

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

| <b>Member</b>             | <b>Constituency</b>  | <b>Political Affiliation</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 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

Wednesday, November 2, 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

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills?

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs

##### Fifth Report

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

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

#### Meetings

*Your Committee met on November 1, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.*

#### Matters under Consideration

- *Bill (No. 9) – The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections (suppression de l'allocation annuelle)*
- *Bill (No. 17) – The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes*

*médico-légales et la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil*

#### Committee Membership

- *Hon. Mr. FLETCHER*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. HELWER*
- *Mr. ISLEIFSON*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Mr. NESBITT*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON*
- *Mr. SWAN*
- *Mr. WIEBE*

*Your Committee elected Mr. ISLEIFSON as the Vice-Chairperson.*

#### Bills Considered and Reported

- *Bill (No. 9) – The Election Financing Amendment Act (Repeal of Annual Allowance)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections (suppression de l'allocation annuelle)*

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.*

- *Bill (No. 17) – The Fatality Inquiries Amendment and Vital Statistics Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes médico-légales et la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil*

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.*

**Mrs. Guillemard:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), that the report of the committee be now received.

**Motion agreed to.**

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** I am pleased to table the 2015 and '16 annual report for the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture—the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the Minister of Agriculture please proceed with his statement.

### National 4-H Day

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture):** Strong leadership, vision and communication are important elements for future economic development and 'riley' of the communities in Manitoba.

Today and into the future, Manitoba's youth will be driving new ideas and economic results through contributions to leading industries such as agriculture, food industries, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, technology and many others.

When I think about programs that make a real difference in developing this future leadership potential, the 4-H program is top of mind. The 4-H program has been developing the skills of Canadian youth for over 103 years. In fact, Roland, Manitoba, was the birthplace of the 4-H program in Canada back in 1913.

The 4-H program philosophy is, Learn to Do by Doing. Through hands of learning opportunities, young Manitobans build leadership, communication and other practical skills in areas such as agriculture, food, healthy living, environmental stewardship. These skills help individuals to accede in the future.

When I talked with 4-H youth, they speak fondly about the opportunities they get through 4-H and the friendships and connections they develop.

This summer, I had the good fortune to visit the north—annual North Interlake 4-H Beef Club's competition. Madam Speaker, 4-H members are proud to show the results of their hard work, and the results of that hard work was impressive. I am proud for our young farmers who I know will be the future leaders and innovators in the agriculture and food industry.

Today there are 146 4-H clubs in 100 communities, with more than 2,300 active 4-H members and 850 volunteer leaders. The 4-H program would not be where it is today without volunteer leaders that co-ordinate club activities and facilitate learning.

Today is national Show Your 4-H Colours day and we have been joined by 4-H members, volunteer leaders, alumni and supporters in wearing green to celebrate. Earlier today, I signed a proclamation declaring November 2016 as 4-H Month in Manitoba.

At noon today, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and I joined a group of 4-H members and leaders from across Manitoba to recite the 4-H pledge on the Grand Staircase of this Legislature. I am pleased to acknowledge this group that has joined us today in the gallery.

I encourage all Manitoba youth to see what 4-H program has to offer. The program offerings are plentiful; the benefits from participating are rememberable.

**Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas):** Madam Speaker, today, people are celebrating 4-H Day to support some great initiatives that help young people thrive.

Madam Speaker, 4-H is an international youth and volunteer organization that provides young people with leadership skills, communication skills and self-confidence. With 4-H, young people can travel across Canada to make friends, share ideas and learn ways to achieve their goals together. There are also opportunities to travel internationally to work on community development projects.

Local programs help youth develop leadership skills in communications, technology and sustainable agriculture. In Manitoba, many people who are involved in 4-H learn how to be active and engaged community members. They work on projects that help them gain valuable skills and they create lifelong friendships.

Supporting kids and families when they need it most is—has substantial and lasting impact on their lives. We want children to grow up safe, in loving communities, with supports they need to get a strong start, a good education and good jobs. Madam Speaker, 4-H is a valuable organization that enables youth to participate in activities in a safe, supportive, friendly and inclusive environment.

It is important to recognize the importance of all grassroots, volunteer-led organizations that we have here in our province. We should all hope that this government understands and recognizes the importance of these types of community organizations and commits to increase the supports needed to keep them running and

thriving. By doing so, we will all be able to ensure a better and brighter future for youth in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I'd like to ask for leave to respond to the ministerial statement.

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

\* (13:40)

**Ms. Klassen:** Madam Speaker, 4-H Manitoba was founded in 1913 and it is part of an international not-for-profit organization. 4-H aims to give Manitoba's amazing youth the training and soft skills that these youth carry into adulthood. The extracurricular programs enhance belongingness and, in turn, fosters friendships that last a lifetime.

Madam Speaker, 4-H works by planting the seeds of knowledge that will grow forever, and I would like to thank the organization for the seed of knowledge gifted to each of our members in the Liberal office. The organization has been recognized multiple times in the past, including an induction into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame for their services to our youth, and I commend them for all these accomplishments.

My own daughter, who is in the gallery today, Corbin Klassen, who is here for take your child to work day, was also a 4-H member in Steinbach. I can—so I can personally attest to the success and quality of the program she received.

The 4-H program has helped so many at your 'rith'—risk youth—find a secured, structured environment to grow and a place of belonging. Had it not been for the Steinbach 4-H Club, my own niece surely would've been lost in the mourning of her older sister's suicide.

When students graduate from 4-H, the program still finds a way to give. They have given students valuable information to help them receive funding for post-secondary education and the tools necessary to succeed in life.

In closing, I would like to thank the many volunteers and organizers of the 4-H program for their hard work and dedication. You have truly inspired many youth in our province.

Miigwech, thank you.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Community Resident Associations

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** I rise in the Legislature today to speak about community residents associations. These groups represent the citizens of vibrant young communities and make a significant and positive impact on these flourishing neighbourhoods.

Have you ever taken a drive through Island Lakes? If you have, you may notice all the pristine potted plants along the boulevards. What makes this area unique, in all of Winnipeg, is that all 117 pots are paid for and maintained by—privately by the lakes—the Island Lakes Residents' Group.

Have you ever heard of the Sage Creek Canada Day celebration? Well, this huge event that drives local businesses and brings the community and those from surrounding areas together for a very entertaining and memorable day, is organized and funded entirely by means of the Sage Creek Residents' Association. Both associations are represented here in the gallery today.

These groups continually stand up for their citizens; it's no wonder that the memberships of both associations continually increases by as much as 4 per cent per year. Their social media is also kept active with current webpage and Facebook updates, as well as organized local buy, sell and trade groups, specifically tailored to their residents. They also promote citizens to look out for one another's well-being; this includes crime prevention and awareness. Just this past summer, video surveillance on an Island Lakes resident's car being broken into was made public, garnering over 22,000 views.

These organizations are known to lobby for what they need in their respective communities; much hard work on a completely voluntary basis. This is yet another fine example of how Manitobans are also the most generous and charitable people in Canada, giving both their time and resources to so many worthwhile causes.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Elmwood Community Resource Centre

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, I believe strongly in the power of citizens to affect change in their community through direct action and volunteerism. Today, I am pleased to recognize an organization that embodies this principle and to offer a big congratulations to the Elmwood Community

Resource Centre on 15 years of service in our community. I thank the many staff and volunteers for the amazing work that you do.

I was pleased to attend the 15th annual general meeting of the ECRC on September 21st where I was honoured to give the keynote address. I reflected on the real difference that this organization has made in our community and how it has grown by encouraging community pride, inclusion and collaboration.

Some of their programs include crisis counselling, drop-in and computer training, literacy training, a Health Baby and Lighthouses site, maintenance of the community gardens at Stadacona and Watt streets, and the Elmwood Youth Employment Experience program which gives youth ages 18 to 29 job skill training and work placements to help them find good jobs.

They've also been integral in settling—settling refugees, including those from Syria, in our community through their Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program.

The ECRC also hosts many annual community-building events like their Breakfast with Santa and their Canada Day celebration, and they partner with many organizations like local churches, community groups and the Chalmers Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation in order to reach more people.

All of this is provided by an amazing staff team led by Executive Director Nina Condo and a stellar group of volunteers and board members who are committed to their community.

Madam Speaker, again, I congratulate the Elmwood Community Resource Centre and the board on 15 years of great service and tireless dedication to our community. We wish you all the best in your bright future.

Madam Speaker, sorry—

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia?

**Mr. Wiebe:** My apologies. I'd just like to ask leave to have the list of names of the ECRC board members and employees to be added in Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave to add those names to Hansard? *[Agreed]*

*Executive Director Nina Condo; Operations Manager Mark Stine; Programs Manager Sean S.; receptionist, Kamelia S.; Financial Administrator*

*Anne O.; GOAL admin / teacher, Jennifer N.; GOAL teacher, Ema T.; GOAL Educational Assistant & Newcomer Settlement Worker, Anna M.; Healthy Baby Facilitator Diane D.; Healthy Baby Childcare, Yesenia G.; Youth Employment Outreach, Carmen G.; Job Coach Youth Employment, Akbar N.; Youth Facilitator YEAR, Hurui B.; Youth Mentor YEAR, Celina B.; Maintenance / Cleaner, Sashi D.; Canada Summer Job, Courtney Nelson, Deepak S., Braeden C., May-Anne M.; Green Team, Brandon C., Elvis M., Robin S., Karen G.*

### Fall Suppers

**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye):** I rise in the House today to speak to an important Manitoba tradition. Fall suppers have been going on in Manitoba for over 100 years. They've always been an important part of communities in Manitoba, especially in rural and small-town Manitoba.

Fall suppers probably first started as a way for communities to celebrate the harvest and have a well-earned feast. Today they are still that, but have also become a major fundraiser for a variety of local causes and in some cases, the only fundraiser that community may have.

In the constituency of La Verendrye that I represent, there are more than 20 fall suppers. These fall suppers feed anywhere from 200 to 1,200 satisfied guests.

In the last five years I have attended many fall suppers. The menus vary from town to town and represent many ethnic favourites. Wherever you go, you can be assured of a great meal and good conversation.

I have never been to a bad fall supper.

I would like to thank all the volunteers that make these fall suppers possible. Those volunteers are keeping a Manitoba tradition alive and growing. They are true community builders.

For those of you who have never experienced a fall supper before, I believe there still are a few left in communities this fall. I would urge you to find one, hop in your car and partake in a Manitoba tradition and enjoy a great meal.

### Poverty Reduction in Winnipeg

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I have not attended so many fall suppers yet.

But income is one of the most important factors for our health and well-being. Unfortunately, this

has been ignored by the current Conservative government when they chose not to increase the minimum wage—and I hear some groans.

This decision affects many families in my constituency and in Manitoba by decreasing their ability to escape poverty.

Make Poverty History is a coalition of organizations representative of Manitobans with an understanding of the needs of our most vulnerable who promote anti-poverty policies and work to make the elimination of poverty a top priority.

One of the members of this coalition is the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, a leader in policy and community development initiatives aimed at improving social conditions. They have worked in partnerships on many campaigns to end poverty for children and families.

\* (13:50)

I am very proud that our NDP team acted to reduce poverty and to support Manitobans with high-quality health care, education and good jobs to make life more affordable for families.

We increased the minimum wage every year, developed social and affordable housing units and protected Universal Child Care Benefits for families.

I'm also proud to have many dedicated organizations and initiatives in Manitoba that are working to reduce poverty.

Thanks again to groups like Make Poverty History and the Social Planning Council.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Garry Remple

**Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize a Virden man who has been named a hero for his quick thinking the night of Thursday, October 6, 2016.

Mr. Garry Remple is the equipment assistant for the Virden Oil Capitals Manitoba Junior Hockey League team. After leaving the game that evening, walking home Garry heard someone calling for help from the nearby train tracks that run through the town. Garry soon realized that someone was laying by the tracks in pain.

After finding the injured man in the dark, Garry sprang into action. Knowing that the man was hurt, Garry knew he had to help. With his quick thinking

and actions, Garry moved the man to safety and had an ambulance on the way.

Garry has always been a kind, gentle soul who wears his heart on his sleeve, a well-known small-town guy who is always helpful.

Mr. Harris McEwen was transferred to hospital where it was determined he, in fact, broke his femur. He had been on the tracks for close to two hours when Garry found him. Shortly after Garry moved him, a train went through town. Remple says he was just glad that he was at the right place at the right time.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I'm again to take this time to congratulate Mr. Remple for his heroic act of kindness and fast thinking in saving the man's life. Thank you, Garry.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, we have a number of guests in the gallery today, some you have already met.

But also with us today from the Island Lakes Residents' Group: Helen Lymburner; Rae Wagner; Lindsey Wilson; and from the Sage Creek Residents' Association, Lang Wong who are the guests of the honourable member for Southdale (Mr. Smith).

Also with us today as part of the Take Our Kids to Work Day we have with us—and we do have a number of them in the gallery: Sarah Reid-Clinch from St. James Collegiate; Niniichaanis Fontaine from Grant Park High school and the son of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine); Nicholas Everett, Laysar Dee and Shyanna Fawcett from General Wolfe School.

And we have Javen Neufeld with his mom Vicki Neufeld, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen).

And also with us today we have Annlise, Nyla, Jillian and Meghan, who are the daughters of the MLA for Southdale.

On behalf of all honourable members, we'd like to welcome all of you here today. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** I'm feeling bad because I missed that one.

**An Honourable Member:** We'll tell you later.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

Are we ready?

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### University of Manitoba Contract Collective Bargaining Negotiations

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We are pleased to welcome Manitoba students and those who care about the future of Manitoba's post-secondary education.

We are concerned that instability and uncertainty are becoming the hallmarks of this government. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) won't be forthright about what he's planning, and now students are thrust into uncertainty at the University of Manitoba by his eleventh-hour interference. He expects others to take responsibility for his actions.

When will he finally take responsibility for his actions?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I thank the interim Leader of the Opposition for the question, and I want to be clear, as we have been clear as the new government of Manitoba, for the last number of days.

This new government has no plans to interfere in a labour negotiation that is between an employer and an employee group.

Now, these members of the opposition must understand that all governments have the responsibility to set mandate parameters. We have said very clearly that the backdrop for this negotiation is clearly the significant fiscal challenge faced in this province. It is a challenge faced by all Manitobans. We are aware. We are watching very closely to see as the conciliation process continues even today between the University of Manitoba and the association.

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to proceeding with oral questions, I would just like to indicate to members in the gallery that there is to be no public participation, and that includes applause. Our rules and procedures of this Chamber do not allow participation from our guests in the gallery. So I would please ask you to refrain from any applause.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** This government is causing great uncertainty for students. The Premier won't even commit to keeping tuition tied to the rate of inflation nor would he commit to protecting the student

tax credit. And now he has directly intervened in contract negotiations at the U of M at the eleventh hour after an active offer was put on the table.

Will the Premier today rescind his intervention and commit to stop his political interference?

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the interim Leader of the Opposition for the question. It allows me to put some facts on the record.

It was the—it was John Kearsy from the University of Manitoba who said, even this week, that the government of Manitoba has definitely not interfered in bargaining. This was from the University of Manitoba. So she is wrong in her assertion.

