise today to bring attention to an exciting new development in my constituency of Kildonan.

The Winnipeg Soccer Federation's soccer north pitch is open to the public. Located north of Garden City Community Centre, at 725 Leila, the 163,000-square-foot facility is sure to be a gathering spot for community and sporting events.

* (13:50)

My special thanks goes to the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler), who's tireless advocacy for soccer and his instrumental push to make sure funding was secured for this project, could not have happened without him.

Construction began April 2015 and, with funding provided by the Province of Manitoba, City of Winnipeg and Winnipeg Soccer Federation, it was completed on 12 July.

The first official game happened the next day on 13 July, where a series of exhibition matches, in preparation for next year's Canada Summer Games, happened between Team Manitoba and the team from Prince Edward Island. The complex can be configured for use as a full, half, or quarter fields. This allows for a variety of activities to occur, such as football, rugby, ultimate disc, dodge ball, and physical education classes for community schools across the North End.

Spectators will be delighted by the 360-degree view that is offered from the second level with seating for up to 1,770 people. With a large concourse area and canteen, the facility is perfect for pre-game strategizing and post-game celebrations. This new building offers superb sport enthusiasts a state-of-the-art facility to promote fitness, active living and most importantly of all, teamwork in the community.

I encourage all members to come by and experience this new complex in the heart of Kildonan, whether as a spectator or an athlete.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Seniors' and Elders' Month

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Today marks the end of Seniors' and Elders' Month and the conclusion of our month-long celebration of older adults in

Manitoba. This year's theme, Take a Stand Against Ageism, challenged everyone to recognize and put a stop to stereotyping and discrimination based on age.

The month started off with International Day of Older Persons on October 1st and continued with events and award ceremonies meant to promote and thank our older generations.

Last Friday, the Manitoba Council on Aging once again acknowledged Manitoba seniors for their exceptional contributions and commitment to their communities at their annual recognition awards.

This event is a great way to highlight the work that seniors are doing in our province, whether it be volunteering with Meals on Wheels, serving as board members with leisure clubs and resource councils and participating on advisory committees. They prove you're never too old to give back and make a difference.

Our NDP team continues to support our seniors. We invested in seniors' housing by supporting over 15,000 homes for seniors across the province, and we built hundreds more personal-care-home beds.

Many seniors who reside in my constituency have different needs and preferences when it comes to where they want to live. It's important that we continue to support all senior citizens to live the lives of dignity and to provide for all seniors regardless of level of income.

Madam Speaker, this month has been a month of learning, awarding and celebrating. I personally thank our seniors for their hard work that they've done and continue to do here in Manitoba.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

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

And as seated in the Speaker's Gallery is the Consul General of France in Toronto, Marc Trouyet; the Honorary Consul of France in Winnipeg, Bruno Burnichon; James Lindsay, mayor of Lynn Lake; Justina Pidruchny, stepdaughter of James Lindsay; and Rick Stryde, the CAO of the Town of Lynn Lake.

On behalf of all honourable members here, we welcome all of you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

University of Manitoba Contract Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): On this side of the House, we're very pleased that that soccer complex in Kildonan is now open under our watch. We made sure that it will come to fruition, because we believe the people of Kildonan need that community centre.

Madam Speaker, despite protests to the contrary, the Premier does not respect the collective bargaining process. His eleventh-hour intervention has imposed a new mandate on the University of Manitoba that is months into bargaining process and offers have been put on the table in good faith.

What we learned last Friday is that the Premier will undermine collective bargaining already under way by imposing conditions that are lower than current offers on the table.

My question to the Premier is very simple: Why would he impose these eleventh-hour conditions that effectively force the University to bargain in bad faith?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I must acknowledge a major—I think—accomplishment that was achieved this weekend with the signing of the Canada-Europe trade agreement. I think it is a tribute to our federal representatives who fought for this agreement to happen, and for all of the countries involved a beneficial arrangement has been reached. This is the second largest trading—potential trading block in the world after the United States and a powerful opportunity for Manitoba's economy to advance in a number of commodities. And I would like to especially pay tribute to the previous federal government for initiating the negotiations.

Bargaining is not always easy, sometimes it's very difficult, many times it is difficult to watch it happen. But, when it comes to fruition, it is to the satisfaction of all concerned and so, as is the case with the U of M, I believe these agreements will be reached. They were reached between Canada and Europe on the weekend and I think it is a stellar accomplishment.

I'd like to congratulate our present Prime Minister and Minister Freeland for their hard work on this issue, and wish them good luck going forward.

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

Ms. Marcelino: I didn't hear an answer to my question. So I'll ask the Premier again.

His government has shown a complete disrespect for the process of fairly negotiated collective bargaining. Both sides are working diligently to avoid disruptions to students and their futures. Offers have been put on the table since government—his government was in office. The two sides have been in mediation but, according to the President of the University of Manitoba, the government has delivered a new mandate that would be less than the offer on the table. The government has done tremendous damage to ongoing talks.

What steps will the Premier take to repair the damage he has done?

Mr. Pallister: I would say that doubling the debt of our province in just a few short years was damage seriously done by the previous administration, and that is the kind of challenge that we've inherited from them. But we did—and I know this is difficult for members opposite to accept, but we did ask Manitobans for a mandate to correct the curve, to correct the course, on out-of-control spending which is unsustainable and dangerous to all the people of our province.

We asked Manitobans for a mandate. They gave us a mandate, much to the chagrin of the members opposite who are still grieving over it. But the fact remains that we, as opposed to they, will keep our word to Manitobans, not break it, keep it.

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

Ms. Marcelino: I'll try again for this third time. This issue is very important.

The Premier has stood in the House saying he has tremendous respect for collective bargaining but, then, actively works to undermine it. The damage had already been—has already been done, casting tremendous doubt on the resolution and what this will mean for students. Even when they called out—even when called out by the president of the University of Manitoba and the faculty association, the Premier hid in the shadows, unwilling to reveal his intentions.

Will the Premier announce what his negotiations mandate is? And will he commit not to undermine negotiations that are to come?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, I was six-three in grade eight, I haven't been able to hide for decades, and I don't intend to hide now.

The fact is that we have been given a mandate by the people of Manitoba to correct the mistakes of the past. Not repeat those mistakes, but correct them. And so getting control of our expenditures is the mandate that Manitobans gave us. I understand the members are having trouble accepting that fact, but it remains the mandate we were given and it is the mandate we have accepted, and it is the fact that we will keep our word to Manitobans.

Now, the members have difficulty accepting this, Madam Speaker, but I don't believe Manitobans do, and I know that the management and the faculty of the University of Manitoba will negotiate. And they will continue to negotiate, as they have been for now 10 months, and they will arrive at a conclusion, and we look forward to seeing that happen and we support them fully in every way we can to arrive at that conclusion.

* (14:00)

The previous government had two strikes, not one, two, at Brandon University, and I don't blame for that fact; I'd appreciate it they don't blame me for the current situation at the University of Manitoba.

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

Ms. Marcelino: It is clear now how the Premier intends to push responsibility onto everyone else for his actions. He gives himself a fat salary increase, but freeze the minimum wage, and now the president of the University of Manitoba has informed the public that this government has delivered a new mandate on contract negotiations that have been under way for months.

Madam Speaker, this government is not interested in fair negotiations and, frankly, shows bad faith to the people of Manitoba.

Will the Premier accept responsibility, come clean with his intentions and commit to respecting the collective bargaining process?

Mr. Pallister: There are too many pieces of misinformation in that preamble to respond to all of them, Madam Speaker, but, in fact, the people of

Manitoba gave this party and this government a mandate. That is a mandate which we will act upon.

Now, after a decade of debt under the previous administration, we were charged with the responsibility of fixing the finances of our province. To do that—and members from the previous administration, I think, understand this, you have to get your spending under control.

Now, they committed to doing that in budget after budget after budget, and they failed, failed again and failed again. And while they were failing, they were raising taxes as well. So we had, under the previous administration, a doubling of our debt and the largest and most significant increase in tax burden on Manitobans of any Canadian province at the same time.

That is their record. That's a record of betrayal that fomented distrust, and it would be nothing short of hypocritical for the member to continue to claim that she has a record other than that, because she and her colleagues do not.

