

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

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
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	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
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SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
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WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Point Douglas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 22—The Regulatory Accountability Act and Amendments to The Statutes and Regulations Act

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 22, The Regulatory Accountability Act and Amendments to The Statutes and Regulations Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: Bill 22 sets out a new direction of regulatory accountability for Manitoba and is an important part of our government's plan to rebuild and grow the provincial economy. The first of its kind, Bill 22 sets into law the reporting of all regulations every year and establishes mandatory reviews of regulations by the Legislative Assembly. It removes the excessive and unnecessary administrative burden on businesses, local governments, non-profits, when they are providing or accessing government services.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Crown Services): Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board Quarterly Report for the nine months ended December 31st, 2016.

Madam Speaker: Ministerial Statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Allan Lysack

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Dr. Allan Lysack spent his entire career practising medicine in rural Manitoba, and did so while serving to the highest standards of his profession.

Allan Lysack was born and raised on a farm near Minitonas. He graduated from the faculty of medicine at the University of Manitoba and

completed specialty training in general surgery. He began practising at Dauphin General Hospital in 1965 and retired just weeks ago from a 51-year career serving Manitoba's Parkland region.

Dr. Lysack established Manitoba's first rural intensive care unit, introduced new surgical procedures and received the 1997 Physician of the Year award from the Manitoba Medical Association. As a general surgeon at the Dauphin general hospital and assistant professor of surgery at the University of Manitoba, Dr. Lysack has been a role model and mentor to many young physicians. On October 24th, 2003, Dr. Allan Lysack became a member of the Order of Canada, a centerpiece of Canadian honour.

In fine form, Madam Speaker, Dr. Lysack credits his success to others: his family, his wife, his colleagues and education, and enjoyed his life in rural Manitoba, regretting only that he couldn't do more.

In 2014, Dr. Allan and Shirley Lysack received Dauphin's Philanthropist of the Year award and have set up two scholarships to help students with post-secondary studies in music and health.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Dr. Lysack on his many accomplishments and wish him and his wife Shirley a long and healthy retirement. For his many years of service, dedication and commitment to rural Manitoba and for the difference he has made in the lives of so many, we say thank you.

Ghanaian Union of Manitoba

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, the African Communities of Manitoba Incorporated, otherwise known as ACOMI, is an inclusive, non-profit organization in my constituency. They work tirelessly to bring together and unite individuals, communities and organizations of African heritage here in Manitoba.

The Ghanaian Union of Manitoba was one of the early members of ACOMI and this year they celebrated their 60th year of independence from British rule. I was honoured to partake in the celebrations, which featured music, singing and dancing and, of course, traditional food and attire.

Ghana is a peaceful country with a rich and diverse economy. It has one of the highest GDPs in West Africa, standing out as the beacon for other African countries.

The Ghanaians here in Winnipeg are very active both in their community and in the city as a whole. Most notably, they recently held fundraisers and info nights to support refugees and newcomers to our province.

Sixty years of independence is a great achievement, and the event I attended on Saturday was a huge success.

To the executives and community members here in the gallery today, congratulations to the Ghanaian Union of Manitoba and all Ghanaians in Manitoba on your continued prosperity. Thank you for your contributions to the rich cultural diversity and the vibrant economy of our province.

Madam Speaker: The honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition.

Ms. Marcelino: I ask for leave for the names of the Ghanaian Union of Manitoba executives and members present to be added in Hansard.

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

Maggie Yeboah, president; Frank Indome, vice-president; Emilia Tuffour, treasurer; Michael Baffoe, chairperson, Ghana@60 Planning Committee; Cecilia Oduro, past president; Members: Selina Bieber; Felix Kaguah; Bertha Tackie; Sam Tackie; Sam Armah; Tonny Gadagbui

McIvor Mall Recycle Everywhere Project

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): Madam Speaker, I am proud today to speak to a unique recycling project taking place in my River East community.

In today's society, recycling is commonplace, and I am proud of Manitobans for doing their part to improve recycling and help the environment in our province. Manitobans expect and deserve to have access to recycling, whether they are at the lake, at home, at work, or at a Jets game or at the mall.

While we all have blue boxes at our homes and offices, malls across our province don't often separate or collect recyclables. As an avid advocate of recycling, I questioned why there was no recycling program in McIvor Mall, where my constituency office is located. So I asked, how can

we address this? My constituency office reached out to the Canadian beverage containing recycling association, which is CBCRA, to partner with the property management of the mall to roll out recycling services there.

Partnership between Marwest Management properties, McIvor Mall and CBCRA has demonstrated what a success the Recycle Everywhere program can be in a commercial multi-tenant location. McIvor Mall now has been outfitted with Recycle Everywhere bins in the mall's public areas, indoor and out, as well as in each tenant space. The changes made not only mean that 1,000 beverage containers will be recovered every day, but it also leads to waste-management cost savings for McIvor Mall, in addition to increased satisfaction by mall visitors and tenants.

During my discussions with many of the tenants I have heard how pleased they are with the new blue bins and the active role that they are taking to reduce waste from our landfills. I'd like to thank McIvor Mall, Marwest Management and CBCRA. Their partnership is a shining example of what can be accomplished when we work together.

McIvor Mall serves as a lighthouse project for other malls, strip malls and businesses in our province, and I urge all members and encourage all of them to have such partnerships so that we can truly recycle everywhere.

Thank you.

Recognizing Virden's Emergency Response Teams

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Arthur-Virden): Madam Speaker, I rise in this Chamber today to commend the Town of Virden, along with the Westman Emergency Group and its volunteers.

Due to the sudden blizzard in December 6 and the last blizzard last week, closed the Trans-Canada Highway from Winnipeg to the Saskatchewan border in both directions and stranded many motorists. This resulted in the Town of Virden activating its emergency plan and opening up emergency accommodation centres at the tundra and oil glass place. The point of—during this December 'bizzard'—blizzard, they lodged more than 108 stranded travellers, including the Canadian entertainer and actor Mr. Tom Jackson, and country singer Beverley Mahood, who actually performed at this emergency shelter. This past week there were up to 80 stranded motorists lodged at the same location.

* (13:40)

The Westman Emergency Group is a group of community volunteers who come together in the event of a disaster or a major emergency. However, in the event of this magnitude, this group could not have accomplished this task without the help of many dedicated volunteers, including the RCMP, Manitoba Infrastructure and staff, Wallace District Fire Department, Prairie Mountain Health and the Virden EMS and, of course, the Town of Virden and its citizens.

This act of kindness proves to be one reason why I am proud to be a Manitoban. The emergency co-ordinator, Mr. Scott Simpson, stated that when they reflect upon the two snowstorm events, he cannot help but be proud of each and everyone's contribution.

Madam Speaker, this past week many other communities across Manitoba, including the RMs of Whitehead and Alexander, Russell, Roblin, Churchill, Gillam, Thompson, Leaf Rapids and Emerson, all opened shelters for stranded 'motorists' when many volunteer paramedics, firefighters, Manitoba Infrastructure employees, RCMP, hospital staff, who all worked tirelessly during the last week's snow storm.

Once again, we want to thank them for—their all for their hard work and dedication. Let's give them a hand.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Kelvin Active Living Centre Project

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, as we approach the provincial budget, it's vital that there are sufficient resources dedicated to preventing sickness and to optimizing health, and it's vital that these resources be used in a focused and effective manner. Without this effort, our health system is not sustainable. We must ensure, for example, that expenditures which have the potential to improve health and decrease downstream costs to the health-care system will continue.

One project, for example, is the Kelvin High School gym and Active Living Centre, a project under consideration for more than 20 years. Over the last ten years, it's been slowly working its way to the top priority of the Winnipeg School Division. With 1,350 students, there's a very clear need for this project. At the moment, many athletes at Kelvin High School in training must run around the halls of

the school because there's not room in the present gym. The demand is far beyond the capacity of the gym which is already fully scheduled from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day.

The new gym and Active Living Centre will help not only students, but also members of the community. And for this reason, the community has fundraised more than \$1 million to enable the construction of the whole project.

Let's look at the savings. The exercise enabled by the new gym will improve brain function as we've shown in our recent brain health report and enable students to do better in the school subjects—in their school subjects as well as preventing conditions like diabetes, various cancers, depression and dementia. Participation in sports has also been shown to decrease the likelihood of substance abuse.

I call on the government to open their minds to the reality of their decision and to reverse it so the Kelvin gym and Active Living Centre project can go ahead

I note, for example, Mr. Finance Minister, that with current lifetime costs for diabetes, that the cost to the provincial government today could likely be recouped if the facility prevented as few as 27 new cases of—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Introduction of Guests

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

With us today is the Ghanaian Union of Manitoba executives: Maggie Yeboah, president; Frank Indome, vice-president; Emilia Tuffour, treasurer; Dr. Michael Baffoe, chairperson, Ghana@60 planning committee; Cecilia Oduro, past president; and community members, who are the guests of the honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition (Ms. Marcelino).

And also in the gallery today are family members for the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), Kathi and Derek Campbell, who are here from Ottawa.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Small Class Size Initiative Government Position

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you again to the Ghanaian Union of Manitoba for their presence here.

Madam Speaker, this sad day for Manitoba students. The Premier is truly out of touch with the needs of parents, teachers and students. He is more concerned, it seems, with making sure his own salary will go up, rather than focusing on the needs in our education system.

This government has decided that it doesn't matter how many students are in a classroom. This government has decided that parents who are concerned about their child receiving individual attention are wrong. Instead, this government has decided it knows better than the students, teachers and parents who have advocated for smaller class sizes.

Will the Premier reverse this regressive decision, make sure all students in Manitoba get the attention they deserve?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, as we invest record sums in education, as a new government, we demonstrate not only our commitment to education for our young people and for those who need training or those who come to our country with hope who want to explore their own potential and find a chance for success here for themselves and their families, but we also demonstrate a commitment to getting better value from the money we spend.

Most importantly, we demonstrate a commitment to getting better results for people. After 17 years of the previous government's opportunities to explore their ways of leading us in education, we found that we ranked 10th of all 10 provinces in terms of getting educational outcomes for our children, Madam Speaker.