I remind this member, and I remind all members, that this is a dispute that has been going on for 10 months; it is not something that started last week.

We acknowledge that there are students who today aren't in classes. As my Premier said yesterday, we are aware of what is going on right now at the University of Manitoba. We are also aware of what is not going on right now at the University of Manitoba.

Clearly, there is challenge here, there is a conciliation effort that is under way. We are watching that process and we have faith in that process.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable interim official Leader of the Opposition.

#### University of Manitoba Students Request for Meeting with Premier

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We'd like to see that the Finance Minister commits to keeping tuition tied to the rate of inflation and also protecting student tax credit.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba students are concerned by the Premier's actions and the uncertainty that has come about because of his actions. The Premier won't even raise the minimum wage that would help affordability for students. His actions have real consequences.

Today, we are pleased to see hundreds of students on the steps of the Legislature to raise their concerns, and many students are in the gallery looking for a commitment from the Premier to put students' interests first.



Will the Premier commit to meeting with the students today?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** Well, Madam Speaker, first of all, we do acknowledge that students have joined us today at the Legislature, and we understand that they would rather be in class. We acknowledge that, you know, those of us who watched the Brandon University strike, not once but twice in three years, we're aware of that. We heard these stories first-hand from parents, from university students, from members of faculty.

Certainly, I would ask members on that side to look back and see the comments they made. They had faith in the process back then; we have faith in this province—process now.

But, certainly, that member must acknowledge that her government did not get the results on education, and we know that as a province we don't lead the nation, we trail the nation in education results and we need to focus there.

\* (14:00)

#### **Tuition Rates Indexed to Inflation**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** There were tons of students outside on the steps of the Leg. today and there are some in the gallery here as well. They are marching, rallying, mobilizing for their national student day of action.

They're concerned that rising tuition and student debt is going to give them a debt sentence, one that'll stifle their future innovation, entrepreneurial and workforce potential. The first step to alleviating student debt is keeping tuition affordable. It matters to students in Fort Rouge who have to use a food bank to survive. It matters to all students who want to use education to improve their lives.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) commit to keeping tuition tied to the rate of inflation in next year's budget?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question.

We're certainly very committed to keeping the costs of post-secondary education affordable here in Manitoba. That's why we have been meeting regularly, both with students and with the post-secondary institutions, to work on a stronger bursary and scholarship program. We're certainly

very pleased to have committed further dollars to this.

We'll make it—make that program stronger, and it'll help Manitoba students.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** But how about tuition, Madam Speaker?

Walking and talking with students today, I heard about their challenges. Many are concerned about the fact that after many of them graduate they will be precarious workers, workers for whom an average student debt load of \$19,000 would be unmanageable.

The most direct way to help them is to keep tuition affordable. That's the law right now in Manitoba, but the Premier hasn't told us whether he'll maintain that law.

Will the Premier commit to preserving the protecting affordability act so that the students know that tuition increases are tied to the rate of inflation?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for this question.

As I said before, we're committed to keeping costs of education, especially post-secondary education, affordable in this province. We're also committing to getting better results from the K-to-12 system. If you care about education and you care about the students, results matter.

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

#### **Tuition Rebate Program Government Intention**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** Investing in post-secondary students is investing in the future of our economy. Anything we can do to help recent grads stay here is a boon to economic growth but also to future tax receipts. The tuition rebate program has been proven to help keep recent grads here in our province. We know that because the take-up rate is very high. Yet the Minister of Education—and said he is not working on helping students after the fact.

Will the Premier give a clear answer today and let students know whether he will keep the tuition rebate program in place here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** We're certainly interested in keeping Manitoba students here in Manitoba and having them

contribute to our economy. We're working very hard to keep the cost of education affordable.

Where was this member when they raised the PST? He didn't speak out on behalf of students.

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

### **Post-Secondary Institutions Operating Grant Increase**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** Students want a high-quality education. Today is their day of action, and they're making it clear they also want an affordable education. But quality has to be a part of that discussion as well, so we have to focus on delivery. We also have to focus on affordability. That means investing in post-secondary institutions, and this is part of the reason that the University of Manitoba Faculty Association is on strike over the issues of class size, workload and tenure that help to assure a quality education.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) commit to walking back his political interference in the U of M negotiations and instead focus on quality by increasing the operating grants to post-secondary institutions?

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

Now, the member feigns an interest in affordability, but, Madam Speaker, there's a complete disconnect between the record of that former government and what they're saying today about affordability. If that government had—when they were in government, if they had cared about affordability, they would not have failed to raise the basic personal exemption that would've given more money to students and marginal income earners.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Friesen:** But, moreover—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** —they would never have widened the RST and then raised the—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** —PST, taking thousands of dollars out of the pockets of single-income earners every single year.

They talk a good talk on affordability; they do not walk the walk.

**Madam Speaker:** Before we go further with oral questions, I would just like to remind people that we do have take your kids to work here with us today. There are students here in the gallery, and I'm sure they are going to want to see a Chamber where there is respect afforded for questions asked and answers given, and I would urge everybody to remember that as we proceed with question period.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Thank you for that, Madam Speaker.

You know, I was at the University of Manitoba's Bannatyne Campus this morning observing the picket line and the impact on students there. It turns out, as I arrived, it was about the same time the dentistry students showed up to drop off coffee for the striking faculty, their teachers there.

So it may not be unanimous, but it does seem as though there is a lot of support among students for the striking faculty. Again, it seems like students are willing to support as long as it results in the outcome being a higher quality education. But that demands provincial investment.

We know there's an issue with workload when students who can't get into the sections, they can't get into the courses. Some even have to sit on the floor in overflowing classrooms.

Will the Premier commit to rectifying the situation by—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the member for that question.

And he is correct; it may not be unanimous, because that member's aware as well that today, even today, there are classes continuing at the University of Manitoba as well. So, there are students in class and there are some students out of class. And there's a conciliation process that is under way.

And when he talks—when we talk about mandate, we have to make very clear for these members: we received a mandate; we have a mandate from Manitobans, an overwhelming mandate. We asked for Manitobans for the chance, for the opportunity, to get the finances back in order, to fix the finances of this province. This is a road that all of us together as Manitobans must travel. It was work that was left undone, unfinished, unattended to by the former

government. But it is work that we think is fundamental to affordability and keeping our students in—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

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

#### **Tuition Rates Indexed to Inflation**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** The only thing left undone and left unfinished is the answer to the original question about tuition next year.

For a low-income student, raising the basic personal exemption will only mean 10 extra dollars for them in a year, but the tuition increase could potentially mean thousands of dollars of impact.

So the question is direct for the benefit of the students with us here today: Will their tuitions be tied to the rate of inflation in this province in the next budget?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** We certainly appreciate the member's comment.

We're concerned about costs to students as well, and we're working very hard, as I said, with MSBI, to make this program more affordable. We're interested in results, results in the K-to-12 system where we've been seeing a stagnation, in fact, a drop in graduation rates amongst First Nations students.

I think that we have every right to be concerned for—on behalf of the taxpayers that they get good value for their—for the dollars that they invest in education, and we're here to make that happen.

\* (14:10)

#### **Minimum Wage Increase Request**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Students work long hours both within their academic institution and in their minimum wage jobs. We know that some students actually work and pursue their university degrees while also being a mom or a dad. Students do so with purpose, determination, commitment and vision for their future and, in the case of the students with children, for their children's future.

Students are concerned with rising student debt and the prospect of rising tuition fees, particularly in light of this Premier's (Mr. Pallister) refusal to raise the minimum wage.

Will this government listen to students and commit to affordable education today by immediately raising the minimum wage?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** I do appreciate the question from the member opposite and certainly like to have a discussion about minimum wage.

We know we've passed the concept of minimum wage over to the Labour Management Review Committee. We're waiting for their input on it. We've asked for the concept—their perspective on the concept of indexing minimum wage into the future.

So, obviously, we're going through a prebudget consultation with Manitobans as well. We've had submissions from 20,000 or more Manitobans so far, and we look forward to hearing their input in terms of what they think on increasing minimum wage.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The benefits of the Manitoba economy must be shared with all Manitobans and not just the privileged few. That includes students who more than deserve our support as they face the cost and challenge of post-secondary education.

The Premier's response to students has been nothing short of discouraging and, quite frankly, utterly divorced from their reality they face every day.

Will the government rethink their misguided approach and immediately increase the minimum wage?

**Mr. Cullen:** I do appreciate the question.

I think we can speak about reality. The reality is we as a new government faced some very dire financial consequences. But we have taken steps to leave more money in Manitobans' pockets, especially the low-income earners.

With our recent budget we've taken almost 3,000 low-income earners off the provincial taxes altogether. We think that's a step in the right direction in terms of affordability.

And I will remind the members opposite, we now have the third highest minimum wage rate across provinces in Canada. That is a step in the

right direction. There's more work to do, and we're continued—and we're going to do that work.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The members opposite can thank this side of the House for that high minimum wage that we have.

The government seems to recognize they've made this—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —mistake, now suggesting—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —next year they might consider indexing the minimum wage to inflation.

This is simply not good enough for students and certainly not good enough for Manitobans. Steady increases to the minimum wage above the rate of inflation helps students pay for their tuition, their rent, their books, their food.

Will this government commit to Manitoba students today to ensure their right to their future by raising the minimum wage immediately?

**Mr. Cullen:** We know who we can blame for raising the provincial sales tax from 7 to 8 per cent: people sitting in that bench right over there.

Madam Speaker, I think it's important—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** —for the students in the gallery to understand—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** —where we're at in Manitoba relative to other provinces in terms of where we start paying tax. In Manitoba it's just over \$9,000. Our neighbours in Saskatchewan don't pay tax until it's over \$15,000.

We have a lot of work ahead of us to do, but we're committed to getting it done.

#### **University College of the North Future Contract Negotiations**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** Approximately 1,800 students attend the University College of the

North each year. UCN is there for the people in The Pas, but it's also a centre for education and training that serves all of northern Manitoba. Twelve regional UCN centres serve the constituencies of Flin Flon, Kewatinook, Thompson and Swan River.

The members for all of these constituencies want to know that students will have a stable place to learn and train for the future.

Can the Premier (Mr. Pallister) assure these members that the events playing out at the University of Manitoba won't happen at UCN?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question.

We're certainly interested in making sure that students in the North have good access to post-secondary education, whether it be through University College of the North or other colleges that exist in the North.

We certainly want to make sure that these students have affordable access to education now and into the future, but when it comes to negotiations, that's always between the university and employees.

Thank you very much.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** The strike happening at the U of M shows what can happen when government interferes with labour negotiations.

Our NDP fought to make UCN a reality for northern students in spite of opposition from the members opposite, but the government needs to commit to funding UCN so that students can study in the North.

Can the Premier assure this House he will not interview with—interfere with any future labour negotiations at UCN?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question.

I think she's well aware that governments in the past have given negotiators—or—a mandate to work on.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wishart:** We certainly have had mandates in the past, and I expect we're going to have them in the future. But we're working very hard to make sure education is affordable in the North, in the south,

anywhere in Manitoba, and that you get a quality education for the dollars you spend.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** The North is cold enough as it is, and this Premier (Mr. Pallister) is making it colder every day. His blue skies carry a frigid wind as working people across the province worry that the government will order public bodies to force a one-year wage freeze.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lathlin:** While this government bundles up with—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lathlin:** —indexed tax brackets—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for The Pas has the floor.

**Ms. Lathlin:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

While this government bundles up with indexed tax brackets that will help the wealthiest, they hurt workers with a minimum wage freeze.

Will this Premier admit that his policies are going to leave most Manitobans out in the cold?

**Mr. Wishart:** As I said before, we're working very hard to make sure that students, wherever they are in Manitoba, have access to a quality education. We're not working hard—to fear monger.

I think in April, Manitobans showed the NDP what they thought of fear-mongering politics.

### **Provincial Student Loans Converted to Non-Repayable Grants**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** The provincial Liberal Party has been a strong supporter of converting student loans into grants, a model we have seen successfully adopted in Newfoundland. This would be a sensible change to public policy and would help many students who have had difficulty funding their education under both the past NDP government system and the current Conservative system.

I ask the Minister of Education whether he will consider helping post-secondary students in Manitoba by converting the provincial component of all student loans to nonrepayable grants.

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question.

We're certainly working with both students and post-secondary institutions as organization to increase the amount of money that's available through bursaries and scholarships all across Manitoba in all sectors, whether it be college or whether it be the universities. I think that that's a very good way to help students in Manitoba. We've increased the amount of money in this, and I think it's going to be a very well-received program.

Thank you.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** In order to make the change from student loans to grants there needs to be a priority put on supporting students in post-secondary education. This will need an extra injection of funds to support the program.

Our Liberal caucus joined post-secondary students on the steps of the Legislature today, and what we heard clearly and loudly is that more support is needed.

\* (14:20)

Will the Minister of Education commit today to supporting the conversion of student loans to grants and commit to ensuring that in the upcoming budget there will be sufficient funds for this program?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question.

I think she is very much aware of the state of the finances in this province that this government received from the previous one. I think that there was a very clear message on behalf of taxpayers on April 19th that they want this government to fix the finances in this province.

We are aware of the cost to students of education, and we're going to work very hard to keep that as reasonable as possible, but we are also aware that Manitobans had a voice.

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

### Eligibility Review

**Ms. Klassen:** I want to thank everyone for the—not heckling at this moment; my daughter is listening, and I'm trying to encourage more of our youth to come into this Legislature.

One of the issues with the student loan program has been that there are some students on low—who—on low income; they're unable, because of their incomes, to qualify for a student loan. This is a Catch-22 because some students make a modest income and they actually need the loan because their income is not sufficient. Yet, if they do get a job and earn that higher income, then they become disqualified for that loan that they need to attend university or post-secondary education.

Will the Minister of Education commit today to reviewing the eligibility for student loans and to making student loans in Manitoba more flexible?

**Mr. Wishart:** I certainly appreciate the question.

We're very aware that there are some problems in the way that the post-secondary loans and bursaries are handled. We're looking at this already, looking for ways to try and make the program work better here in Manitoba.

Under the previous government it was ignored for a number of years; now we're trying to fix the services as well.

### Northern Economic Development Strategy New Government Strategy

**Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson):** Yesterday, the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade announced the co-chairs of a task force to implement the Manitoba government's Northern Economic Development Strategy.

Can the minister tell the House how this recent move will create long-term economic solutions in the North?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** I thank the member for Thompson for this question.

I know he realizes the challenges that we've inherited in northern Manitoba, but also I want to signal that our government is on a new path, moving Manitoba forward, and yesterday we announced the co-chairs who will lead the development of our northern economic strategy. They are Chief Christian Sinclair of OCN First Nation and Chuck Davidson, president and CEO of

the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. We know these two fine, upstanding gentlemen share our commitment to the potential of northern Manitoba.

We are going to be continuing to work with northern Manitobans and consulting with northern Manitobans as we move forward on our economic strategy for northern Manitoba. There's great things coming in northern Manitoba. Stay tuned.