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

Ms. Marcelino: It is one rule for the Premier and another set of rules for everyone else. The Premier says he has no choice but to accept a big salary increase but is not bound to respect the collective bargaining process at the University of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, he has a choice, and we urge him to reconsider: Will he reduce his salary and will he stop undermining the collective bargaining process at the University of Manitoba and across the province?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, of course, as you well know, as do most members of the House, our salaries and benefits are set by an independent arbiter, and we accept them. So, therefore, the people of Manitoba gave me a raise, and I propose to earn it. I propose to earn it by doing what I said I would do. And we propose to earn it by keeping our promises to Manitobans, not breaking them.

Now, it was about five years ago this month that the members opposite went to every door in this province, knocked and said, we promise you no tax hikes, and then proceeded to give people the largest tax hikes in the province's history. Now, that is breaking your word, Madam Speaker. We're going to

keep ours, and we'll make sure that Manitobans have a stronger and more secure future because of it.

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

Ms. Marcelino: The Premier says people gave him a fat raise, but not for minimum wage earners.

Madam Speaker, the Premier likes to push off responsibility for his actions; it's not his hands on the scissors. But by going public, the president of the University of Manitoba has pulled back the veil on the Premier's intentions to actively undermine the collective bargaining process and impose resolutions on labour disputes. And all this while he himself gives—while he gives himself a fat salary increase.

Will he change direction?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, I thank the people of Manitoba for the honour of being their Premier, and I thank them for the increase in pay as well. I appreciate it.

The way in which the previous administration showed their respect for the people of Manitoba was that immediately after the 2011 election where they went, looked people in the eyes and promised them they wouldn't raise their taxes; they did. But they also gave themselves a bonus. They gave themselves thousands of dollars of additional vote tax subsidy.

We'll take that back, Madam Speaker, and we'll put it towards early-years education so it can help educate our children in this province.

University of Manitoba Contract Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) misguided, unilateral last-minute interference in the University of Manitoba faculty negotiations is going to have a real impact on students. It looks like there's going to be a strike, and the Premier is not helping. In fact, he's actively making the situation worse.

Over the weekend, University of Manitoba Students' Union President Tanjit Nagra said she's worried a lot about what a strike will mean for the 30,000 students at the U of M. The Premier's misguided decision will impact them and all of the families who help them pay tuition and support them in other ways.

Will the Premier withdraw his zero directive and allow the U of M to negotiate for the best interest of students in good faith?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question; it allows me the opportunity to correct some of the misstatements he put on the record.

First of all, this member will understand that the government is not a direct party in these negotiations. It's a negotiation between an employer and an employee group, and so we are watching and we are watching carefully to see that process unfold.

The member also realizes that this process has been going on for 10 months now, and so this is a process that will definitely lead to a conclusion at some point in time and government is happy to help that process along the way in whatever appropriate means are available to us.

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

Mr. Kinew: The actions of this government are akin to trying to change the rules of the game when the game is already in overtime.

Students are making their career plans assuming that they can pursue their educations on time this year. They weren't counting on a strike and they definitely weren't counting on the Premier helping to make a strike happen with his unnecessary political interference. Many of these students' families are counting on them to start earning a living. Our whole economy stands to benefit once they join the workforce. But, now, the Premier's ideological obsession with austerity is standing in the way.

Will the Premier change course on the issue and apologize to the students for the stress he's causing them this week?

Mr. Friesen: Once again, I'm pleased to respond to the question.

As I mentioned, government is not a direct party in these negotiations. On the subject of mandate, of course, Manitobans did give this new government a mandate, and government's role in the bargaining process, of course, is to give mandate and to provide parameters, which we have continued to do. Since day one, we have said Manitobans hired this new government to get our finances back on track, to fix the finances of Manitoba. We have said that all negotiations need to respect the fact—or, the ability of Manitobans to pay.

So these are the parameters we are given and—that we have given, and these are the parameters that we will continue to stand by.

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

Mr. Kinew: The minister says that his government is not a party to the negotiations, but this is clearly political interference in the lives of students.

Students were preparing to write mid-terms, were getting ready to hand in assignments, and then boom, the Premier decides to insert himself into the negotiations. Now students are preparing for a strike.

Besides being fundamentally unfair to the administration and to the faculty who are deep into negotiations, this political interference has created a tense atmosphere on campus for students.

Will the Premier commit to doing right by students and backing off his unilateral zero directive so their studies can continue without political interference?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, this member understands that this process did not arise overnight. He understands that this process has been going on for 10 months. He understands that Manitoba faces some significant financial hurdles to overcome, challenges that we continue to qualify and to quantify and put forward to Manitobans so they understand the extent and nature of the challenge that is in front of all of us as Manitobans. This is the mandate that we have given: that all negotiations must bear in mind the ability of Manitobans to pay, and this is the serious reality we find ourselves in.

The member seems to suggest that he's taking sides in one part or the other of this conversation. I would caution him not to do so.

* (14:10)

University of Manitoba Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): A day after Manitobans jammed the committee room to protest Bill 7, which is a unwarranted attack on workers' rights to join a union in this province, this government then interfered in the constitutionally protected process of collective bargaining. The result is likely to sideline students and send the University of Manitoba on strike as of 7 a.m. tomorrow morning.

So, Madam Speaker, I have to ask: Who's responsible for this move? Was it the Premier? Was it the minister of labour? Was it the Finance

Minister, the Minister of Education? Or are they all complicit in this terrible move for Manitobans?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I'd like to let the member know that he and his colleagues are responsible for this situation.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Allum: Manitoba students, students at the university deserved a better answer than the glib answer that we just got from the Premier on an important matter here for Manitoba families.

Madam Speaker, front-line workers in Manitoba have a sacred right in this province to the collective bargaining process. The government's actions have sent a chill right across the province, quite frankly, because people are unsure whether they'll be able to negotiate through collective bargaining.

So will the minister of labour walk over to the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Friesen) office, set him straight and tell him to respect collective bargaining in this province?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, I don't think the member was accurate in his assertion. There's nothing glib about it. The members opposite doubled the debt of the province over the previous six years.

Every year, year after year, they claimed they would get their spending under control. Every year they failed to. Every year their spending rose dramatically, above some of the fastest growing tax take of any province. It was out of control. Because it was out of control, our province suffered a credit rating downgrade and then another, costing us tens of millions additional dollars going to happy moneylenders.

If the member does not wish to accept responsibility by ignoring the past, I understand that. I understand why the party opposite has as their motto, Today's NDP, because they want Manitobans to forget about the past and they've already forgotten about the future. But we haven't, and we'll build a stronger future by working conscientiously to make sure that our expenditures are well managed and that our revenues are well managed so that we have a balanced approach going forward, something that the previous administration never succeeded in achieving, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, students at the university won't have a future as a result of this unwarranted intrusion into the collective bargaining process.

We're trying to get an answer from the government on what their plans are going forward. Are they going to respect collective bargaining in this process? Are they going to respect the rights of workers? Are they going to be there for students when they need them in order to ensure they complete their education? Or is this the new normal that we can expect in Manitoba: a terrible, terrible broadside on collective bargaining in this province?

We won't stand for it. Will they?

Mr. Pallister: I advise the member that hyperventilation is not a way to address a reasoned bargaining situation.

I want the member to understand that we, of course, are thinking of the students and their families. All members should be. But these members were not, in the previous administration, thinking of the long-term interests of students or families. They failed to address those concerns. They simply let their spending get out of control, then maintained it on an out-of-control level, causing two credit downgrades and a high, high erosion of Manitoba's take-home pay. They did this year after year and then culminated in an election campaign where they tried to buy the vote by promising to spend even more.

Now, they failed to understand, even though they mouthed the words in their budget documents each year, the importance of addressing spending and having reasonable controls over spending.

We accept those responsibilities, Madam Speaker, gladly, because those responsibilities were given to us by the people of Manitoba on April the 19th this year.

MGEU Labour Contracts Government Mandate

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The Premier (Mr. Pallister) pretends that he consults with labour and weighs their advice before taking action. This was not true of his introduction of Bill 7, as many of the presenters attested to at the committee.

Why did the Premier choose to issue a mandate imposing zero increases on public sector employees before even meeting with the president of the MGEU?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I appreciate the member's question.

Obviously, Bill 7, interesting topic. We had some—lots of presentations this past week. We look forward to more presentations on Tuesday.

I will remind the members opposite that we have been consulting with Manitobans for a number of years now, and this is the message Manitobans have given to us in terms of the direction that we're taking on Bill 7. Manitobans want this direction. We're doing what Manitobans have asked us to do.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Nurses: their contract is coming up next spring.