We want to be the most improved province in Canada, and this is a particularly important area for our government that we believe is one that we can do far better in than the previous administration, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Marcelino: The Premier is out of touch with how modern schools operate. Teaching has changed, but now the Premier has decided to make unreasonable demands on teachers, on parents, on students.

He expects teachers to be able to do more with less resources while teaching more and more children. He expects parents to be happy with a situation where their child can't be guaranteed the kind of individual attention and work and can make important differences in their lives.

The Premier's decision today will lead to bigger classes and less resources for teachers: Will the Premier stop this wrong-headed attack and reverse his decision to increase class sizes?

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, Madam Speaker, the member's wrong in her assertions.

And again, it reveals the problem with the kind of thinking that says that simply putting more money on that file gets better results. The NDP spent a lot of money but it didn't get the return on the investment that Manitobans deserved and wanted, and Manitoba families know that.

University instructors and community college instructors have said consistently in our consultations with them that young people are coming from our high schools without the basic skills in terms of reading, in terms of math and computation that they need to find their potential.

And we need to do a better job in the early years, Madam Speaker, and will, but not simply by spending more money, as the previous administration no doubt was capable of doing.

She speaks about doing more with less, but this is exactly what the NDP government asked every Manitoba household to do when they raised taxes after promising not to. They left less money on the kitchen tables of Manitobans to support their own children and their own families, Madam Speaker. That's why we're holding the line on tax increases and leaving more money in the hands of Manitoba families to find their way.

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

Ms. Marcelino: The Premier is out of touch with how our education system works. Small class sizes help students get the attention they need. Small class sizes help teachers manage classrooms and provide individual attention to each student. Small class sizes

help parents know their child's education is being taken seriously.

Now that the Premier has finally revealed to Manitoba families his plans, we ask today: Will he listen to parents, to students, to teachers? Will he commit to keeping class sizes small, or does he think he knows better than parents, students and teachers what's best?

Mr. Pallister: No, madam, I don't think that I know better than those folks, but I know better than the previous administration about the importance of getting value for money. I know better than the previous administration that if you simply lower class sizes, but the results get worse for the students in those classes, that's hardly evidence that you're doing the smart thing, the right thing, for children.

And so it's those children in the schools that concern us first and foremost, not playing to some other optic, Madam Speaker. And spending more and getting less is not what Manitobans do, because they have no choice in their own families' circumstances but to manage well with what they have.

That's exactly what we're going to do, Madam Speaker, manage well with what we have, not go to Manitobans and ask them to pay higher taxes like the NDP did, year after year after year.

* (13:50)

Small Class Size Initiative Government Position

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): There's a simple question at the heart of the small class sizes initiative, and I encourage any parent in Manitoba to ask themselves the following question: Do you want your child to have more one-on-one time with their teacher?

Madam Speaker, it seems to me that every parent would say, yes, I want my kid to have more one-on-one time with their teacher. But, apparently, this minister and this Premier (Mr. Pallister) disagree. They're cutting the small class sizes program, not because parents want the change, but just because it was a program started by the NDP.

Will the Premier reverse course and commit to keeping the small class sizes initiative, just like his minister promised this House last week?

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

We've certainly been listening to teachers and to parents and to administrators in this education system, and they've been telling us what they want to see for the students in our system is better results, Madam Speaker, and we think that focusing on early years literacy and numeracy will give us those better results.

After five years of small class size initiative, we had spent \$48 million and the results showed no improvement.

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

Mr. Kinew: As any good researcher knows, you have to collect enough data so that your findings are statistically significant.

Statistically significant research, Madam Speaker, that's what the National Education Policy Center did, that's what the Canadian Education Association did when they conducted long-term studies on small class sizes, and they said small class sizes are good.

We're talking about the impact teachers have on kids over the course of their entire lives, Madam Speaker, not just a year or two. That's why this Premier cutting this program before we can see the long-run impact is such a mistake.

Will he reverse course and restore the small class sizes initiative so parents, teachers and students can see for themselves the good that more one-on-one time has on students?

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

As I said, we've been listening to teachers and parents and educators in this province, and they've been telling us very clearly that they want more flexibility in their system. The announcement that we made today to change the focus on early years literacy and numeracy will give them that flexibility, the capability to make the choice as to whether it's class size initiative, a class content initiative or whether they use different teaching techniques within that class size.

Give them the flexibility and they will give us the better results that we need for Manitoba.

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

Mr. Kinew: The minister is putting politics ahead of kids and the minister is putting politics ahead of doing his job.

He promised this House—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —on March 8th and again on March 9th that he would get back in touch with the Brandon School Division and let them know that he would keep the small class sizes initiative. But today the Brandon School Division told the Brandon Sun they still haven't heard from the minister.

This government has put no evaluation system in place to tell whether or not ministers are doing their jobs.

Why are they cutting programs for kids in schools before we see the results, but then turning around and fighting to keep their 20 per cent raises before we can see whether or not they're doing their jobs?

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

The small class size initiative that the previous government put in place, actually, originally had an evaluation component. But their minister took that out so he wouldn't find out the results. We have, in our initiative for early years, improvements in literacy and 'numisry.' We have built in an evaluation process right from the start so we can learn good techniques and we can share them across the province so that we can get better results for our Manitoba students.

Isn't that what really matters, not political posturing?

Cabinet Salaries Refund Request

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has shown an amazing ability to be out of touch with the people of Manitoba. The first thing that he did was to give himself a great big raise and then he froze minimum wage for those who earn the least in our province.

Yesterday, they tabled legislation which locked in that huge raise for the Premier and his Cabinet, and yet has still said nothing about minimum wage.

Could the Premier justify this intolerable double standard?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, we were proud to introduce yesterday The Fiscal Responsibility and Taxpayer

Protection Act, that will provide Manitobans with real measurement on the path to balance.

Balanced budgets matter because money that we don't—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Friesen: —because money that we don't pay to moneylenders in New York and Toronto can go to front-line services here.

This is about sustaining front-line services. That is the path we favour. If they favour a different path, let them say so.

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

Mr. Allum: You're not sustaining front-line services when you make cuts to education, when you make cuts to CancerCare Manitoba, when you cut the Field of Dreams at Dakota and when you cut the new—when the new field at Kelvin High School—the new gym at Kelvin High School. That's not protecting front-line services.

So will the Finance Minister, who's doing the Premier's bidding, do the right thing and return his 20 per cent pay increase?

Mr. Friesen: Well, the member is incorrect, and he knows that because he's read the legislation.

But let us not forget in this House that every minister of the NDP government gave themselves a raise in 2010 when they passed a provision, a loophole of sorts, to say we will not take a 40 per cent pay decrease because we will call this exceptional circumstances. That was a refusal to be accountable.

This bill is about accountability. This government will be accountable where that previous government was never accountable.

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

Mr. Allum: It's hardly accountable when you give yourself a raise and ask everybody else to be all hands on deck and then throw them all overboard at the same time.

So I'm asking the Premier today to get up out of his chair, indicate to the people of Manitoba he's ready to show leadership and give back his big, fat raise.

Mr. Friesen: Well, the member is incorrect in his assertions and he ignores what we just provided on record as evidence that the NDP ministers gave themselves a raise when they passed phony-baloney measures to prevent them from taking the consequences of their overspending. *[interjection]* The result of NDP overspending is a real threat—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —to the sustainability of the services that Manitobans depend on.

We will sustain those services by ensuring a path back to balance. That is the provision of this bill that we've brought. We welcome that debate, and we are calling for it, and we look forward to debate that will happen for the betterment of all Manitobans.

* (14:00)

Wait Time for Child Care Reduction Commitment

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Experts believe that families need high-quality child care so that parents can return to work or school knowing that their children are in good hands. They also agree that the best way to offer high-quality child care is in publicly funded centres in schools or stand-alone locations.

When parents can't find appropriate child care in their communities it presents a serious barrier to fully participating in the economy, which hurts all of us.

The bottom line is that this government has done nothing in respect of child care in its first year in office. As a result, the waiting list for child care is now close to 15,000.

Will the minister commit to ending the 15,000 wait-list within his first mandate of this government?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): I can tell you the statements made by the members opposite are untrue. This government has a balanced approach to child care that provides choice to many Manitobans.

One thing that we did find out that is a fact is the Leader of the Opposition talked about the fact that family-home-based child care is a mistake.

We disagree with that, Madam Speaker. We're providing a comprehensive plan that's going to provide real spaces for real Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: We know that most of the stuff that the minister rattles off as his own plan is actually our NDP child-care commitments from more than a year ago, so I do want to congratulate the minister—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —on appropriating our commitments. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Better late than never.

However—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Fontaine: I do want to point out that the minister is failing to attach any kind of timelines to any of his promises on child care. It's a bit like their balanced budget legislation. It might happen sometime or maybe never.

So I put it to the minister: If he is serious about creating new child-care spaces, will he commit to ending the 15,000 wait-list in this government's first mandate, or in any time?

Mr. Fielding: One thing that we won't copy the NDP is leaving 15,000 people on a wait-list in terms of child care.

What we did in the last two weeks—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —we introduced our first component of our child-care plan. We're streamlining the system—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —reducing red tape that's a part of this, and we're also creating meaningful spaces for Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The minister is really good at theatre, perhaps not as good as his colleague, the Minister of Health, but certainly his colourful, excited promises to his avoidance of taking responsibility for failing to follow through on anything has rendered a couple of giggles, but it does nothing for families who desperately need child care.

So today I'd like to give the minister, yet again, a chance to stand up for parents: Will he commit to ending the 15,000 wait-list for child-care spaces in this government's first mandate? Or, if not in the first mandate, will he put any time frame on his promises?

Mr. Fielding: One thing this government is committed to is cleaning up the mess that was left by the NDP when it comes to child care.

This government is going to create a comprehensive plan that's going to create spaces for families. We're not going to look to take an ideological approach, like the NDP, and provide a whole choice for residents of Manitoba to be a part of it.