### Health-Care System Review Government Intention

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Yesterday, the government handed three quarters of a million dollars over to their old friends at KPMG to find cuts in Manitoba's health-care system. This is the very same company that helped the Conservatives try and privatize our home-care system and have privatized public services across Canada, including Ontario's hydro and liquor sales.

Manitobans are concerned that the government is using the health review to justify cuts and privatization in health care, and they're worried what the impacts of this government's political ideology will be on their families.

Madam Speaker, will this government clearly state where they draw the lines on protecting our public health-care system, or will KPMG be the government's privatization puppet?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, Madam Speaker, it's a sad day when a member of the Legislature would stand here and say such things about a company that has many Manitoba employees, that has employees across Canada.

It was, of course, the member who stood in this House a couple of weeks ago and tried to scare Manitobans, to say that there would be some American company with American people coming and doing the review. I thought he was going to stand up and 'pologize.' Fortunately, he has two more questions to do exactly that.

Will he stand up and apologize for fear mongering, Madam Speaker?

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, once again, Madam Speaker, this minister is missing the point.

The minister had the opportunity to set out clear terms of reference for this contract where he could

rule out user fees or set clear protection against the public delivery—or for the public delivery of services. He also refused to commit to protecting front-line workers in his terms of reference and, in fact, noted that numerous and diverse groups working within and across the health-care system will be impacted by the recommendations made.

We know the last Conservative government and KPMG thought that front-line home-care workers were on the table.

So will this minister commit now to protecting home-care workers and health-care workers and keeping our system public?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, the terms of reference for the KPMG contract include eliminating work duplication, increasing cost savings, improving accountability and reducing the number of collective agreements. But just so that there's no confusion, this was actually the contract signed by Gord Mackintosh from the NDP with KPMG to review Manitoba Housing in 2007.

Did he complain at that time?

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, Madam Speaker, here we have a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who's mused about two-tier health care. We have a minister who said privatization is an option that's on the table, and now they've hired a firm of—who—that—hired a firm—they hired a firm who are experts in privatization.

He refused to clearly state where they draw the line on privatization and layoffs. The contract doesn't even mention labour or require KPMG to even report the public—the findings to the public. It's time for the Health Minister to come clean about this review.

Will he use it to push the Premier's ideological views on privatization, and will he—or will he take a stand now against privatization?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I'm saddened that the member's taking such a hard stance against Mr. Mackintosh. I think Mr. Mackintosh was a dignified member of this Legislature who hired KPMG to eliminate work duplication, increase cost savings, improve accountability and reduce the number of collective agreements.

If I would only have one argument with Mr. Mackintosh in hiring KPMG, he, actually, at that

time, paid them over \$900,000. We got a bargain, Madam Speaker.

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

### Federal Home-Care Funding Outcome or Per Capita Basis

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, I'll try again with a question I do hope that the minister will be able to answer directly for this House.

The federal Liberal government has committed to \$3 billion over four years for home care across the country, but they haven't said how that money will be doled out across the provinces. We know that Manitoba has a strong publicly delivered home-care system, but a growing aging population will mean more supports will be needed in the future.

The minister himself acknowledged that our province's demographic factors make our health-care delivery unique and the—and an outcome-centred funding model would mean Manitoba might get the short end of the stick.

Can this minister tell us whether the federal Health Minister will be granting home-care funding as an outcome or on a per capita basis?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, I have some advice for the member. He should always ask two questions, because the second question was much better than his first set of questions, Madam Speaker, because this is an excellent question.

\* (14:30)

And we certainly have concerns in terms of the federal government in how they're going to allocate the \$3 billion for home care. Of course, that is tied in with the discussions around the Canada Health transfers.

But I would say one of the things that concerned me about the federal government's commitment, they said during the election that that 3 million—\$3 billion for home care would be in the first budget that they tabled. It wasn't in the first budget that they tabled, and that is very concerning.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I am glad to hear that the minister is at the table, but now that we brought in his old friends at KPMG who helped the Conservatives

privatize home care in the past, the obvious direction that we're concerned about are potential cuts to our system and, of course, privatizations.

Manitobans do remember the home-care fight. It was one of the biggest and most important in our province's history. And they will not turn back the clock and let this Conservative government try it again. Manitobans want assurances today that any new home-care money will go to strengthen the public system.

Will the minister keep KPMG away from the home-care delivery and use the federal money for our public home-care system?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Madam Speaker, in terms of contractual relationships, I've only been friends with KPMG for less than 24 hours. He was friends with them for more than nine years.

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

#### **Home-Care System User Fee Concerns**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I got to hand it to this minister, he's a slick politician. He's always got a quick answer.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order. I would just caution all members. Again, we are here as role models for students that are here for take your kid to school. I would encourage members that when we are asking questions or answering questions that the content be referred to actions versus trying to put a label onto another person—I am very particular about that—and that we do not in any way try to inflame a situation by saying things that can come across as derogatory. So I would urge the member to use some caution with the words he's choosing.

**Mr. Wiebe:** My apologies, Madam Speaker. I'll get right to the point.

Home care is not an insured service under the Canada Health Act, and Manitoba's the only province that doesn't charge user fees or limit support services by income. Health care was—home care was born in this province, and it is essential that it stays public, universal and accessible.

Will the minister commit to keeping user fees out of Manitoba's home-care system?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, see, Madam Speaker, this is why I never bring my son to take your son to work day—child to work day.

I would say, Madam Speaker, that the member raises a good point when it comes to the federal government's commitment, and we certainly want to see the federal government fulfill their commitment in providing funding for home care. He is spot on when it comes to that point.

However, he is wrong on other issues when it comes to looking for savings within the health-care system. The health-care system, as he know and other provinces already realizing, is not sustainable. We need to find efficiencies within the health-care system because we want to ensure that the health-care system isn't just there for today but it has to be there for the next generation as well.

#### **Labour Relations Act Withdrawal Request**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Last night, we heard from Michael Barkman from the Canadian Federation of Students who spoke passionately about how Bill 7 is going to impact students' ability to pay off loans and seek good jobs in the future.

Will this government today commit to withdrawing Bill 7 and give students a fighting chance?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** I know that's the doom-and-gloom party from across the way again, lambasting out here.

I will say, Madam Speaker, to that question that we are very respectful—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** —very respectful of workers' rights. We're also very respectful of students too.

It's our job here to rebuild the economy for Manitobans. The previous government did not do it. They left us a decade of debt, decay and decline.

We're here; we're going to rebuild our economy for the benefit of all the students in the gallery today.

**Madam Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.



## PETITIONS

### Bell's Purchase of MTS

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** 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 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, 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 to do all that is possible to prevent the Bell takeover of MTS and to preserve a more competitive cell 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 of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, these are the reasons for the 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 an independent review at the

Labour Board is held to ensure that the law has been followed.

The provincial threshold to achieve automatic certification of a union is the highest in the country, and at 65 per cent, the democratic will and decision of the 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.

The recent introduction of Bill 7 by the provincial government confirmed this possibility by removing automatic certification and the safeguards in The Labour Relations Act to protect workers from employer intimidation during the bargaining process.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government 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, many hard-working Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now consider the opposition day motion of the honourable member for Fort Rouge.

I now recognize the honourable member for Fort Rouge.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** I move, seconded by the member from Point Douglas, that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to call upon the provincial government to immediately stop interfering with collective bargaining, to fund

post-secondary education at least at the rate of economic growth and to keep tuition increases capped at the rate of inflation.

***Motion presented.***

\* (14:40)

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, I'm very honoured and happy to rise before you today. It really is a great day at the Legislative Building when we see hundreds of Manitoba students coming together, showing solidarity, and standing up for their futures. That is truly something for all of us to be proud of.

So, earlier today, you know, I was very happy to participate in the march, which was organized by the Canadian Federation of Students and during that event, which culminated in the rally here on the front steps of the Legislative Building, was able to talk to many students here in Manitoba, and it was good to see some familiar faces, students who I've seen very active in the community as organizers or as people concerned with the environment or indigenous issues or student issues in the fight for a fairer society, a more just society. It was a really good thing.

Of course, it seems as though the timing was worked out in a quite fortuitous fashion because it happened to coincide with just the second day of the strike at the University of Manitoba, which is very concerning because you know it's the first time in, I believe, more than a decade that the largest post-secondary institution in Manitoba does have a strike.

And so, of course, that issue was top of mind for many of the students that I spoke to, and it was interesting to hear though the students are the ones who are bearing the brunt of the inconvenience and students are the ones whose class schedule and assignment schedule and exam schedules are being disrupted, that a good number of them are expressing solidarity for the U of M Faculty Association, and I think it does come back to the point that we've heard raised by the Faculty Association in the media and through other outlets that for them the—this job action really is about ensuring a quality education at the University of Manitoba from now and going into the future.

The concerns that we heard there being raised by the faculty association, the ones that I heard from the students today, really had a lot to do with class sizes. Many students were feeling the sections that were being offered at the U of M are too—there's too many students to fit into the classrooms. Some students

talked about, you know, having to sit on the floor. Others talked about not being able to take the courses that they need on time so as to fit in with their graduation plans.

Again, we know that the amount of sections that are on offer, the amount of courses that are on offer, are a product of the university's decisions around resources and, consequently, are a reflection of the Province's priorities. And so the students are concerned. The students want a quality education. They want their post-secondary to be adequately funded. They want their tuition to be affordable but not just affordable, but predictable, and the predictable trend in this province has been tying inflation—or tying tuition to the rate of inflation. Students want that to continue.

So, again, I've heard from a good number of students. Of course, I heard a few angry honks visiting the picket lines as well, so it's not unanimity—it's not unanimous but, you know, it does seem that—I would hazard a guess as to say the majority of students right now do support their faculty in trying to bring about a better quality education at the University of Manitoba. But that whole process was really derailed not too long ago by the directive that came out of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) office for there to be a wage freeze at the University of Manitoba.

You know, it's a bit as though the Premier had this 29 hand and played it and then the faculty association and the U of M administration informed him: Very good, sir, but we're not playing cribbage, we're actually playing poker here, because the discussion centred around things like workload. It centred around things like the process by which tenure applications are reviewed for faculty. It has to do with the number of teaching sections that faculty are being asked to play. There was a lengthy discussion of these points.

You know, we've heard many months of negotiation and, unfortunately, that whole situation, all those talks that had advanced to that point were scuttled by this curveball arriving out of left field from the Premier's office.

And so that answers, I guess, the reason we inserted this first clause here in the opposition day motion that I'm happy to bring forward today, and that is to just ask for the Province not to interfere further and to withdraw their directive. Let the University of Manitoba administration and the

faculty association negotiate freely and, hopefully, they will come to a conclusion soon that is in their mutual best interests, but most importantly looks out for the best interest of students who want a quality education.

Second point that I want to speak to is about the importance of funding post-secondary education at the rate of economic growth. Of course, this has been a priority in Manitoba in past years to ensure that there is predictable increases in funding which allow universities to engage in long-term planning and also to be able to respond to the real dollar increases as a result of inflation that their cost structures bear.

Now, the challenge for post-secondary institutions is going to be for them to pivot to meet the jobs of the future while also preserving those core aspects of their mission that they have to continue to deliver. But I think that the best way for them to be able to accomplish those two objectives is for them to have the ability to engage in long-term financial planning, and, again, the best way to do that is for them to have predictable increases to their operating grants that would be tied to the level of inflation.

We've seen in the media reports that some of the senior administrators at the post-secondary institutions feel as though they're being left in the dark. So it's very difficult to engage in the type of long-term planning that's needed without the communication coming from the provincial government and, more importantly, without a clear directive, that those operating grants are going to increase at the rate of economic growth.

And, finally, of course, the issue that seems to be top of mind for all the students is not just affordable tuition, but rather that they want the tuition increases capped at the rate of inflation. I'll be quite honest with you, Madam Speaker, many of the students who are out on the steps of the Leg. today, they want education to be entirely free at the post-secondary level. They are saying, we don't want any sort of tuition or fees for post-secondary. They feel as though education is a right and it should be delivered free of charge.

I agree that education is a right; however, I am cognizant of the political reality of the current administration here, and I recognize that tuition being abolished is not likely to happen during the current government's mandate. So I would ask that they consider one of the policy levers open to them, which is something that could fit in with their

other priorities, and that would be to continue the practice of tying post-secondary tuition to the level of inflation. Again, this would keep tuition affordable; this would help allow students to have predictability in terms of planning their year out, in terms of how many hours they need from the work that they do, what sort of student loans, grants, bursaries, you know, private loans that they need to take out in order to plan for those things.

But right now it seems as though there's a great deal of uncertainty, and so we see a situation where through not the action of government, but rather through the inaction of government, the inability to clearly communicate what it going to be happening at the post-secondary level in terms of tuition, in terms of operating grants. We see some uncertainty for the students who are unsure whether they're going to have to perhaps work another 20 hours a week to be able to cover tuition next year, who may have to take out another private loan from a financial institution to cover their tuition next year.

And so all we're saying here in this motion is something very reasonable, which is to, you know, remove the interference from the negotiating process so that the U of M can return to delivering a quality education to students, and it's to tie both the operating grants and the tuition to the rate of economic growth so that students and the institutions and the faculty all have predictability and are able to go about their planning in a good way.

\*(14:50)

But, again, Madam Speaker, over and above the details of this motion, I'm very happy and very fulfilled to see so many young people engaged in the democratic process, advocating in a respectful way and showing up here on our steps to make it clear that they value their futures.

Miigwech.

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services):** And it is my pleasure to put a few words on the record regarding today's opposition day motion.

Manitoba's new government is committed to improving education outcomes in Manitoba. Under the previous NDP administration, Manitoba ranked last in the country for results in reading, math and science. Funding for post-secondary education under the previous NDP administration and continued under our government has been generous. Since 1999-2000, PSE funding has increased by 125 per cent. In the past five years,

support for universities and colleges has increased at double the rate—14 per cent of operating grants to K-to-12 schools—7 per cent.

Our government was elected on a mandate to focus on improving results for early years education, including literacy and numeracy. While we are supportive of and concerned about post-secondary education in Manitoba, we recognize that in order to benefit from a post-secondary education, Manitoba children need a quality education during the K-to-12 years.

We will continue to make investments that provide a stronger way up for Manitoba's children and improve our education results, including focusing on reading in the early years. Education is an investment in a better future for our children and our province and Manitoba's new government is committed to making Manitoba the most improved province in Manitoba.

In fact, the motion in front of us today is not about the NDP decade of decline in education results for our kids. Despite the importance of kindergarten to grade 12 in preparing Manitoba students for post-secondary education, the NDP ranked last in the country in education results.

The NDP does not want to talk about the barrier their failure represents to entrance into post-secondary education for Manitoba students. The motion is not about the NDP decade of debt. While education results declined, the NDP doubled the provincial debt. Manitobans over 25 and all those students who recently graduated and are entering the workforce will have a \$26,000 share of Manitoba's provincial debt. That is the summary net debt per capita for a population over 25 in Manitoba, is estimated at \$26,030 in fiscal 2016-2017.