Does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) contemplate imposing a similar mandate on these and other front-line workers?

Mr. Cullen: I will indicate to the members opposite that we have had discussions with various unions across the province. We realize there's a process in terms of collective bargaining. We appreciate that process going forward. We know that, you know, employers, employees don't always agree, but there certainly is processes in place to look after the collective bargaining process, and we respect that. We respect the workers. We respect the workers' rights.

Clearly, we're listening to Manitoba workers. This opposition is not.

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

University of Manitoba Contract Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I'd like to acknowledge that there are students listening to question period today.

And it has recently been reported that mediation talks have reached an impasse between the University of Manitoba and its faculty association, and this is in no small part because of the grenade that the Premier threw in their midst on Friday when he instructed the administration to extend their collective agreement by one year at zero per cent.

Will this Premier accept responsibility for provoking what will surely be a strike and ignoring the collective bargaining process?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): That preamble was dangerously close to using students in our universities as a political tool, Madam Speaker, and not justified at all.

Also, Madam Speaker, the preamble was quite wrong. The mandate has been set a long time ago and it was set by the people of Manitoba as much as over six months ago now. And so suggesting that somehow, as the members opposite are trying to do, that there is blame to be placed, is not something that's unprecedented in this place, but it's certainly totally unjustified.

I would say that what we need to do here is encourage the bargaining agents to get together. I understand that conciliation—a conciliator will be appointed very quickly by the government. And we will assist, and the members may be interested in this, in every way possible to arrive at an amicable solution and resolution to this arrangement.

But I would also comment to members opposite that in their hyperbole they need not forget that there was not one but two previous strikes at universities and they should be respectful of the process, as we are on this side, Madam Speaker.

Agriculture Industry Tax Increases

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Farming, agriculture and food security are near and dear to my heart, as I live in Steinbach.

The ag industry contributes \$3.6 billion to our economy. Farmers are experiencing a rapid increase in their tax bill. One farmer spoke of an increase for—in the amount of 111 per cent for 2015. There's fear for 2016's tax season.

Minister, what solutions has your government come up—for this—for farmers?

Thank you.

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I thank the member opposite for the question, because it is a question that's being asked by many of our ag producers. Tax sales are just out in a lot of municipalities, and definitely a question.

* (14:20)

And, you know, it kind of speaks to the price of our land and good agriculture in Manitoba, which we celebrate, but we are already in discussions with my colleague ministers, as well as other stakeholders, in regards to the situation, and we will take care of our ag producers and their land.

Madam Speaker: Before the member proceeds, I would just like to caution her again that—would urge her to use the—to speak—or ask her questions through the Speaker and not use the word you, as it tends to take us off in wrong directions. So I appreciate her doing that.

Ms. Klassen: I apologize for forgetting yet again.

Agriculture is an—important for our economy. To build this sector, it needs not only farmers but many others, such as food processors. Processing here in Manitoba has been growing rapidly, but we are continually surpassed by Saskatchewan.

What is the minister doing to ensure Manitoba is not, yet again, left behind?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): I thank the member for the question.

If you look at the mandate letter that I received from the Premier, it's exactly that. We're going to grow the value added in our agricultural sector. Agriculture has only been the lead role in province of Manitoba. One out of every nine jobs is created because of agriculture, and I know that we take this very seriously and we will continue to build value added right here in Manitoba.

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

Northern Manitoba Communities Food Production Promotion

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I was hoping for a more specific answer, but—

Agriculture and food production is important in northern Manitoba, and it will be increasingly important with climate change and warming temperatures. Mankind can grow food in space stations.

What is the government doing to promote and enhance food production and agriculture in regions like Kewatinook?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): This past week, and as the Premier talked about early on, was CETA, recently just signed. This is a huge opportunity for agriculture, in particular, in

Manitoba. It will create some \$137 million in trade just with CETA alone.

I would also encourage members opposite, who have been opposed to TPP and CETA, to get on side, create those good jobs, those good opportunities right here in Manitoba, get behind our producers and make sure that Manitoba continues to grow value-added in the agricultural sector.

Manitoba Hydro Bipole III Costs

Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital): Madam Speaker, the former NDP government told all Manitobans that the Bipole III line wouldn't cost them a single cent.

Can the Minister of Crown Services please tell this House how much Bipole III will actually cost Manitobans?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): I'd like to thank the member for St. Vital for that question. I'd like to point out that that was just a terrific question, and it is an issue that is important to both Manitoba ratepayers and taxpayers.

As we know, the current—or the previous NDP government claimed that Bipole III would not cost taxpayers a single cent, and that's an actual quote. They went out and said that it would cost Manitobans nothing. And what we've learned from the decade of debt and decay that, under the NDP government, Manitoba Hydro debt went from \$12 billion to \$25 billion.

We were elected to fix the finances of Manitoba, and that's exactly what we're going to do.

Remand Centre Deaths Information for Families

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Errol Greene, an inmate at the Winnipeg Remand Centre, died on May 1st. Mr. Greene's death is one of at least five deaths at the Winnipeg Remand Centre this year, including four in the last six months.

The autopsy report in Mr. Greene's case raises serious questions about what happened. An inquest into Mr. Greene's case will allow a judge to determine what happened and, rather than find fault or blame, recommend how similar deaths can be prevented.

We expect the Chief Medical Examiner will call an inquest. If not, this Minister of Justice has the power to do so.

Can this minister confirm to the family and to Manitobans that an inquest into Mr. Greene's death will take place?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank the member for the question. I think he knows all too well that I'm not able to comment on the specifics of an individual case. Of course, in this case, this is, as the member mentioned, in the hands of the Chief Medical Examiner and we will await his results.

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

Mr. Swan: This minister should know she does have the right to call an inquest, and whether it's her or the Chief Medical Examiner, she can give the family some comfort that this will occur.

The high number of deaths in custody in Manitoba jails in the last few months is a great cause for concern. The families of the deceased, like Mr. Greene's family, are grieving, they're upset and they are looking for answers. We know the families want more information in a timely way. We know that the voice of the correctional officers, the MGEU, agrees that families of the deceased should receive more information.

Will the minister show leadership in a difficult time and share information with these families?

Mrs. Stefanson: I again thank the member for the question. Of course, any death in custody is very difficult. It's very difficult, not just for the families, but it's difficult for the correctional officers who were there and work very hard in doing their job in the correctional facilities. It's very hard on them and the other staff that witness a death in custody. So we recognize that.

We also recognize, of course, in the individual cases, that these are left up the Chief Medical Examiner to examine those individual cases. That is what is happening in the event of this case right now, and we will await the results of the Chief Medical Examiner as to whether or not he sees that an inquest is necessary.

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

Mr. Swan: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice can and must take action to restore confidence in our correctional system. She does have the power to call an inquest and she could make it clear today that there will be an inquest in Mr. Greene's case and in

others. She has the power to direct her department to provide more information to the families and to share whatever information is available, even if it is incomplete. This minister could meet with the families to share whatever information she has, but more importantly, to let them know that she's taking this seriously.

Will this minister do her job and take steps to restore the confidence of Manitobans in our correctional system?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I take any and all deaths in our correctional facilities very seriously, as we do on members of this side of the House. And, certainly, I'm not going to prejudice the results of the Chief Medical Examiner. This issue is before the Chief Medical Examiner right now, and we will await his results with respect to this inquest.

Northern Manitoba Communities Unemployment Concerns

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): The Premier sees nothing wrong with stepping into bargaining processes between the University of Manitoba and professors but has made very little commitment to our Tolko workers in The Pas. I'm still extending the invite for the Premier to visit our workers in my community.

Will the Premier stop spending his time undermining labour negotiations and start working to save the people of the North from unemployment?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, we're proud to stand on this side of the House with our working men and women, unionized or not. I would say that the way to undermine those families and those workers would be to go to their doors, knock on them, look people right in the eye and say you won't raise their taxes and then jack up their taxes, jack them up on their benefits at work when they're trying to protect their children and themselves, or jack up their home insurance premium by 8 per cent on their house that they're trying to pay off, with less money left over because of the higher PST and other taxes on beer and on—well, beer is very important to me, so I emphasize beer—but I would say that other things, as well: cottages, car insurance, gas, you name it.

So, Madam Speaker, the member in her preamble speaks about undermining the confidence of workers. That's exactly what they did. And we won't. We'll encourage our working families by doing what we promised to do.