Crime Rate Statistics Yearly Comparison

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Last week in question period the Minister of Justice said, and I quote: We need to ensure the safety and security first and foremost of all Manitobans.

Does the Minister of Justice believe that crime rates are a useful measure of success or failure?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, I want to thank my honourable friend for the question.

And, of course, we do know, back when he was minister of Justice at the time, during his administration they had among the highest crime rates in Canada, especially among violent crime, especially among murders. And I would suggest that I will take no lessons from members opposite when it comes to the safety and security of all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Speaker, it's a sadly typical non-answer from this minister.

A look at the City of Winnipeg CrimeStat website shows that reported crimes are way up, in fact, by more than 15 per cent since last May 1st over the similar period the year before. That represents more than 1,000 more Winnipeg families impacted just by the crimes reported by CrimeStat in the same period one year before.

Can the Minister of Justice tell the people of Winnipeg: Why are we so much less safe in our communities than we were just one year ago?

Mrs. Stefanson: Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

Of course, as a result of many years of mismanagement of our justice system in Manitoba under the watch of the NDP and, in fact, under the watch of this very member of the Chamber, Madam Speaker. We, of course, are conducting a review of the criminal justice system from beginning to end, and it's something that should have taken place many, many years ago. It never took place.

We will make sure that Manitoba is the most improved province in Canada over time.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, those answers aren't good enough, Madam Speaker, and it's getting worse, not improving.

So far, in 2017, the crimes reported by CrimeStat are up 27 per cent over the same period last year. Commercial robberies are up 32 per cent. Non-commercial robberies are up 40 per cent and car theft is up a shocking 42 per cent under this minister's watch.

This government has no ideas how to stop crime from occurring and no ideas on working with offenders after they're charged, and they've frozen the Neighbourhoods Alive! program—[interjection]—which allows communities to—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —preserve safety.

Why is this Minister of Justice failing to make our communities safer?

Mrs. Stefanson: We do take the safety and security of all Manitobans very, very seriously.

And I know the member opposite wants to pick out various numbers and so on. I could go back and pick out many, many numbers from the past where Manitoba was the murder capital of Canada, Manitoba was the violent crime capital of Canada, and who's watch was that under, Madam Speaker? The member for Minto.

Health-Care Funding Federal Negotiation Concerns

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): This week is Brain Health Awareness Week, and here in Canada mental health illness accounts for 70 per cent of total disability claim costs.

These costs are staggering, which is why it is shocking that this government's refusal to negotiate with Ottawa, or rather, their insistence on gambling with these valuable dollars for mental health and home care are completely appalling.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier: Why isn't he allowing his appointed minister to negotiate an agreement with the Minister responsible for Health in Ottawa?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, the member for Burrows speaks to an important point, the fact that there hasn't been true negotiation with the federal government; there hasn't been a real partnership.

And we haven't seen real results from Ottawa. In fact, it was just on Friday that we heard a quote; it was said that we are seeing a funding view that will force cuts to services and does not commit to upholding the principle of equity in public health care. That is a quote from the Friends of Medicare.

I wonder why the member isn't a friend of medicare.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, giving an ultimatum to the federal government is not a negotiation.

Ontario, Quebec and Alberta have now signed on to agreements with our federal government. This makes Manitoba the only province who has not signed on.

My question is: When will the minister or Premier get to work and negotiate an agreement?

*(14:10)

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm glad that Manitoba is standing up strong to the federal government and saying, we want a fair deal for all Manitobans.

This isn't about this party. This isn't about the other party. This is about Manitobans getting a fair deal, a fair health-care deal.

In fact, it was only on Friday of last week that a quote came out: The federal government is not just abdicating its responsibility to uphold single-tier public health care, it's threatening its future. That's from the Canadian health-care coalition. Why doesn't

she stand with the Canadian health-care coalition, Madam Speaker?

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would challenge the minister to question himself on what the options—or the definitions of strong and egotistical are.

To be frank, if the Premier's health facts were accurate, do members of this House honestly believe that all other provinces and territories would have signed on to—with health-care agreements?

If the health-care deal is not signed before the federal budget is tabled on March 22nd, which is next week, Manitobans will continue to suffer and they could lose out on critical health-care dollars in the next fiscal year.

Madam Speaker, will this government negotiate a deal before Manitobans lose out on \$41 million?

Madam Speaker: I would just like to remind members in the House that some words can be viewed to be very inflammatory and are really quite inappropriate to use in this House, especially when we're taking personal shots at members across the House. So I would urge the member to be cautious in her language.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I want to encourage the member to understand that no one has stood up more for health care than our Health Minister here in this Chamber.

We have encouraged all members of this House to join with us in standing up for Manitobans for better health care and standing up for Canadians, as well, to fight for a fair and sustainable and honest system that works for not just today, but for the future.

And while Liberal members appear to be Ottawa-west, Madam Speaker, and sitting idly by or, worse, applauding the federal government's lack of consultative approach and co-operative approach, the members opposite sit on their hands from the NDP and do nothing. And it's hard to say which of those two things is worse. But one thing is certain, that standing up for Manitobans and Canadians for better health care is what this government is all about.

Regulatory Reform New Legislation

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Madam Speaker, in the not-profit world where I come from, we need to be highly efficient in how we use our resources. And nothing is more frustrating and wasteful than dealing with multiple regulations that do the same thing.

The burden of red tape stifles economic growth and innovation. The minister introduced legislation today that will help business and not-profits alike.

Can the Minister of Finance tell the House how Manitoba is leading the way in reducing red tape?

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

We are ensuring transparency and accountability in how we regulate in the province of Manitoba. The Regulatory Accountability Act will set into law the reporting of all regulations in a year and mandatory reviews by the Legislative Assembly.

The new two-for-one rule will be one of the strongest regulatory 'accountability'-accountability measures in Canada. Every new regulation in government creating two others must be eliminated.

Regulations will be published online and a 45-day public comment period will ensue to make sure that everyone can have their say.

With this act, we will be accountable to small business, to local government, to non-profits and to everyday Manitobans.

Agriculture Industry Recruitment of Punjab Farmers

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Punjab province of India is an agriculture province and is the bread basket of India. A Punjabi farmer is a multi-skilled farmer who does crop farming and at the same time, dairy farming and poultry farming, et cetera.

The farmers from Punjab are relocating to Alberta and BC. The Manitoba Agriculture Minister may not be aware and is not encouraging these skilled Punjabi farmers to populate our rural area.

These skilled farmers would increase business in Manitoba's rural economy and ensure Manitoba does not face a farming shortage.

Will the minister start recruiting farmers from Punjab province of India to immigrate to Manitoba?

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

Our door is open to all immigrants. And we know that there's better farm practices that we can practise and learn from around the country. We welcome the opportunity to work with the folks that the member talks about. We know that our door will always be there for farmers moving forward.

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

Mr. Saran: The May 2016 Census of Agriculture counted a 9.6 per cent decrease in farms and 7.5 per cent decrease in farm operators during the past five years. Manitoba is facing a shortage in skilled farmers as farmers are reaching retirement.

There are suitable farmers from the Punjab province of India that are ready to come to Manitoba: Will the minister make it a priority to recruit these skilled farmers and accelerate the immigration process for them through the Farm Strategic Recruitment Initiative?

Mr. Eichler: Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

And he makes a good point. Our farmers are always looking for new, innovative ways, young farmers that are going to be taking over in the next generation. We know that there's programs in place to ensure that the next generation has those tools so they can be effective and efficient in growing farms here in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Saran: Clearly, there is a decline in the number of farmers and farms in Manitoba. The Minister of Agriculture is not doing enough to bring skilled farmers to our province.

India is the most common place of birth for the immigrant farm population in British Columbia. BC is recruiting these farmers because they are very skilled and they have sufficient financial resources to develop a sustainable farming operation.

When will the Minister of Agriculture put extra resources into recruiting Punjab farmers to Manitoba?

Mr. Eichler: I thank the member for the question.

I would welcome the conversation to any farmers that want to come to Manitoba. We know that there's an opportunity here.

And, next Tuesday, I'll give you the opportunity, for ag awareness: maybe you'll come up and stand and thank the farmers for what they do, providing the safest, most economical food in the whole country.

Regional Health Authorities Funding Cut Concerns

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): This government has made its priorities clear: a 20 per cent raise for themselves, cutbacks and cuts for Manitoba families who rely on our important health-care services.

We know the minister has demanded that the WRHA cut over \$80 million from their budget this year. In the words of Dr. Alan Katz, these cuts make it, quote, impossible for the WRHA to eliminate—not eliminate front-line employees.

Will the minister admit to the House that his cuts are impacting the front-line health-care workers that we count on and the front-line health-care services that Manitoba's—Manitobans are counting on?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I wish that the member would have finished the quote, because Dr. Katz from the University of Manitoba also said this is a unique opportunity for there to be true innovation in the health-care system, something that hasn't happened for many years under the former NDP government. There is finally a time where there is a government that is looking to ensure that there's not only health-care innovation, but sustainability for the future.

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

Mr. Wiebe: This government is certainly out of touch. They're out of touch because they think that innovation has to happen with—or can't happen unless there are cuts.

And that's certainly what we're seeing from the minister opposite. He rewards himself with a 20 per cent pay raise and calls it for his sound management.

* (14:20)

But the minister isn't being honest with Manitobans. He ordered the RHAs to make the cuts, but he has reserved the right to control where each RHA will actually make those reductions.

Will he tell this House, then, exactly where will he order the RHAs to cut?

Mr. Goertzen: We were clear. We asked the regional health authorities to find reductions in their management staff by 15 per cent. I gave those directions several weeks ago, Madam Speaker, where they understood that they were looking to reduce their management staff.

It might instructive for the member to know that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, the increase of management between 2006 and 2016 has been 95 per cent.

In 2006 the premier was Gary Doer, his predecessor in his seat. I wonder why he doesn't support the levels of Gary Doer.

Madam Speaker: I would just like to issue a caution to the member on his last question where he made a reflection on the Minister of Health and was questioning honesty in his question. I would urge caution in members in making those types of remarks in the House.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, this government is out of touch with the front-line workers in our health-care system. I'm simply asking the minister here today if he will take personal responsibility for the impact that his cuts are going to have on the care that patients receive in our hospitals and clinics.