If you add in federal debt, Manitobans' share of all government debt stands at over \$53,000. Manitoba's ranked fourth highest among provinces behind Newfoundland, Labrador, Quebec, Ontario for per capita debt in this category. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said this level of provincial debt is unsustainable. The NDP does not want to talk about how they have burdened students transitioning into the workforce with massive government debt, as well as some of the highest and most regressive taxes in Canada.

This motion is about one thing and only one thing: This motion is a thinly veiled attempt by the NDP to interfere with ongoing collective bargaining

process. On the first day of conciliation talks, the NDP is more concerned about scoring political points than allowing the conciliator to do their job.

Sadly, the NDP is more interested in politicizing the issue than acting in the best interests of students and the families who support them. The University of Manitoba has been clear: Our government has not interfered in the bargaining process. This has been repeatedly confirmed by Vice-President External John Kearsy, who has said that, and I quote: The government has definitely not interfered in bargaining. Unquote.

We will not do so today, despite the partisanship and provocation of the members opposite. Government has a responsibility to provide broad mandate parameters in response to significant fiscal challenges that are the legacy of the NDP decade of debt, decay and decline.

We will act in the best interests of students, families and all Manitobans. For that reason, this concludes the statement of our PC team and, Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the House one more time for the opportunity to stand, put those comments on the record.

**Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas):** I'm proud to put some words on the record in support of my colleague from Fort Rouge's opposition day motion, and I'd like to say for the record what this is again: the provincial government to immediately stop interfering with collective bargaining, to fund post-secondary education at least at the rate of economic growth and to keep tuition increases capped at the rate of inflation.

I was able to listen intently to the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler). One of the things I was quite surprised to hear is that he didn't take the time to acknowledge the hundreds of hundreds and hundreds of students that took the time to come into the Manitoba Legislature today to convey how important post-secondary education is. Of course, under the leadership of the Canadian Federation of Students' Michael Barkman, we were very proud to march and to walk with them.

And, Madam Speaker, today's opposition day motion goes directly into the kinds of things that we heard directly from the hundreds of students that took the time to walk here today. They wanted their message heard loud and clear. We're not guessing that this is important to them; they told us directly. So I'm proud to stand in support of this.

The first part that I want to make sure that I say for the record as a—as someone who represents Point Douglas, you know, there are a lot of families and young people that do struggle, that they—you know, I represent a lot of low-income families. But I want to acknowledge the work of not only those families, but of non-profit organizations, of our daycares, of our elementary schools, our junior high schools, our high schools. So many people—our universities and our colleges are working so hard to make sure that they're reaching out to young people that no matter who you are or where you live, that you should get a tap on the shoulder to say post-secondary is for you. That's critically important that no matter who you are or where you come from in this province you should be able to access post-secondary, and that path, whatever barriers are in place for that, that those barriers should be removed.

That's what the students were talking about today. That's—at the very least—how important it is to keep tuition increases capped at the rate of inflation, and that's what members were talking today. I think it goes without saying that interfering with collective bargaining, without question, is absolutely unacceptable. You heard that today at the front of the Legislature Assembly. You know, the Minister for Crown Services is saying, you know, we're saying this, or this side of the House is saying this. That's not coming from us. That's coming directly from hundreds and hundreds if not thousands of people that believe in collective bargaining, so the message was loud and clear on the front steps of the Manitoba Legislature today.

And so I was actually quite surprised when the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) had the opportunity to stand up to acknowledge, you know, how important it is for students—this motion is grounded in what they told us. They took the time today; they organized themselves. Hundreds of people came out. Students themselves directly put on today's march. They were able to build in allies to take the time to come directly to the Manitoba Legislature today to tell us directly how important post-secondary education is and how we have to continue to make it affordable to everybody.

One of the things that we know is when we want to maximize the potential of young people in our province, and they have the ability to get good jobs, that they have that opportunity to give back to their families and their neighbourhoods, that that path includes affordable, accessible post-secondary education. And we have groups of people that

work incredibly hard to make sure that that's going to stay the case, and that's done often through collective bargaining; that's done through outreach programs; that's done from universities and colleges themselves; that's done from students who took the time to come here today.

So, one, they're working incredibly hard to make sure that post-secondary continues to stay accessible to all Manitobans and to make sure that we continue to be able to do that so we can have the opportunity that no matter who you are or where you come from, you have access to post-secondary, but you can get a great job, that you can stay here in Manitoba and you have that ability to give back.

\* (15:00)

Many times I was able to hear the member from Fort Garry-Riverview stand up, whether it be in question period, in the House, and talk about how important post-secondary education is to students and how important it is not only just to his riding but to all of Manitoba. And in essence that's what this opposition day motion's about; it's about accessible post-secondary education for everybody.

You know, one of the things that I got to tell you that I was quite proud of at my time when I worked at the University of Winnipeg and then, of course, being elected here, was the tuition waiver, where young people that were in care, if they could make it through to high school and graduate, that the University of Winnipeg started it, that they could go on to university for free, that tuition would be completely waived for kids that were in care. And the government committed to making sure that we could extend the services.

So that was a clear message, so that when teachers or when people in communities, when they look through the eyes of kids, some of the kids that go through the toughest times, some of our poorest kids, that they didn't just see hardship, that they actually saw potential. And that policy, that tuition waiver that was driven at the University of Winnipeg, has now become—has rippled throughout the country, that where many university and college institutions have said that if you're a child in care and if you can show incredible resiliency and graduate from high school, that tuition should be waived.

And that, you know, that was something that I was incredibly proud of, to work on with Dr. Lloyd

Axworthy at the University of Winnipeg. I know that the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) also worked incredibly hard to make that possible.

But, to be able to come up with those policies to make sure that that happens for some of our most vulnerable children, we have to make sure that we protect things like collective bargaining, the very—in essence, the people who are working so very hard to make sure that college and university is accessible and fair. And we want to make sure that tuition is affordable for everybody, that no matter who you are or where you come from.

We were able to cap the tuition at the rate of inflation. We wanted to make sure that graduates who live and work in Manitoba, they were able to get their tuition refunded through the tuition free income tax rebate. We were able to provide over \$195 million in tax credits to graduates. We were able to eliminate the interest on student loans.

So, Madam Speaker, right now what we're seeing is there is tremendous momentum, that we have a very young demographic, that Manitoba has one of the youngest demographics in the entire nation. And, if we want to do well in Manitoba, we have to make sure that we are investing in the education, training and employment of those young people. And we have to make sure with that young demographic that we're giving them the same opportunity, no matter where you live.

And so today's opposition day motion is to making sure that we're doing everything we can to support the people who are working very hard to make sure that their institutions are accessible, are affordable for everybody, no matter where they live, and that's why collective bargaining becomes so important, that we're doing everything we can to make sure it's affordable and keeping tuition capped at the rate of inflation.

We have to remember that there's a lot of people in Manitoba that believe in this, including the hundreds of students that were with us today, our child-care workers, our people who work in our public education system, our post-secondary institutions, our non-profit organizations, we all recognize that not all children see a path to university, not all children see a path to college. There are many families that haven't had the opportunity.

You know, my father certainly didn't have an opportunity not only to graduate high school but

certainly he had no opportunity to go to university, and it was a group of people in my life, often teachers, who said, you know, they were able to see my potential, and not only to see my potential but to remove the barriers so that I could actually attend university. University gave me the opportunity to travel the country.

Without people seeing that potential, without people believing that every child, no matter who they are or where they come from, should be able to attend post-secondary. But, Madam Speaker, I could tell you right now, I wouldn't be able to stand here and be able to share with you today.

Thank you. Chi miigwech.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I rise to put a few words on the record in respect of the opposition day motion, sponsored by the opposition party.

And, Madam Speaker, I just want to be very clear that the opposition doesn't seem to grasp the fundamentals of the incongruence in their own motion. This is a motion that is in conflict with itself. The motion itself calls, first of all, for—to stop interfering with collective bargaining, and then the motion goes on to say, but be sure to interfere; and the motion goes on to say, but be sure to artificially set more than parameters, give direct instructions to universities everywhere to be able to keep tuition rates capped at an artificial level.

Now, this same opposition party only 30 minutes ago stood in the House during question period, and a member said you must index Student Aid; and then the next member stood and said do not index, whatever you do; and then another member stood, and there was conflict after conflict in the message they were delivering. Nowhere is that conflict more evident than in this message contained in their opposition day motion. Now, I don't know if it was—which member it was. I see the member's name that is on this motion—so this is the member for Fort Rouge—but whether this was checked or agreed to by other members on that side, I don't know. The motion itself conflicts with its own language.

So, Madam Speaker, this to us is not a surprise. I call this House's attention to the fact that it was actually the NDP government that was charged with interfering with a labour negotiation. It was exactly this time of year, this early, mid-November time of year in 2011 after the Brandon University strike when member associations from across

Canada charged interference by the Manitoba NDP government in a labour negotiation. So it is no surprise to the members of this government that today that interim leader of the opposition should rise in her place and say stop interfering, when this government of Manitoba has been so clear to say we will not interfere.

Those members understand what the role of government is. They themselves set those parameter instructions, those parameter directives, not involving themselves in direct negotiations—that would be wrong—instead, delivering message to say, this is the backdrop. That is the kind of guidance and that is only the guidance that we have provided, and it is both the prerogative and the responsibility for government to deliver that comprehensive message. What we have said is: all negotiations, this one currently on right now at university between administration and UMFA, but also all negotiations proceeding from this point must recognize the challenge, the fiscal challenge that is in front of all Manitobans. It is not just a challenge for this government, I assure you, Madam Speaker. It is for all of us.

The parameter is this: Manitoba must have the ability to pay. It would be naive to think otherwise. If we do otherwise, if we make decisions as government that run ahead of ability to pay it creates pressure at the end.

Member after member today on the opposition side stood and talked about the future. They are right to talk about the future. We care about the future. The government that cares about the future cares enough to make those decisions, to set those parameters, to deliver not individual instructions about how to proceed on an hourly basis in negotiations, we wouldn't think to do that. A conciliator has been appointed. That process is on right now as we speak in this House on this deeply flawed motion brought by the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) and the members of the opposition, a motion that conflicts with itself, that is incoherent because it calls on government to stop interfering at the same time as it calls upon government to start interfering.

I would submit that the motion should be thrown out and the House could do better to attend to some of the important business other than this.

\*(15:10)

But I want to be clear, Madam Speaker, so that there can be no misunderstanding—so that there can be no misunderstanding—we acknowledge that students are here today at the Legislature. The member opposite has said, why is there no acknowledgement of that? I assure him we were in the hall talking just now with Manitobans and saying we acknowledge that students would rather be in the classroom. We acknowledge that faculty would rather be in the classroom. We acknowledge that administration would rather have faculty and students in the classroom today.

It is the right of students to be here today and we acknowledge that right. It is their right to be heard and we acknowledge that. We will listen as we are listening now. We are following carefully along with this negotiation that is under way. We put our faith in this process. Those members put their faith in the process at Brandon University until they decided to interfere directly, and they were chastised severely by association groups across Canada on Saturday, November the 26th, when they sent a note to talk about the interference by the Manitoba NDP government.

Madam Speaker, I'll sum up by saying this: we have received a mandate. We asked Manitobans for the privilege to be able to fix the finances of this province, to repair the services and to restore and rebuild the economy. Manitobans put their faith in this province—in this government. We are humbled by the confidence that was placed in us. We will do our part here, which is to deliver that broad mandate instruction, that broad mandate parameter. We have done that. Now we watch. Now we will see how this process unfolds. A conciliator has been put in place. We trust that that work today is bearing fruit, that some of these key items that have been raised are being addressed.

We need co-operation on all sides in this province on a go-forward basis. So, Madam Speaker, this opposition motion could not be more flawed. Our education system is in need of investment, as it has been, because our students have not done well enough in this province. Affordability matters, that's why we are attending to affordability. But let's be clear; we won't dignify a motion that stands in conflict to itself. It's up to the opposition to try to state in coherent terms how it is that they are calling on the government of Manitoba to both stop interfering at the same time as they're instructing the government to start interfering. We reject that kind

of thinking. It is naive and it won't lead to any kind of improvement in this situation.

So we continue to watch the negotiation unfold, and we put our confidence in that process, not in this motion.

**Madam Speaker:** I'd like to take a moment to issue a correction from earlier today and an apology to the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith), who, through my words, became apparently the parent of four daughters today. And I would like to just indicate now that he no longer has those four daughters and that, indeed, I would like to indicate who those four young girls were that were here as take your kids to school. One was Annlise Guillemard, the—for the MLA—the daughter of the MLA for Fort Richmond; one was her friend, Nyla who is from Acadia junior high, and I believe they both went to Acadia; Jillian Piwniuk, who is the daughter of the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk); and Megan Teitsma, who's the daughter of the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma).

So, those were all the four that were supposed to be introduced today, and I'd just like the record to show the accuracy of that and that the member for Southdale does not have four daughters.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Of course, I can only imagine the shock of the member for Southdale. I have two daughters, one in first-year university, the other in grade 11, and the prospect of much higher tuition is scary enough with two daughters, so I can only imagine the fear of the member from Southdale thinking he might have four.

You know, I want to thank the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) for bringing in this very important resolution on such an important day, the day of action for students. And I must say, Madam Speaker, that I am disappointed with the comments of the Minister for Finance. I think I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) pretty well. I know he has children actually very close in age to my own children, and I expect, just like I do, he wants the best for his kids and he wants them to have the opportunity to have the best possible university or college education.

And I don't know whether his children will be coming in to Winnipeg to go to school or whether he plans to assist them to go elsewhere, but I would think that the minister and I would agree that there are few things more important for parents than making sure your children get the right opportunities,

and that involves the chance to go to university or college.

We know, Madam Speaker, that education is the path to a better life. And that is the case for indigenous students in our province, for new Canadian students in our province and for everybody in between, whether they happen to be first or second generation Canadians, or whether they happen to be third or fourth or fifth generation Canadians. As parents, we want the best for our kids. And I am disappointed that the member for Morden-Winkler, the Minister of Finance, couldn't even understand the important concepts being put forward in this opposition day motion.

*Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

And one of the things that is called for is for the provincial government to immediately stop interfering with collective bargaining. And that interference was made very, very clear just last week with a joint letter—a joint letter—provided by two adversaries by the University of Manitoba and the University of Manitoba Faculty Association, engaged in tough, difficult negotiations, to issue a joint letter. And that joint letter expressed regret, expressed anger at the eleventh-hour imposition by this provincial government for a zero mandate in a labour negotiation. That is the interference with collective bargaining this motion speaks about.

And what is so strange, of course, is, at first, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) doubled down on those comments, and he thought—I guess, he was being the gunslinger and he was going to double down. And I watched the faces of the members of the government as they sat and watched the Premier flounder and look foolish in question period, look foolish out in the hall after. And, after that happened, the Premier has completely changed his tune and now he's denying ever having done that in the first place. It is absolutely breathtaking that this Premier has flip-flopped, because he knows that he truly, truly has acted improperly, and rather than have the Premier or even one of his minister's apologize on his behalf, to say that they've learned a lesson and they won't interfere, instead, they're trying to spin, they're trying to run, they're trying to avoid taking responsibility for a very serious and a very dangerous step that this government took.