* (14:30)

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

Tolko Industries Pension Concerns

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, many of the workers affected by the potential closure of the Tolko plant are retirees and pensioners. Our workers met on Wednesday at the Wescana Inn to raise their concerns regarding their pensions and their futures.

What guarantees can the government provide that the pensions these workers are depending on will be available for them now and in the future?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I appreciate the member's question.

Obviously, there's some things on the table there in respect to the ongoing negotiations between Tolko and the proponent. Clearly, the workers there and the pensioners have an issue they're voting on. We certainly don't want to predetermine what that outcome may be, so we're allowing due process to take place.

We're optimistic at the end of the day we'll have a positive agreement going forward, and this will benefit not only people of The Pas but people of northern Manitoba as well.

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

Ms. Lathlin: The workers and families of The Pas and all over the North are counting on support where they need it most.

Madam Speaker, yesterday morning I met with a family whose farm and cattle are in crisis at their home of 36 years and heard from Tolko workers who are still worried about their families, pension and future.

Will the Premier visit my community and commit to real supports for communities in the North so people can know there will be good jobs for their children?

Mr. Cullen: I do appreciate the question from the member opposite.

Clearly, we've saw what happened with the previous government in terms of short-term bailouts to a number of companies, including Tolko, what's happened in the past. We've arrived at the position

we're at now. Fortunately, the new government has had to come to the rescue again in terms of putting out some long-term commitments, offer opportunities, I would say, to the various companies that are involved, and I think it's very important that we allow the process to unfold.

In terms of affordability, we know what's happened with this government in the past. They keep raising taxes, the provincial sales tax, and that is not affordable for many Manitobans and that's the issue we're facing.

Madam Speaker, we have a lot of work to do ahead of us, but we're here and committed to do that work.

Berscheid Farm Flooding Concerns

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Madam Speaker, last week we learned that Fall flooding around Tim Berscheid ranch in the rural municipality of Kelsey near The Pas has stranded 400 of his cattle.

Can the minister update the House on this situation in Kelsey, and what has been done to help Mr. Berscheid and his cattle?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): I thank the member for the question.

And, very seriously, we take our department quite seriously in regards to animal issues and, of course, the safety of the farmers as well.

We know staff has been working diligently with the farmer in question and, of course, those around as well. They've been on the phone, through emails. I know the member from The Pas should know this, that the department's been out there several times. They've been talking to him not only this morning, but also over the weekend as well. Feed's been taken out to those animals; there's solutions been offered to the producer in order to ensure that the cattle are fed properly.

As the member talked about early on, as well, the department has reached out to the farmer to talk about testing the field corn that's right adjacent to the cattle, and they've been trying to find out whether or not that corn will be suitable for the cattle to eat. There's been some mould on it, but they want to make sure that, in fact, it will be a safe, viable food alternative for them once they're able to move out.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Bell's Purchase of MTS

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of the petition is as follows:

Manitoba telephone system is currently a fourth cellular carrier used by Manitobans along with the three big—big three carriers: Telus, Rogers and Bell.

In Toronto, with only the big three national companies controlling the market, the average five-gigabyte unlimited monthly cellular package is \$117 as compared to Winnipeg where MTS charges \$66 for the same package.

Losing MTS will mean less competition and will result in higher costs for all cellphone packages in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government do all that is possible to prevent the Bell takeover of MTS and to preserve a more competitive cellphone market so that cellular bills for Manitobans do not increase unnecessarily.

And this petition is signed by many fine Manitobans.

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

Union Certification

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans have benefited greatly from a fair and balanced approach to labour relations that has led to a long period of labour peace in the province.

Under current legislation, if 65 per cent of workers in a workplace vote to join a union by signing a union card, then a union can qualify to become automatically certified as the official bargaining agent for the workers.

These signed union cards are submitted to the Labour Board and are subject to a tripartite review which includes worker, management representatives, as well as an independent third party, each of whom

review every card and ensure that the law has been followed.

Provincial threshold to achieve automatic certification of a union is the highest in the country at 65 per cent, the democratic will and decision of workers to vote and join the union is absolutely clear.

During the recent provincial election, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party announced, without any consultation, that it was his intention to change this fair and balanced legislation by requiring a second vote conducted on a matter where the democratic will of workers has already been expressed.

This plan opens up the process to potential employer interference and takes the same misguided approach as the federal Conservatives under the Harper administration took in Bill C-525, which was nothing more than a solution looking for a problem.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government to maintain the current legislation for union certification which reflects balance and fairness, rather than adopting the intention to make it harder for workers to organize.

And this petition has been signed by many hard-working Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, this afternoon we would like to resume debate of Bill 14.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 14—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), second reading of Bill 14, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Concordia, who has seven minutes remaining.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I do appreciate the opportunity to conclude my comments. I wasn't sure if I would have a chance to rise in this House and

continue debate with regards to this particular bill, but I'm thankful that I do have this opportunity, because I didn't quite finish what I had to say last week.

That being said, I will put on the record one more time that I think—now, this is, I think, I—the third day of debate, perhaps, maybe longer that we've had this particular bill in front of this House. As I've mentioned last week, I think almost everyone that has risen to speak—certainly, members of the opposition have put on the record how important they think transparency and openness in government is. I think there's a long list of things that have been done by the previous government with regards to transparency and openness in this province. We've made significant progress, and I know I had the chance to put that on the record last week as well, so I won't belabour the point and continue to put those on the record. I'm sure folks will be going back to my Hansard and reading my comments from last week and studying those.

But—so—and everybody that has risen has spoken about the importance of this. They've spoken about how important having a transparent and open government is, and yet here we are on, as I said, day three, maybe day four, where we're now bringing this issue back to the House.

* (14:40)

And the reason that I'm so happy that I've had—been given this extra opportunity to put some words on the record is simply to mention some of the things, and to contrast some of the important issues that my constituents have been coming to me talking about with some of the items that this government has brought forward.

So, as I said, we're talking about transparency, and a subject that absolutely everyone in this House certainly agrees with—I think most Manitobans would appreciate and understand how important it is for a government to be transparent and understand the important steps that we've taken in that regard, you know. But my constituents are saying: well, yes, absolutely, that's great, move forward on that, but what about education? What about our schools in our community? And they say, you know, we're happy that there's been some capital investment, that our schools are moving forward with vocational training. They've seen the leaps and bounds that have been made in terms of giving our students a leg up in the workforce and connecting them directly to those jobs of the future.

Just over a couple of weeks ago, Madam Speaker, an opportunity to tour the brand new pastry arts site—classroom at the Kildonan-East Collegiate, and I can tell you that students were just over the moon with this facility. I couldn't believe it. It was state of the art, basically modelled after what is in place at Red River. And so students who are taking these programs—culinary arts, pastry arts—are able to fit right into that program at Red River and move right into the workforce and get good jobs. So students and parents and my constituents are saying this is a great first step. There's a lot more we can do in terms of giving students the state-of-the-art equipment and facilities that they need to succeed.

Just the other week, Madam Speaker, here in the House we had a chance to debate Bill 203, which is the—if I've got my information correct—which is the designation of the Queen's Council for our members in the law profession. I think that ate up a day of debates by itself, there. I know we were sort of taken aback that this was the issue that was forefront on the government's agenda.

You know, for us, seniors are coming to me and they're saying: What about our seniors' tax credit? The one that had been promised to us—guaranteed to us, they had made plans on how to use that money to sustain themselves. And they said: Well, wait a minute, what happened to that money? And not just the money going forward, but the money that was already there—it was in their mailboxes, so to speak. And they're saying: Why is that gone?

We were spending time here, Madam Speaker, talking—discussing Bill 7, which, you know, is an unprovoked attack on labour, which, for no reason other than the government's ideological bent, has that been brought forward before this House and is that being jammed down the throats of workers in Manitoba, instead of talking about things like the health and fitness centre in my community, a great project that the Concordia Foundation has put forward, that is advocating for and is saying it will help with the wellness in our community and is an important project going forward.

These are the kind of things that Manitobans want us to be talking about. They understand that they've sent us here to this place to discuss those issues. They want to talk about daycare, they want to talk about education, they want to talk about health care. They understand how important transparency and accountability is. They see the steps that we've taken.