Families know that having less nurses for patients, having less doctors to see to them will impact our families, but the minister refuses to take responsibility for that.

Will he stand up, take responsibility for the consequences of his actions and will he admit that he's cutting our front-line health-care workers?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, as the Minister of Health, I am accountable. I'm accountable to the health-care system. I'm accountable to things that happen in the health-care system. I take that very seriously. I take that very personally. Each and every day I take that very personally as I read the letters and different concerns, concerns that have gone on for 17 years in the health-care system. Yes, I take that seriously. I take that in a very—way that I don't think could be any more serious.

Of course I'm accountable to the health-care system and I remain accountable to the health-care system.

Children's Advocate Expansion of Role

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Madam Speaker, last week our government introduced important legislation that expands the mandate of the Office of the Child Advocate as recommended by Commissioner Ted Hughes, who led the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

Can the Minister of Families please explain to the House the importance of The Advocate for Child and Youth Act?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families): Well, thank you Madam Speaker, a fantastic question. Thank you very much from the member.

I can tell you that we're very pleased to introduce this new legislation that strengthens the power of the advocate's. It's something that addresses a number of the recommendations from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry that was left untended by the previous government. It also enhances accountability to the child-welfare system and lifts the veil of secrecy, in my opinion, Madam Speaker.

We encourage the members opposite to stop stalling the legislation in terms of the theatrics that we're seeing here and join us and support this important piece of legislation.

Hydro Workforce Reduction Impact on Service Delivery

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, the minister for Manitoba Hydro is overseeing the laying off of many hundreds of employees of Manitoba Hydro. In the past, sometimes, laying off people has led to poorer quality work and problems downstream.

I wonder if the minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro could provide assurances that there won't be problems downstream as a result of poor quality work from his laying off so many people.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, of course we're going to ensure that we do everything we can to clean up the mess left to us by the NDP and Hydro and in every other file without exception.

But that being said, the member for River Heights needs to understand that he was at the forefront of cutting health-care funding by a record amount in the 1990s as part of a federal Liberal government and, again, the threat of the cuts to

health-care transfers in our province and across the country is very real.

I encourage him to begin the process of representing Manitobans and Canadians who need health care, vulnerable people who need health care, as opposed to the current practice adopted by the Liberal Party in this Chamber of representing Ottawa's initiatives as beneficial to us when such is hardly the case, Madam Speaker.

And I encourage the NDP to stop sitting on their hands and ignoring the No. 1 issue that concerns Manitobans more than all others, the issue we're focused on: protecting Manitoban's health-care system.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader?

Point of Order

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): I rise on a point of order.

Madam Speaker: On a point of order.

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, rule 27(2) is very clear. It states that a minister of the Crown may not use the time allotted for members' statements to comment on government policy or ministerial or department action.

I listened quite closely to the Minister for Sustainable Development, member for River East (Ms. Cox), member's statement earlier today, and it was quite clear that her comments were meant as praise of this government's policies and actions, including her own department. It's disappointing to see the minister flout the rules in such a manner.

I would ask that you remind the minister and all members that our rules must be respected at all times.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order being raised, I would indicate that I did note in the statement that there were the significant reference to a constituency issue that was taking place and an effort that was going on in the constituency. But I also would indicate that the member has waited too long to raise the issue.

But I also would encourage ministers to be cautious when they are doing private members'

statements that they are not bringing forward topics from their ministerial position.

But I would indicate that the member at this time does not have a point of order.

PETITIONS

Kelvin High School Gymnasium

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, background of this petition is as follows:

During the past 20 years a colossal community effort has been put into obtaining a new gymnasium for students at Kelvin High School.

The Kelvin High School gym has been on the Winnipeg School Division—one's—list of projects for approximately 10 years and it has slowly worked its way up to the No. 1 priority.

Exercise and sport are a vital part of school activities for students and these play an important role in developing skills including discipline, teamwork, co-operation and communication.

The current Premier of Manitoba has said that children and grandchildren should not have to pay the price of his austerity budgeting.

The Kelvin High School gym is a desperately needed space for children and youth to get exercise.

The community has raised more than \$1 million to help pay for the gymnasium so it can be used as a community facility as well as a school facility.

Kelvin High School serves students from many areas of Winnipeg, including central Winnipeg.

Children and youth should not have to pay for the financial problems of the Province.

Improving the physical and mental health of children through exercise and sport can keep children healthy and reduce health-care costs in the long term.

Having young people learn good habits like improving their physical and mental health through exercise can save a lot of money in future health expenditures by helping to keep Manitobans healthy.

This facility will enable members of the community to participate in physical exercise and sports activities in the evening, and since community members have raised money for this component, it will help save health-care dollars.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse its decision and to provide the remainder of the funding needed to build the new Kelvin High School gymnasium as soon as possible.

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

Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations Funding

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly. The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Since 2001, the Neighbourhoods Alive! program has supported stronger neighbourhoods and communities in Manitoba.

(2) Neighbourhoods Alive! uses a community-led development model that partners with neighbourhood renewal corporations to fund projects that aim to revitalize communities and build local capacity.

* (14:30)

(3) Neighbourhoods Alive! and the neighbourhood renewal corporations it supports have played a vital and important role in revitalizing many neighbourhoods in Manitoba through community-driven solutions, including: employment and training, education and recreation, safety and crime prevention, and housing and physical improvements.

(4) Neighbourhoods Alive! now serves 13 neighbourhood renewal corporations across Manitoba which have developed expertise in engaging with their local residents and determining the priorities of their communities.

(5) The provincial government's previous investments into Neighbourhoods Alive! have been bolstered by community and corporate donations as well as essential support from community volunteers, small businesses and local agencies.

(6) Late in 2016, the minister responsible for the Neighbourhoods Alive! program said that new funding for initiatives was paused and that the future of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program was being reviewed, bringing hundreds of community projects to a standstill.

(7) Neighbourhood renewal corporations and their communities are concerned this funding freeze

is the first step in a slow phase-out of the Neighbourhoods Alive! grant program, which would have severe negative impacts on communities and the families that live in them.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the Neighbourhoods Alive! program and the communities served by neighbourhood renewal corporations by continuing to provide consistent core funding for existing neighbourhood renewal corporations and enhancing the public funding available for specific projects and initiatives.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, pursuant to rule 33(7), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski). The title of the resolution is Recognizing the Value of 4-H Programs in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for Dauphin. The title of the resolution is Recognizing the Value of 4-H Programs in Manitoba.

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Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, this afternoon we wish to continue with Interim Supply.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the House will consider Interim Supply this afternoon.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 8—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017

Madam Speaker: Resuming debate on second reading of Bill 8, The Interim Appropriation Act,

2017, standing in the name of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, who has unlimited speaking time.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): You know, I hardly got going yesterday, and then all of a sudden it was 5 o'clock and it was time to move on. So, so much to say, so little time. I'm honoured to have the opportunity to get back up and speak to the Interim Supply bill.

I know the Minister of Health doesn't really like it when we engage in democracy here, when we debate issues back and forth. I can hear him across the floor getting all uptight and all bent out of shape about ongoing debate on a matter of great consequence to the people of Manitoba.

And so I would hope that he along with his colleagues would, you know, respect the democratic process here in Manitoba. Certainly, when the Minister of Health was the House leader on the opposition side, he had a few long speeches, thou, shall we say, that went on and on and on. And, you know, we always listened intently to what he was saying. We always listened very closely to the arguments that he was making. It is true that he sometimes wandered off here and wandered off there. He couldn't keep sailing right down the river, Madam Speaker. There were many tributaries that he'd like to visit along the way.

And so I know—I know—in good humour, that he will respect this very important democratic process that we have here in Manitoba.

There's lots to say in the context of the Interim Supply bill. And as I said yesterday, my colleagues have put those issues on the agenda out front for the public to understand, and I'm simply trying to reiterate the very important points that have been made by all of my colleagues about their concerns with the direction of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) about where they're going to be taking this province in the future, about the kinds of actions that they've undertaken so far, few though they might be, which have created tremendous harm in our communities and in our neighbourhoods and is really going to cause more harm, more damage, more pain as we go forward, as we head toward the April 11th budget.

And I want to return to that point because I think it's important to re-emphasize that the minister could have brought in a budget on March 1st. He understood what the calendar was. We were all intimately aware of the new rules here in the House

that set out the dates at which we would be back in session and back here enjoying each other's company and enjoying the thrust and parry of debate, and yet it appears that he wasn't prepared to do that.

And that's unfortunate for any number of reasons, Madam Speaker. It certainly causes great concern in those organizations that are waiting to find out whether they're going to receive an appropriate level of funding this year or whether or not they're going to have to deal with a significant cut to their budget. Reading the tea leaves so far it seems pretty obvious to us on this side of the House that organizations across this province who undertake a great work on behalf of our citizens are not going to have the financial support of the government in order to do that incredibly important work. Those organizations now are waiting.

And what's worse, of course, is that the Finance Minister had the opportunity to come clean with those organizations and those groups, with citizens all across the province, and bring a budget in, in a timely fashion, and instead he chose to delay and to drag his feet.

We know that the fiscal year in Manitoba ends on March 31st, Madam Speaker. Those organizations are going to go a full 11 days without getting what we think is pretty bad news. And I don't know about anyone else in the House, but I prefer to have that bad news as quickly as possible so that I can work on it and address it, and find solutions, and, instead, the government has done quite the opposite. They've left those organizations out on a very thin limb and left them with no ability to plan the year's activities, no confidence that they'll be receiving the kind of support that they have in the past and, frankly, are quite worried about the services and the programs that they offer to the people of Manitoba to ensure that we live in strong, safe and sustainable communities from east to west and from north to south in this great province.