And what is the rest of the motion about? Well, to keep tuition increases capped at the rate of inflation. *[interjection]* Oh, that's interference? It's a government law, the member for Thompson



(Mr. Bindle) needs to know. It was a law that was passed by this Legislature a couple of years ago. And it calls on this current government to keep the existing law in place. And it's not something that's suddenly injected into a negotiation at the last minute. It is the law and allows students to know where they stand, it allows universities to know where they stand, and, frankly, it allows the government to know where it stands in terms of funding universities properly. And it also says that ill—we will fund post-secondary education at least the rate of economic growth—at least the rate of economic growth.

And the record, of course, will show, and the Minister for Crown Services, of course, put it on the record more clearly than anybody possibly could, which is unique for him, of the support that our previous government gave to support post-secondary institutions in the province of Manitoba, something which we, on this side of the House, know is a virtue as we continue to build a stronger Manitoba.

And I would suggest the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) revisit his comments, rethink his position, understand that what he wants for his children, what I want for my children, is the same thing other parents want for their kids. They want their kids to be able to go to university and college and have every opportunity in this province, which this government appears quite prepared to deny.

And I know that we can get passionate about this, and we should, because there are few things more important than talking about how we deal with opportunities for our young people. And I don't just speak for my kids; I speak for all the kids in the West End who want to go on to university, who want to go on to college, who want to take a trade.

And, you know, back in the last election, what did the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) say on the campaign trail? What did he talk about? He said, well, you know, maybe we should move tuition to the national average like they have in Saskatchewan.

\* (15:20)

Well, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know your home is a little bit closer to Saskatchewan than most of us. There's many good things about Saskatchewan. There's many things which aren't so good, and one of those things is an average tuition rate which is more than \$2,000 a year more than the cost of tuition here in Manitoba. And \$2,000 is

a lot of money for a family living on Spruce Street, maybe a new Canadian family where a dad might be working two jobs, where mom might be working two jobs to give their kids an opportunity to get to school. That \$2,000 makes a big difference, a huge difference, and that's why my colleagues and I are going to continue to stand, to continue to fight, to continue to push to make sure that going on to university or college is not a luxury, not something only people the other side of the river get to go to or people who might be able to have a large income, but every Manitoba kid should have the opportunity.

And what else do we see at the same time? Well, we have a government which not only—not only won't commit to keeping university affordable, but on the other hand, a government which wants to make it more difficult for those students who need to work and earn money to do so. And what happens if tuition goes up and the minimum wage stays the same? What happens? Well, it means those students have to try and work more hours, if they can get them, just to stay in the same place before they even pay rent, if they have to pay rent, to pay their other expenses, if they have to pay other expenses. It isn't fair to students to really attack them on both sides, to make tuition more expensive and yet to make it harder for students to work and make that money.

My kids have benefits that many other people don't. My daughter is in first-year university at the University of Manitoba. She was here on the steps today because she doesn't have any classes because there's a strike at the University of Manitoba because a difficult negotiation and a tough negotiation was turned into an impossible negotiation because of the ridiculous interference of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this province—and he should apologize to my daughter. He should apologize to 30,000 University of Manitoba students who don't have classes right now, who face the prospect of losing their term, who face the prospect of using—losing their academic year if we can't get some sanity back. Have the Premier stand in his place and apologize, and the Premier and his Minister of Finance and this government confirm to the University of Manitoba that they will stand by them if there's a reasonable settlement—which is what the university wants, which is what the faculty association wants, and which is what every single student who goes to the University of Manitoba wants.

So we know that not every student has the same opportunities as my first-year daughter does: to live rent free, to have assistance with tuition. We're the

lucky ones. There's a lot of people, as I talked about, in Minto that don't have all those opportunities. There's kids from all over the province that have to pay a lot more to get to school. They can't use their U-Pass and hop on the bus. They've got to drive in. They've got to live in residence or they've got to live in private accommodations. It's even tougher for those students, but they've got the same right and they should have the same opportunity to go on to post-secondary education because that is the way that we build a stronger Manitoba—not just for kids who live in the suburbs, not just for kids whose parents happen to have money, but for all members, all kids in this province. That's why this motion is an important. That's why the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) is incorrect, out of line, completely wrong, and I'm hoping some member from the government's side will stand up, put some sense on the record.

Let's vote on this. Let's pass this and let's go forward.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** The Manitoba Liberals' policy of turning student loans into grants was warmly received by thousands and thousands of Manitobans during our campaign trail. We have a precedent to refer to in Newfoundland. Our caucus staff did the math and is why I can state again that it would be a sensible change to public policy. This would support our youth, our students while in their post-secondary education.

I keep—I kept looking for any PC MLA outside on the steps. Sadly, I did not see one during the rally. These students are not only Liberal or NDP supporters; they are PC constituents as well.

It is so sad to know that our great province of Manitoba is lagging in so many aspects when compared to other provinces. I understand that our province is in a deficit position. I also understand that the government has a responsibility to address the serious fiscal challenges it has inherited.

I quote the Minister of Finance: Our government was given a clear mandate by Manitobans to fix the province's finances, to secure and protect the services we all depend on. It is in that statement, the last sentence I want to focus on. They said they would like—the government must secure and protect the services we depend on.

With our aging population, we need to protect our students who are in the process of attaining their educations, as we are going to look to them to fill

that big void that is coming up. We need to secure the support systems we have for students today. The time to act is today.

On the resolution points, there were three mentioned. We—the Liberal caucus is concerned that the government interfered in the collective bargaining process. We recognize that the universities need stable funding, and we know students need supports as well and that the tuition fees should not grow more than the rate of inflation. So, as our Liberal caucus, we support this resolution. Thank you.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** It gives me 'gloat' pleasure to speak on this motion that my friend from Fort Rouge introduced.

This government likes to stand here and claim that it was given a mandate to fix the finances of the province—seems like a lofty goal. Unfortunately, their priorities are so mixed up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want to attack the people at the bottom to make it less affordable, to make them less able to succeed. We've seen that so many times already with refusal to increase the minimum wage; the attack on labour with Bill 7, making it harder for workers to be able to organize, to better themselves. Everything this government does is attacking the problem from the end least likely to be able to solve the problem.

There are certainly ways of doing things differently in this province when it comes to taxation. We need to look at other countries that, perhaps they pay a higher rate of taxation than we do. Education is available for everyone. It's not available only for those of privilege. In those countries, the governments and the people recognize the importance of all members of that society being able to get ahead.

This government is so confused that they want to leave out vast parts of society in Manitoba. They don't want them to get ahead, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They've done everything in their power to make sure they cannot get ahead.

I come from the North. Tuition for kids coming from the North is one aspect of the disparity between northerners and you people in the south: finding a place to live; paying rent; paying for food; paying for transportation so that maybe you're able to go home on a weekend, see your family. A lot of people in the North, contrary to some people's opinion, aren't all working at high-paying mining jobs. A lot of people in the North struggle to survive, struggle to find a

way to put food on the table every day. And this government's misguided attempts to pretend to be representative and building a better Manitoba is a myth that they've created for themselves and themselves only.

\* (15:30)

This government has no respect for unionized workers. This government has no respect for the collective bargaining process, which is becoming clearer every day this government is in power. There can be no mistake, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government interfered very directly at the eleventh hour in a negotiation—in a tough negotiation where both sides fully respected what the outcomes needed to be and how they were going to get there. They were both committed to getting the best deal possible for their members and for their management team and, quite frankly, from my years of involvement in the union movement and in collective bargaining, I can't say as that I've ever seen both sides in a collective bargaining process issue a joint statement condemning the government for interfering. It's unheard of in the annals of labour history in this province, I'm sure.

And yet this government stands across from us every day and says, no, we didn't do that. Clearly they did. Clearly they interfered and they need to stop; they need to back up. They need to back up on so many of their misguided directions that they've taken since coming to power. This is just the latest one.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, education has to be affordable for everybody. If anybody from the government benches had bothered to take part in the march that took place today, what an inspiration that was. What an inspiration it should have been for everybody in this Legislative Assembly to walk with those students, to listen to those students talk about the importance of education, the importance of everybody being able to participate in the education process.

This government is bound and determined, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make sure that only the privileged few will be able to participate in the future. The rest of us are bound to be left behind by the actions that this government continues to take on a daily basis.

Education has to be affordable for every person in this province irregardless of where they come from. It can't be just available for the privileged

business people's children. It has to be available for our indigenous brothers and sisters. It has to be available for new Canadians. It has to be affordable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the things that we've heard at the committee hearings on Bill 7 talk about making Manitoba affordable for all people. Michael Barkman, the—from the Canadian Federation of Students spoke very passionately last night about affordable education and about the ability of those students to get good paying unionized jobs in the future.

And then they also talked about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their parents having the ability to have good paying unionized jobs so that they could help their sons and daughters get the education to get ahead in the world.

Each piece of the puzzle needs to be in place to help all Manitobans get ahead, and this government continues to hide pieces of the puzzle from so many Manitobans so that they cannot get ahead and that's shameful. We should all be ashamed of a government that is going to make sure that portions of our society are unable to compete, unable to better their lot in life; that's just terrible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when student leaves school and enters the workforce they cannot be so burdened by debt that—how many years does it take to pay it off? Their primary function when they leave school cannot be just to pay off the debt. It needs to be to get on with life, to get married, to start a family, to be productive members of society, to invest in this province, to help other people in the province move ahead. If the only focus of their young lives and their future is to pay off a debt, that's wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should all support this motion that's put forward. I don't care which side of the House you're sitting on, which political party you happen to believe in. If you cannot believe in supporting young people, if you cannot believe in supporting people's future so that all young people have the ability to get an education, to get ahead, then there's something seriously wrong with your thinking.

As we move ahead, we will continue to fight and stand with students. We will continue to fight and stand with educators. We will continue to fight and stand with unionized workers. We will continue to fight and stand with poor people, with immigrants and with everybody else that needs a leg up in this world, that this government is so bound and

determined to hold back and stop from achieving greatness.

I'd just like to conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all of us need to stand with young people in this province and help them get ahead in the world, and this is the way to do it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Yakimoski)—no? Is anybody interested in speaking?

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I thought my friend had rose to speak and then he didn't. And that may be a sign and a signal to Manitoba of what's to come in this province in the future.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's back-to-the-future day here at the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. Already, six months in to this government, we've already seen the seeds placed for an agenda of austerity and cuts that are going to hurt every Manitoban, from north to south, east to west, and it's disappointing in that regard. We have labour unrest, unprecedented in the last two decades, suddenly coming to fulfillment when working men and women come to committee and tell the government that their decision to go forward with Bill 7 is wrong. That's a mistake on the government's part.

We have the government going through any number of reviews on the other side, in health care, in finance and across the board, all to set the stage for cuts to come. And then what we had today was hundreds of brave, young students gather on the steps of the Legislature to take this government to task, because already, within six months, the new government jeopardizing the future of their education and their future here in Manitoba, and we're not going to sit idly by and let that happen. We're going to stand with students, we're going to stand with their parents and continue to defend the rights of all Manitobans here in this province.

But let's remember what life was like in the 1990s when the last time these folks were in government, especially with respect to the education file. And I think my friends from the government side will want to remember what those days were like. Let's remember that in the mid-1990s, we had a cut of 2 per cent in Education, and then another cut of 2 per cent, and then 0 per cent, and then 2 per cent, and another 2 per cent, a total of

8 per cent cuts to the post-secondary education system. And you know what the result of that was, Mr. Deputy Speaker? You know what happened as a result of those cuts? Tuition increased in this province by 132 per cent.

And the result—second result of tuition increasing by 132 per cent is that enrolment declined by 10 per cent. That's the path that the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this province are putting forward. That's the future that we're looking at here today in this Legislature unless the government decides to come to its senses and not try to balance the budget on the backs of students and their families. That's wrong, that's misguided and it should never, ever happen.

\* (15:40)

So, it's no surprise that when we came in to government in 1999, we froze tuition right away and actually reduced it by 10 per cent. That lasted for more than a decade and then we went to the—went to—at the rate of inflation for tuition, but we balanced that with the tuition rebate program so that essentially by the end of your education your tuition was the lowest in Canada. That's something to be proud of. That's something to feel good that when you put low tuition together with a tuition tax rebate we had essentially the lowest tuition and the lowest cost for post-secondary education in the country.

Because our goal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was always three things. We wanted affordable education so that everyone would have a place in our post-secondary system. We wanted to be accessible for all, and we wanted a quality education and we did that by funding our post-secondary institutions at—sometimes 2 per cent, 4 per cent, 6 per cent, 7 per cent, as I recall at one point in the mid—in 2007, 2008—probably a record in this country because we understood the balance for a good wholesome education system: affordability on the one side, accessibility for all and quality in our classrooms. And that's why we consistently said to the post-secondary institutions: put that money into classrooms not into boardrooms, and the result of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was that administration costs went down at our universities as well.

But it was more than just that—more than just that. And I have to say I was—I had a great honour to be the minister of Education and Advanced Learning for two and a half years, and I thank my friend for St. Boniface for that great honour that I had. But I

knew coming into that office that I was standing on the shoulders of those who came before me in the NDP government since 1999 who built our education system brick by brick by brick to make it affordable, accessible and a quality education for everyone. Contrast that, as I said, with the unspeakable record of the Filmon Conservatives of which the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this province now was at the Cabinet table at that time—runaway tuition, unparalleled retention rates where students were leaving in droves, by the tune of 10 per cent by they were done, and then on top of that not a single thing was built on any campus across this province.

Former Premier Doer used to talk about when we came into office there was a hole in the roof of the engineering building at the University of Manitoba. We not only rebuilt that one we had committed to building another one as well, because we knew that there was a relationship between an accessible, affordable university and college education on the one hand, a quality education while you were there, and then the opportunity to get a good job after you were done. None of those conditions—six months into the new mandate of the new government—none of those conditions prevail. All of those conditions now are out the window.

And for you backbenchers and members of the government side: remember that record—remember that record of the 1990s because that's the one you're currently going to be following. And you're making a big mistake. They're making a big mistake and doing a great disservice to their constituents and the students and families in their constituencies by following along a path that can only—only—undermine an accessible, affordable, quality education.

That's why we were out on the steps with our—with students today, all of us, everyone on this side was there. Where was the Minister of Education, I ask. Well, he might've been peeking through the windows of the Finance Minister's office, because I saw a bunch of them coming out of the Finance Minister's office at the end of the rally. Why weren't they on the steps with students? Why weren't they standing shoulder to shoulder with students and their families? Where were they?

I'll tell you where they were. They're on the path to abandoning those students, abandoning families, abandoning our education system and abandoning the future of this province. And that's why—that's

why—every member of this caucus was out there this morn—this afternoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**An Honourable Member:** Could have been knocking on doors.

**Mr. Allum:** Whoa. My friend from Radisson suggests somehow—I suggest to him, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, go knock on a door. Go tell them that they're—go tell them—go tell those people that their tuition rates are going to double in the next couple of years. And then, when their kids can't afford to go to university, tell them that you're responsible, you didn't have the courage to stand up to the Premier and the Finance Minister in their austerity agenda, didn't have the courage to stand and invest in an education system that's inclusive of all Manitobans.