But, now, they want us to move forward. They want us to have vision. And, when we look to this government, we see a lack of vision, we see a lack of direction, we see days on end where we're discussing things that Manitobans just don't see as their priorities. So I see my time is getting very short here, Madam Speaker, but I would like to put on the record that it's my hope that we move forward, that we actually find out what the agenda of this government is, that we actually hear from them what their ideas are when it comes to health-care education. We can hear about their thoughts about giving Manitobans a living wage in this province, rather than them just saying no to raising the minimum wage.

These are important conversations that need to be had. These are important debates that I know we can have in this House, and we're going to differ on them, absolutely. We're going to stand with Manitobans on this side of the House, and we're going to stand strong against the ideological direction that this government, I'm sure, is going to take us. But, that being said, we want to hear from them about what their priorities are. We don't think these are the priorities of Manitobans; we think that the priorities of Manitobans are on things that affect them on a day-to-day basis.

So I appreciate the opportunity to put a few more words on the record. I do appreciate the opportunity to stand on the side of transparency and accountability in government. I appreciate the opportunity, once again, to put those words on the record. But I hope that we hear—we move forward on this debate. We move forward into the things that are more important to our constituents.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on Bill 14, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act.

In every democratic election the people is always right. At the last election, Manitobans overwhelmingly elected the Conservatives with the greatest majority in history, three members more than our last number when the NDP was re-elected to its fourth continuous term in 2011. That record, fourth consecutive terms, was also the longest record of any government and political party in Manitoba. We respect and appreciate the people's decision. We

thank Manitobans for electing us to be Her Majesty's loyal opposition. We take this role seriously.

We will be strong and ardent supporters of and co-operate with the new government's programs and policies that will benefit all Manitobans. However, when there are wrong-headed decisions and actions that will hurt the average Manitoban and stall the economic and social gains achieved through progressive policies and programs that have improved the quality of life of vulnerable Manitobans, the ordinary workers of Manitobans, the new immigrants and new Canadians in this province, Manitobans can be reassured that we will be there for them.

Manitobans can expect that we will be diligent and vigilant, and we will vigorously oppose and raise the rationale for not pursuing the inimical decisions. Likewise, we will be here to offer workable alternative solutions, these solutions arrived at after having heard input from constituents and organizations which are on the ground working on issues affecting the life and health of community members.

Madam Speaker, we are very proud of the commitment and diversity our caucus—of our caucus team, a real diverse caucus representing the majority of Manitobans and not just the 1 to 10 per cent of the Manitoba population. Within this diversity of caucus comes a commitment and unity of purpose to work hard, to scrutinize legislation to make sure they will serve Manitobans well, and Bill 14 is no exception.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues from St. Johns and my colleague from Wolseley provided clear perspectives and important context that can only come from their deep commitment to their communities and the work that they have done for years in making life better for everyone when they stood in this Chamber and spoke very well on Bill 14. My colleagues and I believe everyone needs to be given the chance to overcome whatever barriers they find themselves in, many beyond their control, and live a productive, fulfilling life for themselves and their families. My caucus colleagues' perspectives need to be heard and shared widely. Those are perspectives borne out by lived experience. They have lived and worked in these communities and the residents in these communities they have spoken to many, many times in seeking ways to improve their lives.

*(14:50)

Speaking of lived experience, I am a first-generation immigrant myself who came from a Third World country. Where I came from, there is widespread poverty. People die from preventable illnesses. Opportunities for advancement in life is not accessible to all. The disparity between the rich and the poor is so great. Despite the odds, I have seen with my own eyes how people have accepted their lot and tried their hardest to make life work with whatever little resources they are able to get for themselves.

Many of these family members gave up so much of themselves to their families. They sacrificed and endured hardships, such as separation from their families for years, to become overseas foreign workers. In the foreign lands, they have endured harsh weather, they have worked under unfair labour situations and lived in deplorable conditions. Sadly and tragically, many were not able to return to their families alive.

We might say the above conditions do not exist here in Canada. Unfortunately, there are segments of our population who live in Third World conditions and circumstances, and it is incumbent upon all elected public officials at all levels of government to work towards eliminating the conditions that perpetuate such Third World working and living conditions. And my colleagues have mentioned that these are the situations and issues that we should be dwelling on and looking solutions for, and not issues like Bill 14.

Thankfully, Madam Speaker, we have just passed two private members' resolutions such as the equality for First Nations people, and their recognition of integrated service delivery for the support of children and families in Manitoba. These are the kinds of resolutions we need to pass more in this House, because they will promote health, welfare, economic stability and peace in the workplace, among others, and not just the likes of Bill 14.

Madam Speaker, the above perspectives, as well as the rich, cultural experiences and practices, are made possible with the diversity in this Legislature. Right now, we are debating the government's Bill 14. When enacted, will this bill add to the existing legislations in place that will improve the lives of Manitobans? I think a bill legislating minimum wage increase is far more important to introduce than Bill 14 or a bill that will ensure that there will be no two-tiered medical care or, like, a bill that will

guarantee that there will be no health premiums levied on Manitobans or a bill that will protect workers' rights to organize without fear or intimidation from employers.

Those bills are far more substantial and valuable than Bill 14. If there are any benefits that one can learn from the debate on Bill 14, it is the knowledge that several well-positioned members of the Conservative Party received compensations and severance pay that are far higher than what several—than what severance monies NDP members—former staffers, received. Let us review those figures.

Madam Speaker, every year all salaries above—according to this bill, above \$50,000 paid by government are reported to the public. As we've previously publicly stated, we paid severance to seven departing staff members. The global amount for the seven staff members was \$670,000. These amounts were arrived at through negotiation as a result of legal advice, and in accordance with standard human resource practice. Some severance has been paid in 2014-2015 and some will be paid in 2015-2016. That severance will be reflected in next year's Public Accounts.

When severance is paid in, it is determined by what fiscal year an employee departs, and Manitoba's fiscal year is April 1 to March 31.

What did the Premier (Mr. Pallister) say on severance, which are a clear indication of double standards. The Premier said, and it's recorded in Hansard May 26th, 2015: " . . . we haven't paid severance to any of our departing staff and have been totally transparent about that . . ."

Is that the truth? Well, we found out three former members of the opposition's caucus staff received significant severance payments after leaving their government-funded caucus positions, and this was reported by Winnipeg Free Press, May 28th, 2015.

The Premier has also a double standard on severance. He said, recorded in Hansard on May 12th, 2015, quote: All severance payments aren't the same, of course. They are different. End of quote.

Madam Speaker, the Premier defends the fact that he has received over \$100,000 in severance from federal and provincial governments. If he receives them they are fine. He just doesn't believe anyone else should.

In 1999 and 1998, seven former PC political staff were paid nearly or over \$650,000 in severance with no complaint from the Premier, and what are those severance pays? We have those figures, and it's been mentioned in the past, but I think in the context of what I have mentioned, that—regarding Bill 14—that these figures have to be repeated.

A certain Julian Benson, secretary of the Treasury Board, received severance in the amount of \$78,873.03, and this figure is the adjusted figure using Bank of Canada inflation calculator, and if members opposite want to double check, it's on HDTP:—oh. I mean—better still, never mind the HDP—just www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/.

What else is the severance that was received by Conservative Party staffers? A person by the name of Taras Sokolyk, chief of staff at that time, received severance in the amount of \$129,341.74. Again, that's severance adjusted to 2015 dollars according to the Bank of Canada inflation calculator.

What else did we find out? We found out David Langtry—was the senior manager—received hundred and twelve dollars, six hundred twenty-two and twenty-four cents; and a very quite famous person by the name of Hugh McFadyen, was then chief of staff, received \$60,672.05; a lady by the name of Bonnie Staples-Lyon, secretary to Cabinet communications, received \$89,123.87; a gentleman by the name of Fredrick Mantey, then special assistant to the premier, received \$102,845.27; a professional officer, then by the name of Cynthia Carswell, received \$68,128.07; also, a lady by the name of Heather Campbell-Dewar, another professional officer, received \$57,702.63; for a total of \$699,309.19. And these are according to Bank of Canada inflation calculator.

*(15:00)

What else did we find out? Severance for Tories for Progressive Conservative staffers: for a lady in the name of Maureen Cousins, a policy analyst, again, for net 2015 adjusted dollars, she received \$47,254.55; Tricia Chestnut, economic research analyst, received \$46,035.20; and the present Minister of Culture received \$34,301.37; for a total of \$127,591.12—again, adjusted to the 2015-dollar figures. So, Madam Speaker, having mentioned, learning those figures is quite sobering information for all of us.