Now, yesterday, Madam Speaker, I had a chance to talk about the last budget, which of course the Interim Supply bill relates to, and we talked about the many failures of that budget, not only in the way in which the minister was not—Finance Minister was not able to appropriately say what the deficit was. He kept making up numbers, throwing new numbers against the wall, hope they stuck, and when they didn't, then he would try out a new number. We know that he tried to pretend that he'd gone out to find a bunch of savings that turned out to be cuts,

and he didn't even have the numbers right. He was really confused and uncertain about them, uncertain.

We know that he undertook that frankly terrible action to freeze the minimum wage after years and years of successive raises. Madam Speaker, as I've said before in this House, those folks, those who earn the least in our province certainly deserve a wage increase each and every year to try to make ends meet for their families. And it was quite remarkable that the government should decide to take their austerity agenda out on those who earned the least in our province.

And as my friend from St. Johns has pointed out, most of those, a vast majority of those people are women, women who are doing multiple roles in their homes and in their communities and in their neighbourhoods. And so it's unfortunate that the government would target that kind of action against those who are really doing heroic things in their own homes and in our neighbourhoods, in our communities.

The Finance Minister, of course, went on, and he—during this last budget—and he had the, I want to say the temerity, to say that he was offended by alleged tax increases over our time in government. Of course, that's untrue. Manitobans pay less taxes today than they did in 1999, but you'd never know it from listening to the Finance Minister.

* (14:40)

But, then, not only after having targeted those who earned the least in our province, then he turned his attention to seniors and raised taxes on them. And that seemed to be a remarkable chain of events, where they keep pointing their fingers at those who have made enormous contributions to our province. It's inexplicable that the Finance Minister should do those actions, and he does it with a straight face and he defends it every day.

And, to us, it's not the kind of politics that we practised. It's not the way in which we operated. Our government was always committed to ensuring that everybody had a fair shot at having a good and successful life, and we wanted to make sure that there were proper and appropriate supports in place to ensure that people were able to live a life that they could call productive, happy, and that's what's being taken away from them.

We had—the Finance Minister, along with his Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen)—I'm never going to get used to that

title—but, nevertheless, the Minister of GET—one of the strangest acronyms ever in the history of—*[interjection]*—well, that's true; he is getting a 20 per cent increase and that's been locked in, as we saw from that crazy piece of legislation that was tabled yesterday. And the member from Emerson keeps talking about fake news. I'm not sure if he's reading any kind of news, frankly. We're not sure just how in touch he is, frankly. He seems—if anyone—we say constantly that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) appears to be out of touch with the people of Manitoba. I'm not sure what that makes the member from Emerson, but he's way out of touch, I suppose.

But we were very concerned, as well, with the last budget in relation to the war on labour that was undertaken, and my friend from Flin Flon led us in understanding what—how discriminatory this was for organized labour in this province.

Again, those who have—those folks who have made an enormous contribution to the well-being of our province find themselves on the end of jabs and cuts and, really, it was the kind of thing that was so unnecessary, so uncalled for. They didn't need to go down. The Finance Minister, the Premier, the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade didn't need to go down that path, but then it doesn't surprise us, because, for the first time in a long, long, time, we have no department of labour in Manitoba.

One day the Premier woke up and, poof, it was gone—if anything, sends a signal to organized labour that they don't count for much. It was that action, and yet the Premier has the gall to go out into the hallway yesterday and tell everybody he's an old union guy.

Well, he's got the old right and he's got the guy right, but the union—I'm not sure. I don't think that's connected—

An Honourable Member: There isn't a real union around would admit to having him.

Mr. Allum: Well, yes, I—we're not even sure if that's right. Well, there's that old Groucho Marx line about I wouldn't join any club that would have me as a member, and maybe that's what the Premier is referring to.

But so there was many areas in last year's budget that left a lot to be desired—cuts to infrastructure, although we're not sure where the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen) is. He seems to be missing in action, and, as all the cuts go on around him, of course, that infrastructure is central to the

economic development of this province going forward. But, more than that, Madam Speaker, it creates jobs for Manitobans and good jobs and good paying jobs and, yes, often unionized jobs.

They have—that infrastructure investment resulted in important and critical partnerships with indigenous communities all across this province, which the government says doesn't matter—don't care—not important to them, and that's a sad state for any government to be in. We're not surprised by the actions that the government has made in some sense, because they are very ideological in the way in which they operate. But it makes no sense, Madam Speaker, not only to decrease, and decrease sizeably, infrastructure investment in this province but to be very cavalier about the very important partnerships that were created as a result that promoted economic development in indigenous communities, added to job skills, certainly, even in terms of becoming, you know, coming aware of the possibility and the potential in life. And that didn't happen at all. In fact, it's more like saying to those communities and those young people in those communities, you know, there's no opportunity for you in the future, there's no hope for you. Sorry, we just can't help you.

Our government never took that approach. We believed in creating strong relationships and strong partnerships with indigenous communities as well as everyone else in the province because we all wanted the same thing. We wanted a fair, more just, more equitable, more inclusive society for everyone. That's what motivates us as New Democrats, and we're sorry, very sorry, that the government has taken these kinds of actions. But, you know, as New Democrats, and I said this yesterday, we have a backbone. We're going to fight. We're not going to give up that fight. We're going to continue to raise these issues in the House for as long as it takes in order to ensure that Manitobans have a fair chance at a happy and productive life.

I indicated yesterday how disappointed we were with the context of the budget in which the affordability section of the budget was ripped right out so that Manitobans didn't have a chance to compare themselves with other places in Canada as to how they were doing by comparison. And that's a very important piece of information that was always published in the budget, was always transparent, was always out there for everyone to see. I know I took that affordability section to the doorstep with me because from—often, at the time the opposition, now

the government, would go out and make false claims and false characterizations of the tax burden on Manitobans, and I'd have to point out the charts in there that show that Manitobans were actually doing better than they had under the previous Filmon government despite—despite—the misinformation being provided by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen). And then, of course, what he did do was take that whole section, ripped it right out of the budget so no comparisons were possible. People were not able to see province by province how they were doing, nor were they able to see year over year how they were doing. So that was a disservice to Manitobans.

The Finance Minister got up in question period and talked about how accountable and transparent he was. Well, nothing could be more unaccountable and less transparent than taking out vital information to the people of Manitoba to show them in context how they stand in comparison to fellow citizens across the country.

And, had they looked at that, they would have found, Madam Speaker, that Manitobans were indeed well positioned and doing as well, or better than virtually every other citizen in Canada. And we don't—what we would like is for that Manitoba model to go across the country. Certainly, many other provinces imitated the good work that we were doing during our time in government.

Now, the Finance Minister, as I said, got up today, talked about accountability and transparency, and yet, to date, he has yet to release his fiscal performance review that was such a big deal for him last year and now he doesn't mention it at all. It's quite surprising. In fact, we asked for that information in February and nothing was forthcoming. The minister's quoted as saying, and I admit to paraphrasing here, but quoted as saying something to the effect that we're not going to give that piece of political dynamite to the opposition. Well, he has no ownership over that particular document. He didn't pay for that review to be done. The people of Manitoba paid probably upwards of a million dollars. We'll find out in Estimates just how much this particular review cost, but what we don't know is what it actually says and that's not right, Madam Speaker.

* (14:50)

We need to know just what advice is being given to the Minister of Finance so that we can appreciate exactly the position that he's going to be taking in his

budget and, more than that, Manitobans deserve to see what he has in store for them before he tables the budget so that they can give the appropriate kind of feedback to him to tell him if he's got in mind more cuts to education, more cuts to health care, more cuts to child care, more cuts to recreational services and any other cuts that he may have in mind, that that just won't do; that's not acceptable. And he should publish that review as well.

But he's not the only one who's sitting on a review right now. I think we have a Health Minister who's also sitting on a review, won't let Manitobans see that. And that's quite important. We've enjoyed the debate over health care between the Liberals and the Conservatives these last several days, and, of course, for New Democrats, it reminds them of the fabled Tommy Douglas story of Mouseland, because here we have the white cats and the white cat—black cats and the white cats squabbling over health care when neither of them have ever done anything for health care in this country, that health care was an invention of the New Democrats and was something that 'we's' feel very strongly about. So to watch the other two parties pretending to care about it is just more than a little rich for my blood anyway.

It's been entertaining, I'll—and it's been entertaining; that's for sure. But it has been quite something to see these two parties who have done nothing but undermine universal single-payer health care in this country now trying to claim that they're the protectors. Manitobans know; Canadians know that when they need good health care, call the New Democrats, because that's what we're going to deliver.

Now, Madam Speaker, I know the member's encouraging me to go on because I think he's learning something here today, and that's always useful. I appreciate that kind of support, that kind of encouragement. Any time that we can edify and educate the House, that's what we want to do. And, of course, we have many new members who are under a misimpression, misapprehension about the status of where we stand in Manitoba.

I read off to them—I read into the record the Moody's report yesterday. I hope they went home and read that. I think that's important. It's important when you're talking to constituents that you give an honest and fair appraisal of where things stand. And as I said yesterday, the Finance Minister has done nothing but pour gas on his head and light it on fire, but that's not where we stand, Madam Speaker. And

so I hope—I hope—I'm doing my share to help to educate other members on the real status of things.

And we went out during the election campaign and said quite clearly to Manitobans: If you take the risk of casting your ballot for the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister) and his members, bad things are going to be in store for you. And that's exactly what we've found. It's not inconsequential. And I'm surprised members aren't more enraged themselves that when 12,000 or more full-time jobs have been lost under this Finance Minister's watch, that they're not calling him, knocking on his door and saying, what's going on over there? People in my neighbourhoods and in my community and in my constituency are losing their jobs. That's not right. Don't let it happen.

So I would urge you and encourage you to make sure that you go and speak to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) and become crystal clear that many of the actions taken by the government are going to have profound consequences when you lose 12,000 jobs in less than a year. It tells you that you're going down the wrong path. It's that simple. And if you are prepared to pay—play with people's livelihoods, then I would suggest to my friends on the government backbench that you're not doing your job. That's not acceptable. You need to make sure that you're in touch with your Premier (Mr. Pallister) if you get a chance to talk to him—I don't know if you do—or if you get a chance to talk to the Finance Minister. That seems uncertain at best. We know that the Minister of Health typically hides in his office so I'm sure you're not talking to him.