That's why we increased funding for access programming, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's why we made it possible for newcomers to find their way into our post-secondary educational institutions. That's why we built the University College of the North that this side, the government's side now, voted against—voted against. What a shame that day was, and what a shame that continues to be.

Their record on education is maybe the poorest record of any government in all of Canadian history. But I say it's back to the future here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because that's the path they're carving out for the next four years. We're not going to let that happen. If the government's side thinks that this side's going to roll over for them, they've got another thing coming because that's never going to happen. We're going to stand with students. We're going to stand with their families, and we're going to continue to fight for an affordable, accessible and quality education for every Manitoban.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker. It's, indeed, an honour to rise in this House on this, the day of action, a day where we had students come down to our Legislature to take the time to take—to have the courage to come down to this place to tell us, to tell every single member of this Legislature, what's important to them and where they stand clearly. And I know that—I think our entire caucus was represented there. Everyone was out there. Everyone had a chance to meet and greet with the students. Labour was on the steps of this building, standing with students. We had a snapshot of the youth in this province and what they care about.

And I looked for a member of the government's side. Now, I'm not saying that they—they could've been there, but I didn't see them. I didn't see the Minister of Education. I didn't see the Premier (Mr. Pallister). I didn't see the Finance Minister. I didn't see a single government minister who would take the time to simply come out, listen to students, listen to their passion, listen to their concerns and maybe give them just a little bit of comfort to say that they understand where they're coming from, that they understand how important a quality education is and, more importantly, or maybe most importantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an affordable and accessible education in this province.

It's something that certainly you've heard of—passion from members of our side of the House on this issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's certainly something that I feel passionate about. Many members may know that I actually just graduated not too long ago. Took me a little while, but I did manage to get elected in the middle of my degree. So I had to complete my degree while I was in this House, but what it allowed me to do was to have a perspective of a student of actually attending classes, going to the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba while being a member of this Chamber. And so, when I was a member in the government, I knew that I could come to a caucus that was passionate about education, as passionate as I was, that would listen to the words of students and the concerns of students and was actively trying to make sure that education stayed affordable and yet funding remained stable for the institutions that we cared so much about.

\* (15:50)

So it was something that I felt very proud that I could wear both of those hats as a member. And I came to it as somebody who also remembered very clearly my experience as an undergrad, and those first few years after high school when I was working, you know, as many hours as I could get, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was saving every single dollar that I possibly could, and it took me a couple years. And I actually—just before I had the chance to come up and speak, I went back in my university account, and I went back to my tax information from the year 1999. Nineteen ninety-nine was the first year I was in university. And I went back and I checked my tuition. My tuition for that year was just over \$2,000, okay, just over \$2,000. And I had to scrimp and save and fight for every single penny just to get that money to get into university. And that was what I

wanted to do; that was what I cared about. That's where I wanted to go, so I fought for every single penny that I could get to get into university to afford that first year's tuition.

And, when I see an editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press today that discounts that struggle that students have to get into university, to pay that tuition, it sickens me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we're working backwards, we're going backwards in this province. And, instead of talking about keeping tuition affordable, we're saying, well, that doesn't matter. Well, I can tell you for a fact that for those students like myself who had no support other than the money that I could earn and, certainly, so many other students who had—have less privileges than I did, it matters a whole heck of a lot how much that first year's tuition is.

So I had that opportunity because that tuition in 1999—for those of you paying attention, that was the first year of the NDP government. And what did the NDP government do in 1999? Well, the first thing they did was they froze tuition—they froze tuition—but they didn't stop there. They could have stopped there, but they didn't stop there. They froze tuition, and they gave a large tuition rebate to those students who wanted to get into post-secondary. This was the only way that I would have been able to get into university, was with that initial rebate that was given.

The other thing that was helpful for me as a student, as I said, living on my own, getting as many hours as I could, balancing paying my rent, paying for groceries and trying to save up for next year's tuition, was that I knew that the NDP government had committed to continuing that freeze going forward. Now, I didn't know how long that would be, but it turns out that it was more than a decade of that freeze that I was able to benefit from. I could bank on every single year being able to work during the year, pay my rent, you know, go to school, balance those two things, get my groceries, and then in the summertime work a little bit extra because I wasn't in school and save just enough to get me to school the next year.

It was a balancing act, Mr. Speaker; it was not easy. But it was something that I knew was a priority and it was something that I was able to do because the government had given me clear commitment to say that they were committed to keeping tuition affordable.

Now, the final chapter in this story, Mr. Speaker, is that the government later actually went a step further, and I was the beneficiary of that as well. I feel like I hit the lottery, and I don't say that in a flippant way. I say that because I feel that there's a lot of students in this province that had the same experience of—as me. They experienced a rolled-back tuition; they experienced a tuition freeze for over decade in this province; they saw their institutions getting the funding that they needed, getting better; the programming that was available was getting better. And then this government offered a tuition tax rebate for those students who committed to staying in Manitoba and working in Manitoba.

Well, honestly, Mr. Speaker, it felt like winning the lottery, because not only had this government supported students while I was in school, but then when I was out of school, supporting me as I was looking for work.

These are all steps that were taken by the previous governments to get us where we are today. The thing that we don't want now, the thing that students came to this building for, that sat in question period, that listened to the responses of members here in question period—they came to say, where are we going next? How can you support us as students next? How can you make this—our education system better in Manitoba?

But instead what did they hear? They heard that they're getting rolled back. They heard no commitment to keeping tuition affordable in this province. They heard no commitment to funding our post-secondary education institutions.

And so they're worried, and all we're asking for is for members on the other side—we have this afternoon of debate. We've heard the passion from the members on this side. We simply want to hear from the members opposite where they stand. I have one experience. The member from Minto shared his experience with his daughter. Of course, my children—I'm entering that era now, as well. I've started to squirrel away a little bit of money for my kids. Now, of course, I'm starting to think, maybe I'm not putting enough away because I was counting on an affordable tuition here in Manitoba; now I'm not so sure.

But we heard from the member for Fort-Garry Riverview (Mr. Allum). We heard from the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey). Every member in this building should have some experience, some

words they can put on the record, a constituent that they talked to, a student that they know, a family member, maybe themselves. Every single member in this Chamber should put their words on the record, should stand clearly with the students in this province, should commit one hundred per cent to keeping tuition affordable, to keeping our institutions properly funded and, for heaven's sake, just stop meddling in the labour negotiations of professors.

At the very least, will they put those words on the record?

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I'm pleased to be able to put some words on the record in respect of our opposition day motion.

I just want to, of course, share a personal story. So, you know, often we talk. If we hear Justice Murray Sinclair or Senator Murray Sinclair throughout the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, he repeatedly taught Canadians that it's going to take generations to get out from under the colonial history of Canada. And—so I just wanted to share a little story—and what he means by that is that it took us generations to get where we are; it will take us generations to get out of that.

And, you know, I've been very blessed that I've had really good supports in my life that have supported me in my journeys dealing with my own things, but I've also had phenomenal supports in supporting me throughout my post-secondary education career.

And so I'll share with the House that I went to the University of Winnipeg and I got my first degree; so I have a bachelor of arts degree in environmental studies and international development. And, actually, during my second year of my bachelor of arts—it took me about four years to get my BA—I actually got pregnant with my son Jonah. So pretty much throughout my whole academic career I've had children and I actually used to bring my children along with me to class.

And then I went on to the University of Manitoba. I did my pre-master's and then I have a master's degree in native studies, women's studies, and critical theory. And when I actually defended my master's thesis I was actually four months pregnant with my son who was in the House today—who I'm just—was so proud that he was here. And then when he was two I went on to do all my master's—or my Ph.D. course work and my Ph.D. research.

So my children have always lived and breathed seeing their mom go to university. So what's fascinating is that about three and a half year ago my own son Jonah started university, and I remember just feeling so proud of my son that here, you know, here's this longstanding history in our family of abuse and addictions and debts and all of these things, and here was my son starting university. And my son Jonah has been working so hard these last three and a half years. He has taken five courses each term—five courses, five courses, five courses, five courses, to the point—to the point that I—you know, if I call him to say hey, Jonah, do you want to go out for supper or do you want to do something—no, mom, I'm studying.

\* (16:00)

And so my son is slated to graduate this April with an honours degree in political science, and—*[interjection]* Yes, thanks. And then he wanted to take his LSAT in December and go into law, and then has plans to go in and get his master's degree.

When I talked to my son yesterday—and why I talk about it takes us generations, in one generation, I was able to turn around our family. And my sons have this completely different path, and part of this different path and part of this healing generation is education. Education of First Nation, Metis and Inuit students is so critical in ensuring that there is true equity and a different vision and a different future for indigenous peoples across Canada. So, when I talked to my son yesterday, I said, how are you feeling about everything? And he said, well, he said, honestly, I don't know; he says, I'm really nervous; he says, I don't know what's going to happen with my classes, and I don't know what's going to happen about taking my LSAT, and I don't know what's going to happen with all of this.

And so, as anyone in this room can imagine, of course, as a parent your No. 1 concern is for your children, and so I felt hurt for my son Jonah that he's feeling anxiety right now and that's he's feeling uncertainty, and yet he's worked so hard. He has worked so hard these last three and a half years to give himself a good future and to ensure that he has the path that he is seeking out, and now he's unsure of that.

And so I just want to share that to the House, that I know we go back and forth, and it's loud, and there's this and that and, you know, members will say, well, how are we going to pay for this, and this and that, and blaming all around, but actually this is

impacting on people's lives. And, as a mother bear, it is impacting on my son's life, which, of course, means that, as always, I will stand with students as the rest of our caucus did here today.

And I had my son—Niniichaanis came down to that this afternoon, and my sons, both of my sons have actually grown up at rallies and protests and demonstrations their whole lives. And I was telling Niniichaanis, as we were sitting there listening to the students, that these students and the work that they're doing, the rallies that they're going to be holding—because we know that this isn't going to be the first one, we know that there's going to be multiple rallies and demonstrations—that what they're doing is impacting for my son. What they're doing is ensuring that it's not only for them, but it's for other students that have yet to come, to ensure that university, that post-secondary is affordable, and that people that want post-secondary can get the post-secondary education that they deserve and should have an equitable opportunity in this country.

So what I want to put on the record here, in the very short time, is—and that what we haven't discussed here—is that most people know that from very, very—I think, 1991 there's been a funding cap from the federal government for post-secondary education for First Nation students. It's called the circular E12 funding cap, and what's happened is that there's this funding cap for the amount of dollars that go towards supporting First Nation students for post-secondary.

This funding cap only raises by 2 per cent every year, and yet our demographics, indigenous people's demographics keep rising. So what happens is we know that the dollars are not matching our demographic. So we know that, you know, approximately seven in 10 First Nation youth aspire to go to university, which is a phenomenal statistic when you think that, you know, often we talk about that there's just despair and a sense of hopelessness, but actually that First Nation students want to go to university. They want to have these different paths. They want to fulfill that which gives them passion and that they love to do.

However, the reality is that the persistent barriers are presenting—are preventing First Nations from achieving that, and that fundamental piece is that funding cap.

Now, what happens when we raise tuition fees is that that funding cap and the amount of dollars that we have that can go to support First Nation students



actually just decreases, because now the tuition fees are even higher. What that means is that we cannot afford to support more First Nation students to go to university.

In fact, what I'll share in this House, and I'm not sure if most people realize this, is that all across the country there is waiting lists on—I would imagine almost, not one hundred per cent, but almost one—of the 633 First Nations, there are waiting lists for students to be able to go to post-secondary. And so if this province, if this government does not commit to students and does not commit to, you know, raising the tuition fees other than the rate of inflation, they will have an absolute hand in ensuring that First Nation students in Manitoba that want to go to university but will not have enough funding, that they will not be able to go to university.

Okay, so some, you know, a couple hundred First Nation students don't get to go to university because the tuition fees have been raised. But what that means is is that I spoke about in one generation how we can make changes. If we don't support this generation of First Nation students to go to post-secondary—which, again, is heir right, which is every student's right, to get a post-secondary education—all we're doing, we are complicit, absolutely complicit in ensuring that we have generations of First Nations that do not—that are oppressed and are marginalized, economically marginalized, politically marginalized and do not get out of what will take us generations to get out of.

We have a moral responsibility, all of us in this House, to ensure that all students that want to go for post-secondary have that right. But I would argue that in the era of reconciliation each and every one of us here in this room has even more of a moral responsibility to ensure that First Nation students get to go to post-secondary.

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

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to be able to put some words on the record on this motion.

Today we met students outside the Legislative Building, and the students have told us that going to university or college should not be a debt sentence.

Our NDP team is listening. We agree that students need more support. We are going to keep working with students to keep getting an education affordable here in Manitoba.

The NDP respects the collective bargaining process. The government needs to stop politically interfering with collective bargaining at the University of Manitoba. Students are suffering because of this government's reckless and careless interference. This government should stop making students suffer and let both sides get back to the negotiating table without conditions.

We made important investments in education. We made historic investments in post-secondary education while in government. We always committed to funding post-secondary education, at the very least, at the rate of economic growth. We made education affordable. We cut tuition by 10 per cent and froze rates for a decade.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember when my son was in residency; he completed his medical school and he was in residency. And the NDP government was providing \$25,000 funds to help students out, and with the promise that will be a loan, but if they stay more than two years here in Manitoba after that, then that will be converted into a grant and it will be free, they don't have to pay it back. And because those funds were there, we were able to afford his education. Now he's a doctor in sports medicine. And if that fund's available—if that fund were not available, and he could not have make it, because I did not have that much money to afford.

\* (16:10)

Similarly, we were lucky. Two sons are going to university at the same time, but the tuition fees were affordable. My other son was able to complete his pharmacy degree, so that was the gain for immigrant to come to this country because when an immigrant comes from another country, sometimes they think that we will go to Canada and the dollars will be hanging from the trees and we will shake it and we will collect it and we will come back.

But that never happens, and the only benefit, I think, is get your children, give them a good education, and they will be better off. So that's important. Education's really important, especially for everybody but especially for the immigrant because that's the only gain they get when they leave their beloved country and birthplace, and that's the—they'll look at the future, and they may have to suffer a—the first generation may have to suffer, but the second generation, they will benefit and they will have a better life. That's why they come over here.

I went back to—when first time I got elected I went back to India and a reporter asked me, if you become premier, the culture minister over there, what will you do first over here? I will say—I said I will make sure that education is free because if education is not free, these kids, they won't be able to get the skills. If they don't be able to get skills what they will do, either they will start selling drugs, or they will steal or they will be violent. They have to do something. Everybody will suffer. Everybody will suffer. So education is so important and it should be affordable.

And they were really surprised, ordinary person like me, how he can be elected because you did not have that money over there, even I did not have that much money over here.

I think I told them democracy is affordable over there, which is, again, attacked by the other side. They want to take away affordability of democracy and try to bring the system where only deep pockets can—those people who have deep pockets they can run in the election.