I will be remiss not to add another benefit of Bill 14, which requires that any severance paid to a technical officer with an employment or secondment agreement employed after May 2, 2016 must be disclosed within 30 days. Prior to this time, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act does not require immediate disclosure of severance payments, nor of additional disclosure of any individual employment contract or secondment agreement between the government and a person who is appointed as technical officer after May 2, 2016.

Madam Speaker, in this side of the House, our team believes in a transparent government. We believe that we have to be held accountable to our—to Manitobans. And we take our responsibility to be open and accountable to Manitobans while being respectful of the privacy of our public servants in HR best practices. We also believe that having a professional and fairly-compensated political staff is an integral part of delivering quality services to Manitobans. Political staff should not be subject to partisan attacks or treated as political pawns. We support transparency and would like to see the scope of Bill 14 expanded. Its limited scope is unfortunate.

The government should also find time to address important issues for Manitobans, as I've mentioned earlier, which includes creating good jobs for young people, investing in our infrastructure and schools and creating new opportunities by funding programs like child care.

Madam Speaker, we are proud of our time in government, when we've strengthened The Elections Act, beefed up FIPPA legislation and made more government data and information available online, including ministerial travel and expense reports.

During our time, we've made sure the public was free to access information. We've also put more information online, because most Manitobans don't file FIPPA's, they search online. We've posted all government contracts online where they can be reviewed by the public. That's the most transparent system of any Canadian province. We've released key department statistics online, like EMS response times; number of doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners; graduation rates and funding to First Nation CFS authorities or front-line workers. Also, under our time, we've disclosed ministers' expenses annually and ministers' out-of-province travel expenses are disclosed quarterly.

We've made The Elections Act more powerful. We've banned corporate and union donations to keep big businesses and powerful lobbyists from influencing elections, and we've also restricted third-party advertising during election campaigns.

We were the first government in Canada to introduce legislations protecting whistle-blowers and we created the lobbyist registry to keep lobbying in Manitoba even more open and transparent. We've also extended freedom-of-information legislation to public bodies that the Conservatives have specifically excluded. FIPPA now covers municipal governments, school divisions, universities and health regional authorities, and we shortened how long Cabinet documents are sealed.

Madam Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), as I've mentioned earlier, claims that most staff members has received severance from his office and, as I've read, this is not true. The PC caucus, using taxpayers' dollars, paid severance to at least one staffer while the Premier was the leader of his party. We estimate he paid out nearly three quarters of a year's salary in severance to his staffer.

And so, Madam Speaker, we take no lessons in transparency from this government. It has not provided the full disclosure to Manitobans about the size of the deficit in order to try and settle a political debt. It mislead Manitobans about a \$170-million difference in the deficit, and this is no rounding error, but a clear attempt to play with Manitoba's budget for political purposes.

And with—the lack of transparency fits a pattern. Seniors' School Tax Rebate—this government was not honest with Manitoban seniors when they cut the Seniors' School Tax Rebate. The Premier went on CJOB during the election and promised seniors he would keep the credit. His party also promised the same thing. We don't consider seniors earning a family income of \$40,000 to be wealthy and, in fact, we know that this credit helps many low- to middle-income seniors stay in their own homes longer.

We proposed a new income-tax bracket on the wealthiest 2 per cent to help support low- and middle-income families, and the Conservatives opposed it. And there are phony savings that were given out. Now that we know the justification for the Conservative cuts is without merit, will they come clean on what their plans are?

The Finance Minister claimed to have savings of over \$100 million in the budget, but they couldn't or

wouldn't explain where they found those savings. When pressed by the media, the government finally identified items they deemed wasteful: millions in cuts to property tax rebate for seniors; \$35 million in cuts to prevention, including for prevention, including for health, healthy living and children's wellness and prevention programs; \$9 million less for schools and universities; and also reducing the levels of capital spending on infrastructure in 2016-2017, exactly the type of investments that grow our economy and create good jobs.

*(15:10)

It was clear why they would avoid releasing these details. Because rather than finding solutions that grow the economy for all Manitobans, this government wants to fight petty political battles. What's more, their justification for finding these so-called savings was based on a politically inflated deficit figure.

Madam Speaker, when the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was in opposition, he held his press conferences behind closed doors and he delivered his alternative throne speech at an inclusive, insider-only event. The Premier has refused to come clean to Manitobans where he would cut funding.

Under the conflict of interest act, each member of the Legislature is required to disclose certain information by way of a declaration. This includes declaring holdings in any corporation anywhere in the world. The Premier has failed to declare at least two corporations that he owns and continues to avoid questions about his disclosure. That's because when he was the opposition leader his party didn't care about being accountable to working and middle-class Manitobans. Now in power, they want to govern for wealthy, well-connected insiders, and for big business.

When he was the opposition leader—when he was part of the government, the Premier now sold off MTS to their own wealthy friends. His Conservative Party also tried to undermine Manitobans' right to vote when they did this despicable, unethical vote-splitting scandal. The Premier campaigned on the promise of open and transparent government, but it's clear those measures don't apply to his conduct.

Madam Speaker, Bill 14 is a bill that should have been the very last on the government's agenda. The government should have as priority the welfare, the well-being of average Manitobans like workers, middle-class Manitobans, and those who are

making—who are having much difficulty making both ends meet: those Manitobans are having problems with housing; those Manitobans who are finding it difficult to find affordable, safe daycare spaces; Manitobans who are finding it difficult to find employment because over 10,000 of them have lost their jobs when this government came to power.

Bill 14 should be the very last and above—the ones mentioned below that would have been of benefit to workers and to average Manitobans should have been the preoccupation of the government.

We strongly urge the government to, again, make it possible for minimum wage to be increased. This is the first time that it has not been increased, and an increase in minimum wage puts money—over \$400 annually—to the table of working Manitobans. And those are the very money that goes back to the economy, because those help pay for housing, those help pay for the needed food on the table, those help pay for medicine that they need to buy, and not the features of Bill 14 that may be at the very last on the minds of ordinary Manitobans whose situation in life right now are dire, especially those who have recently lost their jobs because of issues that this government should be attending to, like stimulating the economy, like providing trading—training so people can find jobs, like making sure students will be able to finish their studies and supporting students, making sure tuition is affordable.

So, Madam Speaker, I believe Bill 14, as I've said, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act should be at the very bottom of bills that should be tabled in this House and instead bills that would improve lives of Manitobans should be the top priority.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): I'm honoured today to provide a few words on this bill today.

First of all, I just wanted to present our position on this bill is that our team believes in a transparent government that is held accountable to its citizens and the responsibility to be open and accountable to Manitobans seriously while being respectful of the privacy of our public servants and HR best practices.

And, in fact, I'm proud to be part of a team where we support transparency and would like to see the scope of the bill expanded. Its limited scope is unfortunate.

And I also believe that this government should also find time to address important issues for Manitobans, including creating good jobs for young people, investing in our infrastructure and schools and creating new opportunities by funding programs like child care.

And that brings me to the opportunity—last week, I was home in the North. I attended the prebudget consultation meeting in Thompson where these very, very fundamental issues were discussed regarding jobs, investing on infrastructure in schools. For examples, some of the comments I've heard, which I can be—I can relate to, absolutely, as a northern Manitoban, when we hear the mayor of Thompson expressing his concern and inquiring about the industrial schools skills and trade centre.

I thought that was an excellent concern to have because that will create jobs and futures for our young people who, we know, many face loss of hope in the North and eventually leads to social problems such as dropping out of high school, suicide and whatnot. So that's a very, very just question that the mayor of Thomson had asked about this and basically he wants to move forward on this very, very important initiative for the city of Thompson and for the North.

And also, too, we've heard some—from some major stakeholders, too, within their community. For example, I was quite interested hearing from a social services lens I was told at that meeting from our presenters, the executive director for the YWCA. Social services are crucially needed for our women, our youth, Aboriginal people, people facing addictions and mental health issues, and with her hard-working team they face many problems such as intergenerational effects of residential school survivors, which I've shared many, many times in this House that I completely know what that's all about; I'm living it, and with my current situation my daughter's also going through those effects as well.

So, with that, in order to address and give hope to our youth in regards to ensuring that we invest in Manitobans is to invest in more in employment training programs, housing, child care, because right now we're working with limited employment skills.

So, with that, very important issues were discussed regarding homeless shelters and—but specifically in child care. In order to build a stronger Manitoba, we need to have child-care spaces created because that's absolute investment in our society when we look after our children in order for their

parents to find employment, meaningful employment and education.