But, you know, I would encourage you, as myself, a fellow backbencher, to go and make sure you're making the case for your constituents for investments in your neighbourhoods and in your communities, to ensure that there's more jobs available for people, that give hope to young people, and make sure that they feel like there's an opportunity for them. And nothing turns a young person off more than saying, I'm sorry but the job or program or service that you're relying on won't be there for you anymore. And they'll say to you: Well, you had that opportunity. And they'll say: Well, fine, we did have it, but, sorry, we can't afford you. We can't afford you. What a terrible circumstance for our young people to be found in.

And that's why we're so troubled in particular about the cuts to education, Madam Speaker. This is, education is the doorway to a future for young

people. It's that simple. My friend from Tyndall Park says it's the great leveller, and indeed it is. It provides opportunity for everyone. So our goal was to 'mensure' the highest rate of participation in the education system as possible. That's why on the post-secondary side we had the lowest, among the lowest tuition rates in the country and yet at the same time had the highest funding rates in the country, because that's how important education is to our young people and to the future of this province.

You know, people often go out and say, oh, you know, young people are the future, and I would always say to that, in almost every speech I gave, yes, but their future started yesterday. We can't wait. We have to get on with the job now to ensure that there is a future waiting for them. And what we've found instead is a Finance Minister and a Minister of Education who are heartless to that opportunity that our young people are hoping for.

You know, I have three kids in my family, most members of the House have as many or more than I do, and what I want for them is to have the opportunity to be able to live happy and productive lives. And that happens through an education system that is there for them, that's responsive to them, and that's accessible and affordable, and that's exactly what we tried to do.

In addition to that, though, Madam Speaker, it wasn't just about affordability; it was also about making sure that there were multiple pathways for students so that there were no wrong doors, there were no dead ends, but multiple pathways to achieve their future. And that's exactly what we provided. That's why we made sure that there was a kind of system co-ordination going on within the education system so that those in the K-to-12 system were talking to those in the post-secondary system, who were talking to those in the training world so that there was an understanding about how you work together to make sure that there was a future there that was something that our young people can grab hold of, be proud of and continue the work of making a better world for everyone.

And yet in the last couple of days and in the last few weeks, let alone in the last year, we've had some tremendously discouraging news on the education front. And it's not so much, Madam Speaker, that the government seems to be tone deaf and out of touch with what Manitoba families are relying on, what Manitoba parents want for their children or what kids themselves envision as their future—it is bad enough

that they're tone deaf and out of touch on that score—but, more than that, it's their obligation once in government to actually take on the responsibility of governing, and governing for all the people all the time, not just simply governing for some and leaving everybody else in kind of a free-for-all. That's not the way we operated in our time in government over 17 years. That's why we were re-elected, not once, not twice, not three times, but four times, a role in which we have rarely seen.

An Honourable Member: What happened last year?

Mr. Allum: My members—members behind me are saying, yes, but what happened to the last one. Well, Madam Speaker, we know that governments turn over, that change happens. That's not a big deal for—you know, that's not why we're all here, that's not why we come. There only seems to be that the only motivation for the backbenchers, and certainly it's true for the front 'bachers', but it's about winning, but winning for some and not for others. And that has been the thing that has been really hard to digest.

*(15:00)

Well, all Manitobans aren't going to benefit—I'm listening to my friend talking to me as I'm trying to make this very important speech—and all Manitobans are not participating in the world that's being created by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen).

We're going to see, in very short order, tuition increases. And that's going to hurt accessibility and affordability in our post-secondary system. There's absolutely no doubt about it. The last time these folks were in government, it's worth pointing out, the last time they were in government, tuition increased by 132 per cent. Student enrolment declined by 10 per cent. Do you make the connection between those points of view? The more affordable and accessible education is, the more opportunity there is for young people. The more expensive it is, the result is that they stop enrolling in post-secondary education. And, consequently, there's no real opportunity to take advantage of the—of what our world has to offer. That's a sad commentary.

The government, in the last few days, has done something which is, to my mind, beyond comprehension, and that is being to cut funding to the gym and fitness centre at Kelvin, which, by the way, is in the riding for Fort Rouge, even if there's some misunderstanding about that, because we have a member from River Heights. But it's the member

for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) who's out there defending those—that particular project. It was critically important, so important that the community itself went out and raised \$1.2 million to contribute to that gym. That's how important that is. The community was speaking with their wallets. And so tone deaf, so out of touch was the Minister of Education, the Minister of Finance and the Premier (Mr. Pallister), that they pulled the rug right out from under them. How unfortunate that was. So needed by that school—a school, by the way, that serves not just the constituency of River Heights. Kids from Fort Garry-Riverview go to that school. Kids from Minto go to that school. Kids from Wolseley go to that school. Kids from St. Johns go to that school. Kids from Tyndall Park go to that school. Kids from Fort Whyte go to that school. And he just abandoned those families and those students. That's unconscionable to me, Madam Speaker.

But that's not bad enough. At the same time, on that Friday afternoon, at about 3 o'clock, when everybody else is sort of cutting out for the weekend, the minister not only—not only—cuts the gym and health centre, at Kelvin, he cuts the Dakota Field of Dreams. I had the honour, Madam Speaker, for what it's worth, and I admit this isn't worth much, to announce both of those projects, and it is a great honour and a great privilege, and we saw, in both cases, both at Kelvin and at Dakota, community rallying around that project. It wasn't just us; it was the full community. It was the school division. It was the alumni. It was the staff. It was the students, and it was the neighbourhood itself. All around there, all in favour of this great project for a team, a team that never, ever gets to play a home game; they're always on the road. And yet, on a Friday afternoon, at 3 o'clock, their home field, that field of dreams, was taken away from them. And the sad part of that is that our job in this Legislature, in this House, is to make dreams come true, not to kill dreams. And that's exactly what happened. [*interjection*]

Well, the—my members back behind me are saying, oh, you should've funded them. I have a list, a binder, I say, Madam Speaker, to my friends, that articulates the first 35 new schools that were built under this government, the 50 new gyms, the hundreds of new science labs, the new trades training centres all across this province, in every constituency, not just New Democrat constituencies. The member from Brandon West gets in here, and he won't even stand up for a new school in his own community. Shame on him.

And it's more than that. That new school was going to pave the way for something different at the Victoria campus—at the Victoria campus—and we were going to build on the North Hill at ACC as well. None of those projects are happening today. And the member from Brandon West and the member from Brandon East are sitting still and silent, mute—

An Honourable Member: Laughing.

Mr. Allum: —laughing, not taking it seriously. That's a shame on them and we're going to be out in Brandon East and Brandon West, bringing that message to those people. We build new schools. We build child-care centres. They do nothing.

Gee, I felt like I had the floor but I had the whole choir involved in that. You know, my dad was a Presbyterian minister; I'm used to seeing the choir join him in the work that he did.

So, on education alone, Madam Speaker, I've talked about the programs and the projects, but the most—

An Honourable Member: How about results?

Mr. Allum: Well, the member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard) talks about results, and, I believe, just in her neck of the woods, just recently, out in Waverley West, we built a brand new school there, and the Minister of Education actually attended. I wonder if the member for Fort Richmond was there. Did you go to the opening of that? Did she go to the opening of that new school? Oh, she did. It was quite a nice school. I'm glad to hear it. We did a good work; she takes the credit. That's not right either, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Allum: You know, Madam Speaker, in this province, in the province of Manitoba, all across this great country, governments have an obligation to invest in education, and what we've seen and what we will see is death by a thousand cuts in our education system. But it's not just that that gets me a little uptight; it's the cavalier attitude in which the government has tried to message their education funding. We know that there was a 50 per cent cut to base education funding. The 1 per cent doesn't even cover the cost—

An Honourable Member: Thirteen million increase.

Mr. Allum: —doesn't even cover the cost of inflation associated with it and what we see now with school divisions all across Manitoba, certainly in Winnipeg but everywhere else, having to raise their taxes in order to deal with a government that has abandoned—is in the process of abandoning education.

But the member behind me, and I didn't quite hear which one of you, says to me, says just a second ago, \$13 million increase. Well, gee, that's something when you're not even covering the cost of inflation by any imagination. This is not keeping up to the standards, but the real craziness of that position, Madam Speaker, is we find a government unable to sign a health-care accord because they're complaining about federal cuts to education. It goes from 6 to 3 per cent—that's a cut when the feds do it; when you go from 2 to 1 per cent, oh, that's more funding.

Can you understand, can you believe that you're taking that position out onto the doorsteps? I dare you to—I dare our members opposite to go onto the doorsteps of their constituents and say, on the one hand, we're getting ripped off by the feds because they're cutting our funding. We cut education funding; that's an increase. If your constituents believe that, I have some property in Fort Garry-Riverview I'd like to sell them because nobody's going to believe that. Nobody's going to believe I have any property and they would be right about that. But that particular position—that particular position—is so hard to stomach. It's so hard to take. I don't know how members opposite actually go to the doorstep with a straight face. How do they do that? How do they keep their noses from growing as they're talking? I don't know how they manage that particular piece of magic, but I have to say, Madam Speaker, there's nothing that reflects more clearly the agenda of the government than when it comes to education—except health care, because that has been a terrible, terrible circumstance in Manitoba when it comes to health care as well.

* (15:10)

I want to talk, first of all, about the billion dollars in health-care cuts made by the Minister of Health. My friend from Concordia has put that on the table, day in, day out, ask the minister to rescind his position, to take another look to make sure that he's got it right. He refuses, inexplicably in my mind, but nevertheless he refuses to do so.

But, if we take the CancerCare clinic on its own—there are many other projects and I leave it to my friend from Concordia to talk about there—but, if

we talk about the CancerCare facility on its own, we now see the government abandoning something that touches every single Manitoban.

I lost my mom to cancer when I was—just turned 12. I lost my nephew to cancer; he just started working for the Toronto Maple Leafs, which—our—my family would be a super big deal, the biggest deal you could possibly imagine. Age of 33, gets cancer of the esophagus; he's diagnosed in January, and he's not with us by June. He was only 11 years younger than me, even though he was my nephew, so he was really my little brother. And our family misses him very well.