So affordability in education, affordability in democracy, affordability in health are those important pillars of the society. So we should not forget that. I'll simply—keeping in mind, keeping just a—about balancing, but not thinking about balancing the social life of the people and giving opportunities to everybody—that's important.

If we leave the one part of the society behind, other part go ahead, that won't be most improved Manitoba. I think we must have to keep that in mind. The NDP will work with students to keep up our steady progress and ensure tuition costs remain affordable.

We are committed over \$8 million in new funding for graduate and undergraduate bursaries and scholarship support for students and have freed up over \$6.5 million existing bursary to be matched by private donors. We build on more than the 33 million in bursary to students we made available every year. Manitoba students have received \$260 million in grants, scholarships and bursaries since 1999.

I think that's the problem with this Premier (Mr. Pallister). He does not hesitate to interfere, and I can give you example. The only visible minority deputy minister, she has been *[inaudible]* from the position because she did not have a political affiliation. So, in other words, having no political

affiliation, that made her a victim of this Premier's thinking.

So I think we can, if we look from all sides, how much interference from this Premier is affecting the lives of other people. We try to create a role model so other community people can look at them. But his definition of diversity is totally different than which apply to multiculturalism.

So I don't think it will be that easy under this Premier to get—well, funds so that students can afford. Students must have to keep fighting. Opposition must have to keep fighting for them, and society, as a whole, have to become aware what this government's going to do. It's—they said they are going to make Manitoba great. I think they are going to vacate Manitoba.

People leave this province and go to the other provinces, because minimum wage has not increased. At least that could have helped somewhat the students and their parents. But they have not increased the minimum wage. So they will vacate Manitoba and people will be leaving just like before 1999.

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

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Liberals have been arguing the policy of turning student loans into grants for quite some time. This idea was positively received by many Manitobans in the last election. This practice is done in Newfoundland, so precedence has already been set for it.

Being a recent student myself, I'm empathetic and I can understand the burden of financial debt. Young people are being more pressured today than ever before to be successful, independent, passionate, leaders in lives, and on top of this, we have to keep our sanity and lead a fulfilling and happy lifestyle.

Young people deserve to have affordable education so they can afford to live in Manitoba's economy today. This government needs to start making positive decisions that are favourable to students. I remember the summer between high school and my first year of college. I actually worked two full-time jobs. I would work from—at Smitty's from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and, then, Blockbuster from 4 p.m. until midnight. And, you know, I'm not exaggerating when I say I had to do it in order to pay for my education.

It made me miss out on a summer with my friends, and I suppose it kept me out of trouble. I worked my butt off, and I'm proud to say that I was able to pay for all five years of my education in which I never had to ask for help financially. However, I can admit that I missed out on part of my teens and part of my early 20s because of it, something I don't believe should have to be sacrificed if you want a post-secondary education.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

It's hard to understand that our government can help and they're choosing not to. Student debt is a huge concern, and I commend the students who were here at the Leg. earlier today. How are students supposed to afford a living? How can a young person be expected to move out? You have to buy a house, property tax, insurance; there's hydro; there's water bills. Madam Speaker, it's unreasonable. How is a person supposed to buy groceries? How are they supposed to have a cellphone? And let's admit it, that's pretty important nowadays.

Students should also be able to enjoy their money that they work hard for if they can budget for it. The government should want to assist students, as they are our next leaders. They could be replacing many members in this House in the next election, and I can attest to that. I heard members of this House discuss negotiations and the collective bargaining process. I heard about fiscal challenges of these negotiations. I've heard about students imparted with quality education that imparts practical skills that is best suited for employment.

\* (16:20)

I believe we can widen the scope and think about long-term implications. We need to consider that an educated citizen is of fundamental importance to sustaining our democracy. Young people, myself included in this, are today's leaders. Government needs to play a role in maintaining this objective. They need to invest in education, not only for the purpose of reaping economic benefit, although that should be reason enough, but for the sake that, when citizens must understand the principles and operations of our political, legal, economic systems, then they can make informed decisions that will maintain the integrity, and democratic rights, freedoms and beliefs for the long term.

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** Madam Speaker, it's an honour to put a few words on record on this very important opposition day motion.

First of all, I would just like to point out our position that our students have told us that going to university or college should not be a debt sentence. Our NDP team is listening, and we agree that students need more support. We're going to keep working with students to keep getting an education affordable here in Manitoba.

The NDP respects the collective bargaining process, and the government needs to stop politically interfering with collective bargaining at the U of M. Students are suffering because of this government's reckless and careless interference. This government should stop making students suffer and let both sides get back to the negotiating table without conditions.

We made important investments in education; we made historic investments in post-secondary education while in government. For example, that one of those historical contributions that I like to always, always speak on record is the success regarding University College of the North. We made steady progress, increasing funding for universities and colleges since we took office. While other provinces were cutting back on post-secondary investments, our government invested at one of the highest rates in the country. We saw real success at University College of the North and we want to build on that.

The Northern Manitoba Mining Academy, a team effort between the Province, UCN, the mining industry, the Northern Manitoba Sector Council, and the federal government and the City of Flin Flon—mining academy students receive hands-on, applied learning and geoscience and environmental science related to mining and mineral processing that incorporates invaluable lab study and field study.

In 2015, UCN graduated over 200 students, and it was an honour to bring greetings at that grad. And, in fact, this past year, was the record highest amount of students that we graduated at UCN. We invested over \$109 million to build new facilities and renew existing infrastructure at the University College of the North.

The reason why I'm speaking on this motion today, because it's very important that the same situation that U of M does not happen at UCN. I'm actually a graduate from U of M, class of 2003. And so the reason why I hold such high value for UCN, it's a wonderful, beautiful community that I'm honoured to be part of. I go home there, have breakfast there with staff and students, and it's a wonderful place to feel at home again.

And I just wanted to share with you the mission and vision statements that I was—had the honour to be involved in producing. UCN's mission statement is: the mission of the University College of the North is to ensure northern communities and people will have access to educational opportunities, knowledge and skills while being inclusive and respectful of diverse northern and Aboriginal values and beliefs. Our vision statement is: we are rooted in the seven sacred teachings of Aboriginal peoples. University College of the North prepares lifelong learners, graduates, to be positive and contributing members of society.

Now, I just wanted to put more words on record as to why I will work hard and protect that this will not happen in my community of UCN. This is why we promote University College of the North—we have a recruiter who travels across our province to recruit students—and because UCN's a unique post-secondary institution with many great things going.

For example, we're—it's a very hands-on university. So many of the programs provide students with unique, practical training opportunities, whether you're conducting field studies in the natural resources management technology winter or fall camps; working in a child daycare setting as an early childhood education student; or in an 'automotive' technician, diagnosing and addressing issues with a client's vehicle. That's just some of the opportunities that our students are learning.

And real-life experience—the bachelor of education students at UCN train as teachers during Into the Wild program. It's a summer day camp for kids. Two of my children had the opportunity to participate that, and great—it's an eight-week program throughout the summer and an excellent opportunity for the kids there. Other programs such as electrical and law-enforcement—students benefit from real-life conditions of the training house at The Pas campus. This is one of the only—few such facilities in Canada. Electrical students learn how to wire homes there, and law-enforcement classes—practise to safely approach a resident during a high-risk situation.

Also, dental-assisting students get real-world experience treating community members attending the UCN Dental Clinic, and I'm happy to say that a lot of our graduates continue and stay in our community and find work and build our economy in the North there. And also, too, it's a very—UCN strives on how flexible it is. You can earn a degree, diploma, certificate from one of our many academic

programs. For example, if you want—if your career goals change and you want to transition from a certificate program to a diploma program, or a diploma to a degree, UCN can help.

UCN offers programs other—shared with other institutions, such as the popular Joint Bachelor Nursing Program, and it's offered in a partnership with the University of Manitoba. And also, there's also two campuses, Thompson and The Pas, which I had the honour of attending the Thompson grand opening, which is where I can—like to share—that's where I was—I mustered up the courage to finally accept the NDP 'nomination', right at that nomination with Mr. Ovide Mercredi.

And—so also, too, we have 12 regional centres, which I've had the opportunity to travel to Churchill, from Churchill to Swan River when it came to hiring and recruiting people who represent our communities. And also, too, the one great thing I value about UCN is the personal touch. UCN has small class sizes so that students can enjoy personal interaction with our instructors and classmates and professors. And, with smaller classes, obviously, it'll lead to more personal and classroom discussions to help get most out of our students' education.

Also, too, I want to thank that there's positive experiences that students have. Many UCN graduates come back to UCN and work as instructors, which is pretty cool, because as a hiring committee, it's an honour to see—look at their resumes—graduate, graduate—now they're coming home to offer their experience back and fulfill other people's lives with that education.

So, with that, I'd just like to continue with some of the faculties and programs that I've had the opportunity to work with in terms of recruiting instructors and professors to teach our students such as the faculty of arts, business and science. I came here in 2000. I came here to university—to Manitoba to get my bachelor of arts degree, but imagine, I could have stayed home in the North, going to UCN to obtain that same degree, so. And we also have the faculty of trades and technology. That's an exciting hallway that I like walking through. It's loud; you hear the construction engineer. It's a quite exciting hallway to walk through, and what's even more exciting is when I see women students entering the trades, so I think that's pretty cool.

And also, too, we have a Centre for Aboriginal Languages and Culture, which is truly important in the North, because I, myself, did not learn my

own language and—due to intergenerational effects of residential schools, and so I was happy that the centre is there to revive and educate our next generation to keep our culture to—in order to keep strong as Aboriginal people and as northerners.

\* (16:30)

We also have the Kenanow faculty of education, a very exciting program. That's where we have a lot of our teachers. We educate them in the North, and they easily transition into our school divisions or go teach at the Joe A. Ross School or the Oscar Lathlin Collegiate.

We also have the faculty of health, another exciting program, because a lot of our students, when you enter our clinics or our hospital, it's wonderful to see those same friendly, familiar faces and it's glad to see them stay at home and gain employment and, again, building our economy and our community.

And also, too, what's more important to me is the UCN Adult Learning Centre. It's exciting how people, whatever what happened to them in high school, they have that opportunity to come back and finish their education, and UCN is there to provide that opportunity so they can get their grade 12. Options are open now. Doors are open for them. They can have a higher income, get into a post-secondary program. And it's just wonderful how lives are improved by education.

So this is why it's very important to have this—to support this motion today. Thank you.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** It is really a treat for me to have a chance to commend the enormous efforts of the students earlier today. The Canadian Federation of Students and their local organizers are to be commended for their leadership and their incredible organizing capacity for today's November 2nd day of action. Shouts of fight the fees and education is a right reverberated off the front walls of the Legislature and throughout the downtown. I was so proud to join them, both in the march and the rally out front. They conducted themselves in a completely professional, peaceful and intelligent manner, and they brought some incredibly positive energy to a very dark time in Manitoba politics here at the Legislature.

I have a personal connection to all of this, of course. Along with many others on this side of the House, we were student activists in our day. I remember marching from the University of Manitoba down to this same Legislative Building in protest of

the policies and behaviour of the government of the day, the Filmon Conservatives. And it won't surprise too many people in the Chamber that on one of those occasions I ended up as the guy with the megaphone.

So some things don't change, Madam Speaker, and the behaviour of Conservative governments towards academic freedom, the independence of universities and the rights of everyone to have a chance at a post-secondary education is also something that is not changing over history.

I want to just draw out a few of the comparisons that occurred back when I was in university, the contrast between that and what happened under our NDP leadership, and then back to the dark ages under the current Conservative government that we have now.

When I was at university during the Filmon Conservative era, tuition, for example, rose by 132 per cent. The infrastructure was so bad at the U of M campus that we had something called the crumbling infrastructure tour. One of those stops was in the basement of a building where the beam is swinging in mid-air that's supposed to be supporting the structure of the building.

Funding for universities was frozen, frozen, cut, frozen, on an annual basis. And enrolment, not surprisingly, shrunk by 15 per cent. Our universities and colleges, you would be hard-pressed to believe this, given how many students are now accessing university, but enrolment actually declined during the Filmon era by 7,000 students across Manitoba. And outside of the campus environment, another topic important to recognize back then and now, the minimum wage, Madam Speaker. When we finally defeated the Filmon Conservatives and restored some sanity to Manitoba politics, the minimum wage had stagnated so badly it was at \$6 an hour; \$6 an hour was all that a student or anyone else's labour was worth under the Filmon Conservatives when the NDP came to office. So that was their track record back then.

Now let's look at just a few of the highlights of what was different about having an NDP government in office. Let's start with tuition. Whereas it went up by 132 per cent under Filmon, we came into office, we cut tuition by 10 per cent and froze it at that level for a decade. We brought in legislation, Madam Speaker, which now prohibits tuition from rising anymore than at the rate of inflation on any of our campuses or universities in Manitoba.

Furthermore, we brought in the graduation tax credit, which means that when a young person or an older person when they graduate from one of our colleges or universities, they can receive up to 60 per cent of their tuition back in tax credits as an incentive to keep them here in Manitoba. It has been so successful we have been honoured, while we were in government, to provide almost \$200 million in tax credits so far, and that's as of 2015, Madam Speaker.

We built an entirely new campus. The University College of the North didn't exist, and now just last year it graduated 200 students, another part of our efforts to make education accessible. We had the removal of interest rates from student loans. We increased bursaries every year to \$33 million annually. Enrolment, not surprisingly, given all of these great improvements, shot up by 45 per cent at universities and by 55 per cent at colleges under the NDP years versus, as I said, losing 7,000 students under the Conservative era.

Now let's talk about capital improvements on campuses. We invested over a billion dollars in capital projects at universities and colleges all across the province. The University of Winnipeg in my constituency alone received \$173 million in capital funding for a wide range of exceptional projects, which are having a positive benefit for students and the surrounding community today as we speak. And I just list a couple of them, the new RecPlex recreation facility has a community charter ensuring that community members have access to that wonderful facility. My kids play soccer there. It's an amazing facility to now have right in the inner city at the U of W campus.

There's not one but two new student residences also with community housing components built into them for low-income people. The entire new environmental science complex at the University of Winnipeg did not exist, Madam Speaker; environmental science programs didn't even exist under the Filmon era. They didn't want anyone to know what was going on with the environment. We now have that phenomenal facility available, and it wasn't just bricks and mortar, it wasn't just money we were concerned about, we were also prepared to address very serious social issues when they manifested on campus.

I was honoured to serve as emcee at the University of Winnipeg with my colleague the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview when he was our minister for Advanced Education. We joined with women's

groups from multiple campuses to launch a campaign raising awareness about preventing sexual assaults on campuses. I was honoured, as a feminist, to be able to hear the passionate words of the women who are working under such difficult circumstances to address this serious issue, and we were standing there with them supporting them in that cause.

Those are just some of the positive improvements that we managed to bring to every single campus in every single part of Manitoba.

And now, just six months after being elected, the dark ages are back with the Conservative government. Just this week they've stepped out and interfered at the last second with a collective bargaining process at the University of Manitoba. Lo and behold, that led to a strike. Who saw that coming? Well, everybody except apparently the members opposite. Somehow they think that the constitutional right to collective bargaining doesn't apply to them. Somehow they think that tens of thousands of students at the U of M now not being able to access their classes is an acceptable circumstance, and they're refusing to take any responsibility for their very own actions. It's an appalling about-face on policy and practice as it relates to the independence and integrity of the collective bargaining process at our universities and campuses.