* (15:20)

So, when the discussion of child care were brought up, it was interesting that a member from the U of M Social Work Department in Thompson was concerned when our minister suggested home-based daycares. And, with that, I've—a mother myself, I did go through a home base and, guess what, the rates were quite higher, and, currently with my children in the current daycare that they're in, it's reliable, affordable and accessible as well.

So, with that, I'm concerned as well with this individual because there's a concern regarding the transition to school age, what programs would a private home daycare provide for these kids to transition from the daycare to nursery and kindergarten. There's also an issue of safety and education for ESC workers, and also the issue of a Quebec model was even brought up as well.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, many issues were discussed and—including funding programs, such as schools and infrastructure. But I just wanted to read out what my fellow hometown, Mr. Doug Lovestead, he works for the Northern sector council, and it was quite interesting that him and I, even though we ran against each other in the provincial election—*[interjection]* yes, he was a PC candidate—that him and I are on the same page when it comes to the North. I agree with my—with Mr. Lovestead when he issued out—expressed his concern that there is no shared vision for the North, that we need to get serious regarding skills and development for our young people.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

What is the government doing to attract investment in the North? What is the government doing to work with the dynamics of northern Manitoba, especially our young Aboriginal people, to find meaningful employment. Where are the supports that are going to enable economic development in northern Manitoba?.

So I agree with Mr. Lovestead, and also, too, I agree with his meaningful ending statement when the minister had mentioned about employment and training and the low Aboriginal education rates in Manitoba. Well, I agree with him, too, that we need to have hope for our people. We need to have opportunities presented, and so these folks, these young people I quote, you know, they have to have

some hope for the future. And I agree with him too when he discussed about teen suicide rates in northern Manitoba.

Another issue, too; in order to address important issues for Manitobans such as, as well, is to discuss the executive director for the friendship centre requesting more monies for an Aboriginal diabetes program and I believe it was suggested that social impact bonds could be utilized in order to attract money. Well, I didn't think that sat well with their executive director who continues and believes that all government, all levels of government should participate in such important funding such as this.

And I also had the opportunity to listen to the mental health—Canadian Mental Health Association where I was able to ask a question to the executive director in regards to mental health services in the North, in particular to psychiatric assessments for youth. There was none done whatsoever in the North; we have to travel to either Winnipeg or Brandon, which increases further stress on our families where they miss school, parents have to miss work. If they don't have any leave left, there's loss of income.

And with that I just want to talk a little bit more about just how important it was for me to be, as a northerner, to attend this meeting and bring forward these issues that I absolutely agree with our stakeholders when presented at that table.

So let me continue on with another thing, as a Manitoban, that truly disturbed me reading in the media, especially being a former resident of Winnipeg, in regards to municipal transparency. We believe that transparency and accountability should not be limited to the provincial government and should apply to all levels of government. No matter whether elected officials or senior civil servants who work for the City, the Province or the federal government, Manitobans expect that the higher standards will be met.

For example, something that I was disturbed as a Manitoban, reading in our media to learn that the former Winnipeg CEO, Phil Sheegl, resigned in October 2013; it took more than a year and a half to reveal he received \$250,000 severance package. As a single parent on a single income, that was just absolutely outrageous to me. And also, too, learning that the former CAO Deepak Joshi, received more than \$567,000 in compensation after her resign; again, another disgusting number to learn about as a single-income parent.

The City of Winnipeg recently passed a motion to reveal what portions of payments to staff earning \$50,000 or more per year covers vacation pay, severance, salary and other benefits. It is unfortunate that the minister has passed up this opportunity to improve transparency at all levels and this suggests this bill is more concerned with settling old political debts than advancing Manitobans' interests.

So, with that, I just want to continue on that we take no lessons in transparency from this government. And I also just want to continue other outrageous facts that are documented as well as on-reading on Premier Pallister's views and statements on severance.

An Honourable Member: No mention of names.

Ms. Lathlin: Oh, sorry. So I take that back.

For example, learning and reading that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has stated that we haven't paid severance to any of our departing staff, have been totally transparent about that.

The truth is that three former members of the opposition caucus staff received significant severance payments after leaving their government-funded caucus positions as quoted—as stated in the Winnipeg Free Press, May 28th, 2015.

Also, the Premier has a double standard on 'preverance': quote, all severance payments aren't the same, of course; they're different, end quote.

And he also defends the fact that he has received over 100,000 in severance from federal and provincial governments. If he receives them, they are fine. He just doesn't believe anyone else should.

In 1999 and 1988, seven former PC political staff were paid nearly \$650,000 in severance with no complaint from the Premier.

So, with that, I just wanted to end my words on this bill with very, very important questions that should be answered and addressed. For example, let me go on that what will be the mechanism in place to report employee compensation contracts and secondments? Second question is to what—why has the form of disclosure been made a 'misterial'—a ministerial power rather than included in Public Accounts? What consultations did the minister do prior to the introduction of this bill and with what groups?

And further questions are that need to be addressed is: Why hasn't the City of Winnipeg been

included in the scope of this bill? Also, too, why weren't political staff and senior staff of the City of Winnipeg included in the bill? Why does the bill limit its scopes to technical officers with employment agreements or secondments, and why not simply focus on technical officers?

Other questions that should be addressed are: Why weren't other employee groups included in the scope of the bill and what criteria would be used by the minister to determine whether or not employee safety or otherwise be unduly threatened? How did the government arrive at the 30-day time frame?

So with that, these are nine questions that should be seriously addressed to Manitobans in regards to portray the word of being accountable to all Manitobans. So, with that, Deputy Speaker, those are my words on this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 14, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

* (15:30)

Recorded Vote

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): We'd like to call for a recorded vote, please.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It's been a pleasure of the House to—sorry, we're going to—

The request of a vote has been ordered, and so we'll call in all the members.

The question before the House is Bill 14, The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Bindle, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fletcher, Fontaine, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson,

Johnston, Kinew, Klassen, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Reyes, Saran, Schuler, Selinger, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 51, Nays 0.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

House Business

Mr. Micklefield: Mr. Deputy Speaker, could you please canvass the House to see if there's leave to waive rule 23(5) on the morning of Tuesday, November 1st, to allow for a recorded vote on Bill 209 if that debate has concluded before 11 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to waive rule 23(5) on the morning of Tuesday, November 1st, to allow for a recorded vote on Bill 209 if that debate has concluded before 11 tomorrow morning? *[Agreed]*

* (16:30)

Mr. Micklefield: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to call Bill 16 for second reading and debate.

Bill 16—The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on—proposed motion on—the honourable Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), second reading on Bill 16, The Manitoba East Side Road Authority Repeal Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Tyndall Park, who has 22 minutes remaining.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): It's always a pleasure to dovetail my speech right after a recorded vote. There are 51 pairs of ears listening to me.

And, in order to fully appreciate the importance—

An Honourable Member: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Micklefield: I don't believe that member has meant to reference the number of people present or absent in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member from Tyndall Park, on the same point of order.

Mr. Marcelino: I believe that I only mentioned the votes not the members present, no specific reference to anyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just conclude that there was no point of order because there was no specific members who were—that he mentioned to be absent from the Chamber.

* * *

Mr. Marcelino: And, as I was saying, it's so good to be following the recorded vote in this House and, of course, to continue after a point of order.

The—in order to dovetail my comments from the things that I said from last week, the East Side Road Authority was designed to provide economic opportunities for the indigenous communities that will be taking advantage of the construction. It was a 30-year, \$3-billion construction program from the previous NDP government, and from what I heard from the Minister for Infrastructure, he said that he was reviewing the whole thing and then he saw it fit to just dispense with the services of the East Side Road Authority and lump it all together with MIT, which is Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Now, fine and dandy. That was good in some sense because it was a promise on the part of the Progressive Conservative Party when they were campaigning that they will treat all Manitobans fairly, and I'm still trying to find a good reason why I should believe that when they stopped the construction of the East Side Road Authority, how can that be treating those indigenous communities fairly?

The community benefits agreement that were entered into by the previous government and the economic opportunities that were opened up when money was flowing in that direction of the East Side Authority—not Brandon, but East Side Authority—the First Nations were—they were given hope. They were given some of the, what I would call, an equalization of the gaps that are existing between Winnipeg and those who live in that area. It was more of a compassionate way of looking at things as in we

have traditionally ignored those areas and we have traditionally not put money in those communities.