But my story is not unique—not at all, sadly. Painfully, all of us have encountered really difficult circumstances like that that's really hard to take. And so CancerCare Manitoba along with our government and many other donors and many other partners come together to create a state-of-the-art, 21st century CancerCare facility in order to address a very terrible disease that leaves no one untouched. And the government cuts that.

I find myself rarely without words. But, when I read that the next day, I could hardly believe it. And, you know, we said during the campaign, they'd go after cancer programming in some way or another. And, sure enough, they did. Notwithstanding the fact that the now Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mrs. Stefanson) held a big press conference to say: Well, none of that's going to happen; that's crazy. And then a 21st century, state-of-the-art facility to—that's, for all of us—all of us—gone, with the stroke of a pen, blink of an eye. It was utterly inexplicable to me.

And I want to give credit to my former boss—the my former boss of the City of Winnipeg, she was the CAO at the time, Annitta Stenning, who is now the head of CancerCare Manitoba. She was always a consummate professional. She didn't blink when the government came along with that terrible bad news, because it was always Annitta's view that there—you got to find a way to make things happen.

And so I'm going to rely on her good judgment to get this project done, because I sure can't count on the Minister of Health. I sure can't count on the Finance Minister, and I sure can't count on the Premier (Mr. Pallister) to get that very important facility done.

But something else is missing from that equation, Madam Speaker, when we talk about the

building of that particular facility, because is—it's not just about cancer care, although, of course, it is. But, when you invest in that manner, what you're doing is creating jobs for Manitobans. How many jobs were lost as a result of cancellation of that project or any of the other projects that added up to a billion dollars?

True, they were busy working somewhere else, but all those folks, those electricians, those builders, those masons, a whole stream of folks were going to go over and build it. And then nurses, nurse practitioners, doctors, any series of health-care workers, health-care providers were going to then be working there—*[interjection]*—research, with credibly important research. All those jobs—all those jobs—are lost.

An Honourable Member: How are you going to pay for it?

Mr. Allum: And the member behind me says, well, how are you going to pay for it? How are you going to pay for cancer care? How are you going to pay for cancer care?

An Honourable Member: Just let them get sick and die.

Mr. Allum: Well, I suppose so. It's the—it's a very, very disturbing view of—if you're saying we ought not to do the things that matter most to our families and our neighbourhoods and our communities because they're simply unaffordable, except what we know that in the Manitoba, under the Conservative government, there are the haves and then there are the vast majority as the have-nots.

I'm pretty confident that most of us in our caucus, without universal health care, wouldn't be able to afford care. I wonder how many on that side could say the same.

So how are you going to pay for it? Yes, an important question, but that doesn't deter you from providing the programs and services that are absolutely essential to the future of this province. I can't believe—I can't believe—that the members opposite are going to go to doorsteps and proudly proclaimed that they cancelled—they cancelled—CancerCare. It's just unbelievable. *[interjection]*

And I want to say, as I'm not sure what the member from Brandon West is doing or what he does on a day-to-day basis. But we're talking about a very, very important subject, and here he is, speaking out there with no thought—I can, I'm pretty sure that

the member from Brandon West needs to be grounded on these issues. They're centrally important to the future of the province. He should get on with worrying about people instead of talking from the cheap seats, as he always, always does. It's not surprising to us that he sits very close to us and far away from the Premier (Mr. Pallister)—bad news for us that we got him, but I understand why he's so far away from the Cabinet side of the table.

But, Madam Speaker, I've talked about health care. I've talked about education. I know it was probably a terrible weekend. And I think we have some sympathy for her on this side of the House for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer) who had the field of dreams taken away from her. She must have received a bunch of angry phone calls for her constituents.

I wonder, did the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) consult with her before he did that? Did the Education Minister consult with her before he did that? Now, I've got a feeling that the old boys' club got together and said, ah, what don't we care about today: the field of dreams, field of dreams being one, CancerCare facility being two, a whole bunch of cuts to education, a whole bunch of cuts to education—just an endless stream of bad news for Manitobans all in the name of something called austerity, which is always bad news for people, for communities and for this province.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

So, Madam Speaker, I think we've reached the point at which members have been properly educated and edified. We'll do more work in that regard on third reading because there's so much more to say and so little time in this House.

I'm sorry that members opposite didn't take the opportunity to get up and speak to this particular resolution. They seem—

An Honourable Member: You can stop and take a sip of water and then carry on.

Mr. Allum: —they seem—the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) giving me additional advice on how I can continue to speak.

But I wanted to make sure that there was ample time for members across, 40-odd members here, who sat here with a gag on in silence as we talked about critical issues to the people of Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: Wait for the budget.

Mr. Allum: I'm being told to wait for the budget. Well, that's a long time in coming. That's going to be? a long—I'm going to have a lot more grey hair by then, I think, and because that's a long time in coming.

But, Madam Speaker, I think, for now, we'll take—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, welcome to the Chair—we'll take these issues up in more detail in third reading.

What I do want to say in closing, though, is that it seems that—it seems that—unfortunately, debate's not welcome in this House. This is the democratic process that we value so much.

An Honourable Member: Or we could sit through the summer again. Let's debate the PST again.

Mr. Allum: Well, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer)—I don't know is—I don't know if he's like this at caucus or not, but it must be not a lot of fun to have somebody who you pull a string out of his back and he just starts speaking.

But he's asked me, he's tasked me to talk about the PST. And this member, along with that Premier, that Finance Minister and every single member of the Tory caucus are out dining on the PST as we speak. They talk tough about, oh this and that, and yet when the opportunity—when the Finance Minister had the opportunity to take action, he didn't do it. And I've got a feeling, call it a hunch, call it a suspicion, that we're not going to see any action on that next week. They're just going to keep talking about it while they dine off of it. And that's not right. That's the kind of thing that brings politicians into disrepute all across the world, let alone in Manitoba.

* (15:20)

When you say one thing and you do another, as the Tories do, day in, day out, when it comes to the PST, that speaks volumes about them. If you want to do it, if—[interjection] Well, the Brandon—member for Brandon West says he never gets to talk—never gets to talk to the Finance Minister to share his views on the PST, and Mr. Deputy Speaker—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to say the member for Brandon West had the opportunity to get up on his two feet and speak to this—to the Interim Supply bill and he hasn't done it. Instead, he chirps from the sidelines; he won't go on record; he won't do what's required; he's not going to have a seat

much longer if he doesn't want to do things the right way in this House. So I'm asking to respect our time.

But I want to say—I—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Allum: We, on this side of the House, respect the democratic process. All of our members of this caucus have got up to speak to the Interim Supply bill because, when you come in asking for four billion bucks or more—\$4.7 billion, you better expect that there's a debate that's going to happen.

Now, the Finance Minister showed how unhappy he was with having to have any questions on this issue, let alone engaging in any debate on this, and that's unfortunate. In a democracy and in this House, we have the opportunity to get up and to state our case and to fight for Manitobans. We've been fighting for Manitobans for generations and, trust me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to continue to fight for Manitobans from this point forward.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the House today and to put a few brief comments on the record. I think it's an important opportunity.

I appreciated listening, ad nauseam, the remarks by the member opposite, and there was a couple comments that he made that I think warrant, actually, that all of us paid attention and heed them.

The member shared with us some stories within his own life, talking about the impact of cancer within his own circle of family and friends, and he's absolutely right. It's an issue that affects too many Manitobans, and so I appreciated his willingness to share those experiences with us.

And so, because I've seen cancer within my own family, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so I'm cognizant of the impact that it has and I know, or at least it's my understanding, through some heckling from the member of Minto, that the former member of Flin Flon is also undertaking a battle with cancer, which is probably increasingly difficult, given his treatment by his own political party just before the last election, when he decided to join the gang of five, or the rebel five, or whatever terminology that they like to describe themselves as, but the then-premier, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), went up to Flin Flon to speak to Clarence and get his view on as to whether or not he should stay on as premier or what Clarence's perspective was, just given the

backdrop that, you know, five Cabinet ministers had unceremoniously quit their posts.

So, as part of that, the impact on the budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would be profound.

Point of Order

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mean, we are supposed to be discussing Bill 8 in this House, and the member has got nowhere near close to talking about Bill 8. He's talking about the former premier going up and speaking to the former member of Flin Flon about party affairs, which has nothing to do with this Legislature. I would ask you to call the member to order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Yes. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Clearly, in your good judgment, you chose not to call point of order on any of the comments we've just had to endure, and that demonstrates that this broad kind of topical exchange is appropriate for this sitting at this time, and therefore there is, in fact, no point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes. And that's—point of order, there is—like, again, we talked about it before, when it comes to doing the general—when it comes to the overall budget, it's a broad array of topics and stuff like that, so, basically, I believe that the MLA for Morris was going to get to the actual topic. And so no point of order.

Mr. Martin: Well, you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate your clarification, and I appreciate the opportunity. And I think, with those brief comments, I think I put on the record what I wanted to. But I will indicate that if it is—if the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) is accurate in that the member—the former member for Flin Flon is, indeed, battling cancer, I think it's incumbent upon all of us to make sure that he is in our prayers and wishes for a successful battle in that. And it's only too bad that members opposite didn't show that same level of respect to my predecessor, Mavis, when she made that decision in relation to her own spouse.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker—but part of this is about respecting the democratic process and that was the term, I think, that actually the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) concluded his speech

on, was that very phrase, respect the democratic process.

And we saw the democratic process in full effect about—on April 19th of last year, and we're just coming up to the one-year anniversary of that. And so what did Manitobans say through that democratic process? Well, they told us, in a very clear and resounding mandate, a mandate that hasn't been equalled in excess of a hundred years, that they were tired of the empty promises of members opposite. They were tired of a government—of an NDP government that would promise anything and say anything to get elected and, apparently, if you believe the rebel five, would do anything to stay elected—that no longer reflected the views of Manitobans and the priorities of Manitobans. And I think that was the actually—the actual words of the member from Minto, was that the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) no longer had his confidence, more so, actually, he didn't actually reflect the priorities of Manitobans. So you can almost imagine what was going on behind the scenes during that time frame and how little actual work of government was being undertaken during those times.