And the warning signs don't just end there, Madam Speaker. What has this government done in giving assurances to students, to staff, to faculty at any of our campuses that tuition policies, that funding policies, that the graduation tax credit, that capital projects will be protected and maintained as they were under our government? We've had zero-zero-assurances that any of that is going to be maintained by this Conservative government.

\*(16:40)

And on the minimum wage, let's not forget that, lots of students, of course, working multiple minimum wage jobs. And what is the minimum wage now? It was \$6 when we came to office. After being raised every single year that we were in office, it's now at \$11 an hour, more than double the rate of inflation, and this government refused to raise the minimum wage at all. Raising the ministers of-raising the salaries of ministers, raising the salary of the Premier—that was a priority for them. Raising the minimum wage for students and everyone else who works minimum wage—they couldn't get around to doing that.

It is just an absolute night-and-day difference, and I want to give the students a reason why. The Conservative governments are elitist governments. They were elitist in the 1990s; they ignored the structural barriers that people face that prevent them from accessing the education that is their right, that they should have. They have not learned a thing in the decade since. They are an elitist government now, an elitist party, and we stand with the students and all of their allies in the march for social justice in the years ahead.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** Madam Speaker. I'll start off with a quote from Isaac Newton. He said that truth is ever to be found in simplicity and not in the multiplicity and confusion of things. And it's a good quote, and it applies to this resolution.

The simplicity of this resolution is that there is a call on the part of the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), supported by our party, saying that we are calling on the provincial government to stop immediately from interfering with the collective bargaining process.

Now, yesterday there was an allusion and a correction and a torque, on the part of the honourable Premier (Mr. Pallister), that he was not issuing a directive and that it was merely advice. Coming from the Premier, when he says that the university should try to use last year's collective bargaining result and not accede to any increases, it is a directive; I will not call it any other way. It is advice, maybe, but the way it was said in public and in writing was that both parties should agree to some consensus in accordance with the directive from the Premier.

And collective bargaining is a process that simply provides the forum for conflicting interests to compromise, to negotiate, to bargain, to put forward proposals and to reject the same proposals and put forward counter-proposals, and that was happening for 10 months—10 months of hard bargaining.

And, when the Premier decided to put his two cents' worth by saying that the university should not allow more than zero, that is interference—interference, as defined in any dictionary.

The collective bargaining process is a tool that has been provided by the law in order that workers, organizations and employers could reach some kind of a living arrangement that will promote peace in the workplace. And there are certain periods of time

when sometimes the bargaining process does not work and the law also provides some out for it, as in the appointment of either a mediator or a conciliator.

And it is difficult for me to agree that the collective bargaining process has not been tainted at all by the mere statement from the Premier himself.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I'm having a great deal of difficulty hearing the member speaking. There are a number of conversations going on here. I would ask that if members do want to have a conversation that they take it to the loges or out into the hallway, or if you're going to have conversations, please lower your voices quite dramatically so that we can at least hear the member who's in debate.

Thank you. I appreciate the co-operation.

**Mr. Marcelino:** And I'm sorry that I had to interfere in the ongoing conversations between other members, and I'm sorry if—but I thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to hear myself.

As I was saying, I was a labour lawyer for quite some time before I immigrated to—to Canada from the Philippines, and the circumstances are quite different. I joined a picket line and got beat up. Well, you should see the other guy too. But it's part of the difficulties when you don't have industrial peace. Industrial peace is the ideal in any labour bargaining process. We are trying our best as a society to provide the rules, and the rules are very simple. You talk, you counter-talk; you propose, you counter-propose; and then you compromise. And that's what civil society usually—or civilized society usually does.

And, if there should be anything at all that has resulted from this interference, it's the appearance of about 200, 250 students right at the doorstep of our Legislature outside their classes and the strike that's on its second day now, which could have been prevented if only somebody, either from government or from both sides, would have acceded to a compromise, and that's what society is all about, compromise. You cannot be too hard—I would have said something else. You cannot be too hard in your position. You have to be a little bit more flexible.

And, when the Premier attacked the process with the directive for a zero increase for the University of Manitoba Faculty Association, it is more not in keeping with the process itself, but it was a direct interference in the way things are supposed to be.

And I'm happy that he's trying to back off that position. I think that shows some flexibility.

Now, during my time as a labour lawyer, we usually went to the national labour relations commission, and we always asked for injunctions. Well, injunctions against the—against management, injunctions against other unions, injunctions against those who are violating the process, and sometimes we call them unfair labour practices. When an unfair labour practice is perpetrated by a union or by management, it is a problem already, which means that we need more than just talk. Sometimes a good attitude towards each other engendered by trust and honesty. That's what was needed here.

\* (16:50)

And, when the University of Manitoba Faculty Association, when they were on the steps of this Legislature at the front, the president said that he's thankful that there's support. And we were there. And we were trying to support them, meaning by our mere presence.

I am—I don't have too much time anymore, and somebody else wants to speak. So thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Madam Speaker, very pleased to speak to this opposition day motion today, and the outset I want to thank the members for being more quiet than they were a few minutes ago, and just let them know that there's only one more speaker on this side after me. So that should make them all very happy, unless the members opposite want to speak to the motion.

The Finance Minister, you know, I was trying to sort out his comments at the beginning, and I thought his comments sort of reflected the sort of confused and conflicted nature of this government. I mean, the resolution says that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to call upon the provincial government to immediately stop interfering with collective bargaining. Now, I think that's pretty clear. I have a lawyer sitting right—two lawyers sitting right behind me, and I think they would agree that that's fairly clear. Now, that's one concept, and the Finance Minister probably would understand that. And then the second is to fund post-secondary education to at least the rate of economic growth—well, now, that's another concept and something that we certainly did in our 17 years—and keep tuition fees capped at the rate of inflation. And I have no idea why the minister

would have problems understanding the wording and the intent of that particular resolution.

And, you know, this—for the last 17 years in this province, I mean, we've had the odd problem, for sure, but the reality is that under the previous government, we had a record good economy; we had building cranes that, you know, in the Filmon years, there was no building going on here at all. In fact, I think we had net outmigration, if I'm not mistaken, until the former member for River East brought in the immigrant investor legislation—and I think in their first year they had only, like, 500 people—but it was really the NDP that ramped that program up and that brought the success out of the program, so much so that it was actually copied by other provinces, Nova Scotia being one, anyway, as the thing to do.

The economy expanded so much during those years. I mean, at the end, it was, like, I think we were at like \$64-billion economy right now, and debt-to-GDP was, I think, in a better position than when we took over. So, overall, things were very good. And the labour environment in this province was excellent. I mean, can you think of the strikes that occurred during the NDP 17 years in this province? It was hardly any, literally. And here the government's only been in power for, like, six months and they've already managed to trip their way into a strike. And, if they keep going the way they're going right now, this is just going to go downhill for them going forward, from what I can see.

So I was very pleased to see today the hundreds of students who came here from the Canadian Federation of Students' mobilization of the day of action, and Michael Barkman and all of the other students who were here today. And I would ask them to keep up the good work, because the reality is that governments, you know, will be forced—are forced to listen to their constituents. And the students are rightly pointing out that this government is headed initially in the wrong direction. The students are smart enough to see and know the record of past Conservative governments.

You know, why is it that every time we have a period of Conservative government in this province or anywhere else in the country, that we see labour unrest, we see student unrest? This—the previous government brought in a number of very important changes. They brought in a tuition freeze. I mean, the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) pointed out that



that started in, you know, 1999 and has been in effect for a number of years.

And I know when you take tuition comparisons across the country, you know, Manitoba's probably, I would think, if not the lowest but among the lowest in the entire country. So, this is the kind of record that this government is—has to deal with, because every time that it moves on cuts and rollbacks, basically they're doing that in the face of what Manitobans already understand what the record's been for the last number of years.

Now, you know, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), he doesn't understand that working and middle-class families have to pay more to go to university and college to get a good job. The Conservatives have a record of ignoring the needs of students and putting hard-working families in dire straits. A matter of fact, the last time this Premier was in Cabinet, tuition fees more than doubled—I remember those days—skyrocketed up by 130 per cent during those 11 years that the Filmon government was in power. Enrolment in the universities and colleges decreased by 10 per cent and that's from 1993 to 2000.

Now, how does that make any economic sense—to increase your tuition fees by 132 per cent and the enrolment drops by 10 per cent, as opposed to our 17 years, where tuition fees were frozen for that period of time and enrolment certainly went up. In terms of the government that's interfered for partisan, political reasons on an ongoing labour negotiation, it's undermined the university's bargaining position and helped to lead to this strike by the professors.

This government's reckless actions have hurt tens of thousands of students and threatened the semester for the entire university. Their actions may cost students and families thousands in lost tuition fees and lost wages. The Conservative plan for our colleges is to cut funding and stand by as tuition skyrockets and fewer people get a chance for good education.

And this is the fundamental problem here and the same sort of issue that Sterling Lyon dealt with. When you—you know, cuts beget cuts. And when you start doing, you know, the type of cuts—acute, protracted restraints, I think he called it—and basically, at the end of the day, you start shrinking the economy. Unemployment goes up and the whole economy starts heading south, and that's unfortunately where these Conservatives are taking us.

In fact, during their time in office, the Conservative Party froze or cut funding to universities for five straight years. Tuition fees, as I'd indicated, went up 132 per cent and enrolment went down by 7,000 students, 15 per cent. That is a record of the previous Conservative government and, you know, I hate to say this, Madam Speaker, but history does have a way of repeating itself.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** To clarify for the House, according to rule 30(15), the House shall not adjourn until all members wishing to speak on the motion have done so.

Are there members still wishing to speak?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes? Debate will continue until all members wishing to speak have done so.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I'm glad to be able to put a few words. I'd like to thank the member from Fort Rouge and express my support to his motion tabled this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, around noontime today, members of our caucus joined with hundreds of students at the steps of the Legislative Building to show our support, commitment and agreement to the issues that the students have raised.

\* (17:00)

The students expressed the very issues the motion of the member of Fort Rouge raised, which are urging the provincial government to immediately stop interfering with collective bargaining, to fund post-secondary education at least at the rate of economic growth, and to keep tuition increases capped at the rate of inflation.

The plight of students is very clear to members of our caucus, and it is very close to my heart as well. I have five children who were able to pursue higher education because student loans were accessible and summer employment for students were possible. And the student tax credit was a big help for my children and the rest of students who graduated from post-secondary institutions and have decided to live and work in Manitoba after graduation.

At the steps of the Legislature I have heard students speak of the uncertain future that are before them. The students have serious questions: Will

the tuition fee increase, at least be tied to the rate of inflation? For students who are working part-time, they want to know if minimum wage will be increased this year. Moreover, the students are anxious. They want to know whether the student tax credit will still be available when they graduate from their programs a few years from now.

Madam Speaker, the above questions of the students who gathered at the steps of the Manitoba Legislature, I believe, are the same questions that students who live in the Logan constituency would like to ask this new provincial government.

I can fully appreciate the dire situations of struggling students who work and study at the same time. When I was a post-secondary student many, many years ago, I worked full-time during the day and attended school from 5:30 to 9:30 every night from Monday to Friday. That was hard enough, working full-time during the time and then attend school right after.

I found to be doubly difficult was during examination days. I will be writing exams from 5:30 to 9:30 straight without break, and by the time the last test for the night was over, my right hand was so tired from writing.

With all the challenges and hardship, I was grateful to have finished my bachelor's degree in less than four years with honours.

While I'm still on memory lane, I recall I was able to be a working student while in university back in the Philippines, because in high school I took a vocational course which included stenography and typing. I graduated from that program with the highest academic marks, spoke the valedictorian address, and received the stenographer of the year award.

To this day, I still remember and can write Gregg's stenography shorthand, but not as fast as I used to do before.

But that was one part of the vocational program apart from the academic courses. The other part was typing, and this is the biggest problem of them all. For over 100 students there were only two typewriters available for that class—for the typing class, and no one had ever had enough time to be able to practise typing.

I do not know if any one of my friends and classmates had a typewriter at home, so all of us had to take turns in using a typewriter, the kind of

typewriter that was huge and heavy and whose ink ribbon was so old that the typed words are hardly visible.

In my case I was determined to pursue university after high school, and to do that, I have to find employment so I could send myself to school, support my mother and younger siblings, and to find office employment, which is my only option. If I need to study at the same time, I need to get an office job, and I need to have a fast and accurate typing speed.

Well, necessity is the mother of invention. With no physical typewriter to practise typing and gain speed, I had to improvise. So I took a cardboard that was backing a lined paper—the pad of lined paper and in it I drew all of the keys of the typewriter. Pathetic, ridiculous, but it did the trick. I was able to memorize the typewriter keyboard that way. So I was practising day in, day out, using that cardboard and—as if it were the real typewriter, and I was able to really make use of that cardboard, that it was worn out by the time I finished the typewriting class.

Speaking of keyboards, a friend told me a sad yet funny story. Like me, she came from a very poor family—so are many of her friends. When they get together, one of the questions they asked each other was what was lunch or supper for you. My friend would hear various kinds of food her friends had for lunch or supper and really made her salivate and feel a little bad. When it was her turn, she said, for me, we had typewriter for dinner. When asked how a typewriter became a dish, she gestured that, with bare hands, she would pick morsels of plain cooked rice, put it in her mouth and then, with her pointing finger still moist from picking up the rice and putting it in her mouth, she would touch a paper with a little amount of salt on it and put it in her mouth. So she will repeat that, pick up the rice, touch the paper with the salt and put it in her mouth. So she had typewriter for dinner.

That was a familiar scenario in my home as well. There were many a time I and my family ate cooked rice with only a teaspoon or less of sugar to go with it, or boiled rice with plain water as broth and then a little salt added to it; that way, a little amount of rice can be cooked to serve a whole family. It was not unusual to hear stories that—similar stories such as that with many of my friends and neighbours, or we just slept the night away without eating.

So back to the present time after all that recollection of hard times.

Our government—I'm very proud of our government for supporting and ensuring that education is affordable and of high quality. So it is our hope that—on—the present government will make education affordable as well, just like what we did so many students, especially those students who have been dealt a bad hand. Those students who are struggling, those students who come from very poor families will have a chance to improve their life situation, make a name for themselves and be productive members of society, because they have obtained higher education just like many of us did.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is the opposition day motion in the name of the honourable member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew).

Do members wish to have the motion read?  
[Agreed]

The motion reads that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to call upon the provincial government to immediately stop interfering with collective bargaining, to fund post-secondary education at least at the rate of economic growth and to keep tuition increases capped at the rate of inflation.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

\* (17:10)

#### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader):** I request a recorded vote.

**Madam Speaker:** A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

Order, please. Order.

The question before the House is the opposition day motion.

#### Division

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

#### Yeas

*Allum, Chief, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Klassen, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Selinger, Swan, Wiebe.*

#### Nays

*Bindle, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.*

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 16, Nays 36.

**Madam Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

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