* (16:40)

There was talk about the mismanagement of the East Side Road Authority, and the only thing that was mentioned, especially if you read the Auditor General's report, was that there were some monitoring and other types of administrative errors. And I hear the Minister for Infrastructure laughing about it, as he did when I mentioned something about the so-called waste that he said was being perpetrated on those indigenous communities on the east side of the lake.

Now, I understand that this is part of the attempt on the part of the Progressive Conservative government to put their brand of infrastructure building. I know how they do it now. They just stop building. And it's not fair for those communities who had hoped that their areas will be served by an all-season road that will open up tourism, that will open up the economic opportunities that are usually coming in those areas where roads are built.

And the austerity measure that the Progressive Conservative government of the day in this province is a measure that is usually part of a Conservative ideology of austerity and savings, which is fine, except that that same concept of austerity has been debunked, and I will read into the record a column of Louis-Philippe Rochon, from the Laurentian University, and it is about what austerity really is and what its effects are on the poor and the unemployed and the vulnerable sectors of our society.

He said, and I quote: In its April budget, the federal government announced it had succeeded in balancing the budget. Such an achievement, however, will prove to be at best a pyrrhic victory. History shows austerity and balanced budgets never work and only doom our economies to more misery. The austerians—Mr. Rochon called them the austerians—as American economist Rob Parenteau calls them, are clearly winning the policy war. In Canada, as in many other places around the world, governments are turning once again to austerity policies in order to reign in public spending, believed to be out of control. These cuts, however, are usually done in vital social programs such as health care, education, social housing and unemployment benefits. As is the case with other policies, austerity has both winners and losers.

The victims of austerian economics are often the disenfranchised and the unemployed, whereas those who benefit from austerity invariably tend to be wealthier Canadians through reduced tax rates and, in Canada specifically, through a panoply of boutique tax policies such as the recent doubling of tax-free savings accounts and income splitting. In this sense, austerity is not a haphazard policy but a well-crafted approach to rewriting the Canadian social contract. And Mr. Rochon continues: It is a deliberate policy that aims to take away from the poor and give to the rich. Those who disagree with this statement have the burden to show how austerity is a success, but they will have great difficulty proving it.

Academic research has come down against austerity. In fact, austerity has zero empirical support, and it has been completely discredited and proven to be the result of questionable research.

The most famous case was a landmark 2010 paper written by Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff—both from Harvard University, no less—which argued that GDP ratios over 90 per cent would result in considerable damage to national economics: notably, a marked decline in economic growth. Their paper had a huge impact on policy and accounted in many respects for the great policy U-turn of 2010 when countries reversed their previous Keynesian spending policies and reverted to austerity. This was a policy fiasco with an inevitable result that our economies stalled and have remained in this zombie state ever since.

Now, let me connect what I read to what's happening with ESRA. ESRA was designed to be a 30-year infrastructure project to open up the east side of the lake. And the way that it was designed was the benefit agreements with the First Nations will open up the doors for them to have employment. Whether full or temporary, time will tell, but there were equipment operators that were trained, and there was a huge influx of hope. Hope sometimes is the only currency that will keep our people—or, the people in our province to keep on working and living. It is not how much money is being poured in their way. It is just that now there is a recognition that they exist in our province. That particular area, which is the east side of the lake, has been ignored for so long. *[interjection]*

And the member from Brandon West has mentioned 17 years. And, of course, there were some errors made during those times. But, in so short a time, 195 days of Progressive Conservative

government has made so many mistakes in provoking conflict within our province, which is—*[interjection]* Well, it is 195 days of Conservative rule. I won't characterize it as tyrannical, but it's getting closer.

I won't mention anything about the University of Manitoba, because it's not relevant. But it is—*[interjection]* Well, it has not stopped me from saying it.

* (16:50)

Let me continue with Mr. Louis-Philippe Rochon and his academic writing: Their paper had a huge impact on policy and accounted in many respects for the great policy U-turn of 2010, when countries reversed their previous Keynesian spending policies and reverted to austerity. This was a policy fiasco with the inevitable result that our economies stalled and have remained in this zombie state ever since.

Now, to continue, despite the humiliation when those writings were said to be without proper support, when those writings from those two, from Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff, were discredited by no less than Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman, he went even further, Mr. Krugman, and stated unequivocally: All of the economic research that allegedly supported the austerity push has been discredited. Widely touted statistical results were, it turned out, based on highly dubious assumptions and procedures plus a few outright mistakes and evaporated like milk under closer scrutiny. It is rare in the history of economic thoughts for debates to get resolved this decisively.

Bucknell University economist, Matias Vernengo, has publicly called for the paper to be officially retracted or unpublished. And, despite this great humiliation, austerian ideology endures. Austerians, of course, believe their policies will work and will eventually result in increased growth. Yet evidence shows that economies cannot grow without an adequate level of public spending. Or, if they do grow, they grow at very low rates, as has been the case for the last three decades.

In this sense, the evidence indicates austerity is a policy failure on a grand scale. How, then, can such a flawed idea gain so much traction? The first explanation is political. The counter-revolution began in the '80s when a parallel was drawn between personal finances and public finances. We were told that if individual Canadians could not live within

their means, then neither should a state, or in our case neither should a province. Canadians thought it made sense and bought it. This was perhaps the greatest victory of the right, meaning the conservatives, to convince Canadians the state should not live beyond its means; otherwise, it could jeopardize the livelihood of our children and grandchildren.

And, just to comment about that, it has been spoken about in this Legislature. It has been spoken about with such vigour that—and now we know that it's false. This was all smoke and mirrors, of course. Concepts like living within its means have different meanings when applied to the state. The state does not have the same constraints as you and I, and, as far as I know, citizens cannot print their own money. But the idea did gain traction, political traction, and today no political parties dare utter the expression deficit spending. Even the NDP has brought into the myth.

The second explanation is ideological. It is no secret that Canada has one of the most ideological governments in the world today. And we are seeing that same ideological approach in our province when savings and efficiencies are being touted as the end-all and be-all of the values that we have.

Austerians are anti-state, Mr. Rochon continues. They see no benefit from having a large government. So the ultimate goal of austerity is not to achieve some finances for the government, but rather to shrink the size of government and, ultimately, to reduce the size of the state. Cut revenues and you must cut spending if you want to balance the books. There is now a growing consensus regarding the failure of austerity. Yet, in Canada, as elsewhere, governments are not listening, and the provincial government of the day is not listening.

This can only result, Mr. Rochon continues, in a full collapse of our economies. In fact, we are starting to see the early signs of this collapse now. Now. Now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker—Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas. *[interjection]*

Oh, sorry, the honourable member for Brandon East—*[interjection]*—West.

The honourable member for Brandon West.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 16, The Manitoba

East Side Road Authority Repeal Act. I listened intently to the member opposite talking about the politics of the road building and this—and types of things, and I'm wondering what the politics were of \$500 million being spent to build 50 miles of road.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Helwer: Ooh, what would the politics of that be? I'm thinking there's some economics. There's some construction; there's a lot of different things that went in there. But how do you build that little road for that much money? How is that possible? And it's not paved; it's a gravel road.

Madam Speaker, as you probably know, I've been up on that road a few times with members of our caucus, we—and staff from our caucus, and we've seen the road, and we've been over on the east-side road, and we've been up on the ice roads and we've been on the winter roads, and we've seen what has or hasn't been built there. And I think what hasn't been built is the bigger part of it.

Indeed, with—you spent \$500 million on 50 miles of road. Obviously, that money didn't all go into the road. Or perhaps that's where they hid the millions of dollars in gold coins that they talked about that used to be in a vault downstairs. Maybe that's where we should look for the gold because it's obviously not in a road. Nobody would spend that much money on a road. So the money went somewhere else. Where did the money go? Follow the money, Madam Speaker. That's key. Where did the money go?

Now, when we look at the communities along the road and along the winter roads and along the ice roads, they pretend to say that some of that money went into those communities. Well, then, we should see evidence of that, shouldn't we, Madam Speaker? We should see new buildings. We should see new vehicles. We should see, perhaps, restaurants or maybe we would see some gas pumps along—

Madam Speaker: Order.

The hour being 5 p.m. the House is now adjourned and stands—*[interjection]*—oh, sorry, I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

The hour being 5 p.m., the—when the minister—or when the member has time the next time, he will have 28 minutes remaining in his debate.

Now, the hour being 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 31, 2016

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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