So you talk about priorities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you see now the priorities of our new government. The member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), our new Finance Minister, has put forward legislation long in coming that will actually deal with that regulatory burden that too many businesses, individuals and non-profits have faced. I remember the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) would bring forward a regulatory accountability act on an ongoing basis, and members opposite, the NDP, would constantly say, no, we're not prepared to go down—

An Honourable Member: They stood on the side of red tape.

Mr. Martin: They stood on the side of red tape, the Finance Minister says, and he's absolutely right. They allowed it to grow and to the point that it literally was overwhelming, not only businesses but was overwhelming individuals and not for profits. And it was resulting in inordinate amount of time and money being spent by them simply to do and fill out paperwork as opposed to providing those very front-line services that members opposite claim that they're large defenders of.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I use a—own example in my past when I had the good fortune to run a not for

profit that helped people with disabilities. And, for several consecutive years, under the NDP, we saw our funding cut, cut and cut and cut. In fact, I remember when members opposite, I think it was just before—just weeks before Christmas, sent a memo out to 122 not-for-profit agencies in the province of Manitoba, and a lot of the agencies, they described the letter as the Christmas clawback, because what it said to all these agencies is: we want the money that we allocated to you on April 1st, well, we want it back.

And I do believe the phrase, I think, that upset and caused a great deal of concern for a lot of those not for profits that after a year of cut and cut and cut for these not for profits, under the very NDP government that likes to talk about their respect for those front-line workers, after those years of cuts, they, just before Christmas, they received a memo from the minister saying we want to claw back a portion of that funding. And, if you can't justify—and that was the word that really bothered a lot of those not for profits and their clients, that the NDP said, if you cannot justify why you cannot return that money to us, then there will be an accounting.

* (15:30)

And so all these not for profits were going back to the department. They were going back to, in some instances, the former member for Point Douglas, in his department, and they were saying, you know, we can't do this at this late stage of the game here—or there's only three months until the end of the fiscal year; you can't just come in at this late stage and start clawing back monies that have already been allocated. And the only way we're going to be able to fulfill your Christmas clawback demand is actually laying off staff.

And that was the approach that the NDP had to these not-for-profit front-line services, these agencies that provided—whether it was employment services for youth, whether it was addiction services for young people, whether it was employment services for persons with disabilities. Again, all of these agencies were asked the same thing by a government of the day, the NDP government, that were simply so desperate for cash, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they had no limits and—where they would look for that cash.

But I'm confident, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that with the initiatives that we're undertaking—and I know the good work by my colleague the member of Seine River—and I look forward to the new, improved

member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte). But she has done her portion and as leading her subcommittee on the not-for-profit sector to help identify those forms, those processes, that red tape that encumber small—or encumber those not-for-profits that are providing those very vital front-line services and what forms and what parameters that we can take a look at to give them back that time.

Because in a lot of instances, those front-line services are saying to us and have been saying and have said to the former government, you know what, we would like more time. If we had more time, instead of filling out government paperwork, we could actually deliver the services that we think are more appropriate, the services to persons with disabilities, services to youth seeking employment, services to the youth facing the—facing alcohol and drug addictions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The best example, or an example off the top of my head, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was—is, as part of the process in filling out the paperwork, you actually had to, in the provincial grant scheme, you actually had to provide a copy of the resume of all staff that you had to—that were under your employ. And so, at the time, I thought that in some instances there had been staff that had been employed for quite a lengthy bit of time, and so this time took away from their ability to actually work on their budget and that.

And so I said to the time to our project officer, what could we do? Do we need—do you need a copy of those resumes of individuals that had been with us for some 19 years? And so my project officer said to me, well, I do need a copy of them. I know I have 19 copies, but I simply don't know where those are. And so—but I have a box that I need to be able to tick off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the government says to me, I need to be able to tick off a box if I want to move your budgetary application forward.

So I have every confident that thanks to legislation like The Regulatory Accountability Act that we're going to see great strides ahead, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think, coming up on April 11th when the Finance Minister brings in that budget, we're going to see some very important investments, important investments in health care, important investments in schools, not unlike the investments that the Minister of Education recently made to fix leaky roofs, ones that members opposite now are saying, simply cut. Let those roofs leak; we don't really care. That—we know where their priorities are.

So I look forward, as do, I'm sure, all members of this House to continuing this debate. And, as we move towards that April 11th budgetary date where the Finance Minister will be bringing forward the news and the framework that will deal with that decade of debt, decay and decline that we had under the NDP as we move our province forward and fulfill our goal and, in fact, our commitment to become the most improved province.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any other speakers? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 8, the interim appropriation act of 2017.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered. Agreed.

Oh, there were some noes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Oh, yes. Okay. All those in favour, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And all opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A vote has been called, so call in the members.

* (16:30)

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The question before the House is second reading of Bill 8, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 39, Nays 16.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The House will now resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 8, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017, for concurrence and third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 8—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017

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

We will now consider Bill 8, the interim appropriation act of 2017.

Does the honourable Minister of Finance have opening statements?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Six business days ago in this Legislature, the government introduced The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017. We had a good discussion in second reading when I gave my remarks, and we answered questions of the opposition. And the bill seeks to do exactly what we explained at that time. The bill seeks to simply put the provisions in place to make sure that government can continue to pay bills into the new fiscal year. Government requires a new authority to continue to spend in the new year; it does not have authority

should this bill not pass. If the Legislature were not in session, a special warrant would cover the same authority. But, because we are in session, this is the bill we have before ourselves.

The percentages of revenue that would be required for these expenditures are voted on as a percentage of the previous year's appropriation in the budget. This is all plain and clear. What has proceeded since that time has been the NDP opposition's desire to not debate bills, to desire to stall the proceedings of this House. I reject the long tirade, the day-after-day tirade by the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), but, in the—this committee stage, all I would want to put on the record for the purposes of this discussion are remarks that were made in 2013 on July the 12th by the then-House leader Jennifer Howard, who said the government could run out of money by the end of July thanks to the opposition. And she said that their efforts were slowing down the government's legislative and fiscal agenda.

At that time, the premier, whose name I cannot name in this Chamber because he still sits in the Chamber, he agreed that an Interim Supply bill can be used in this case, but suggests it only works if there is co-operation from the opposition side. I state again, that the premier at that time, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) said the Interim Supply bill only works if there is co-operation from the opposition side. And I hear him say right now that is true. So what we have is a lack of co-operation from the opposition side, and we just got that same confirmation from the member for St. Boniface.

The member for St. Boniface went on to say, quite frankly, a solution must be found to allow core services to continue, but it depends on all parties in the Legislature co-operating, and there's no guarantee of that. It requires everyone—and I'm still quoting the member for St. Boniface—it requires everyone to get up with the interests of Manitobans as their priority and their heart to be in the right place in terms of why they are here. Those were the words for the member of St. Boniface.

We stand with the member of St. Boniface, who called on all-party support, to ensure the passage of the Interim Supply bill to make sure that the legislative agenda can go forward in this place. That was from July the 12th, 2013.

I welcome this clause-by-clause examination at the committee stage, and I live in hope that we will

proceed quickly to the third reading in proclamation of this bill with the full support of all members.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the official opposition Finance critic have a statement?

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I want to thank all members for participating in a debate. I think the Finance Minister understands, or should understand, that this is a parliamentary democracy, and, when a bill, especially one that comes in as an interim supply for \$4.7 billion, that we're not just going to wink and nod and say: Yes, that's okay; go right ahead.

So what happened over the course of the past few days, every member of our caucus spoke their 30-minute time limit, as is absolutely their right, their prerogative. Those were the—those [interjection] Yes, when we have 4.7 billion reasons to continue to speak about these particular issues. So what happened is every member of our caucus got up and spoke to it, as did members from the Liberal party and other independents; that's as it should be.

*(16:40)

This—what happened here over the course of the last few days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was merely democracy in action. This is how oppositions operate in relationships to the government. And, from our point of view, from the official opposition's point of view, we had several issues, several questions, that we wanted to address, and that is our right as opposition MLAs representing our constituents, our neighbourhoods, our communities, to do the very, very best we can to hold the government to account.

Now, I understand from the—what the Finance Minister just said, that he's uncomfortable in a parliamentary democracy. It sounds like he would be more comfortable in a dictatorship. Certainly, it's been a very authoritarian way in which he has proceeded to date, and I find that unfortunate that it has to become that when we're simply doing our job as members of the official opposition to hold the government to account for the decisions they make, for the choices they make, for the policies that they put—table before us, for the programs that they're cutting.

And so our members, quite rightly, had an obligation, in fact; not just—it's not just part of the job; an obligation. It's our duty to hold the government to account, to explain to Manitobans

where the—where they have made decisions that are going to have extremely high consequences for the people of Manitoba and especially for those who are most vulnerable in our society. So the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) rolls in one day in his brand new 'sess' UV that I see outside, and he says, I've got a \$4.7-billion Interim Supply bill; could you 'juys' just get on with it and pass it? Well, I don't think so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think we're going to do our job here the best way that we can. He might not like the way that we do our job; I can tell that it's very hard to actually make this statement because I—because of the noise over on the government's side of the House. And it would be helpful if I was able to put these to a more quiet House.

Mr. Chairperson: Everybody just—remind everyone that it's—we're in Committee of Supply, and it's really hard to hear the speakers. So if everybody can, in the House, be a little quieter.

Okay, the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

Mr. Allum: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Allum: —for making sure.

You know, we listened quite closely because it's our job to listen closely to what the Finance Minister has to say, what the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has to say. We talk to Manitobans all the time, and we listen very closely to what they have to say because they're articulating their concerns about the direction of the government that is part and parcel of the Interim Supply bill that we're talking about today.

The Finance Minister had a choice, of course. He could've brought in a budget. He well knew that we were coming back into session on March 1st, and we fully expected that within a very short period of time of returning into the House—returning to the House, that he would have a budget prepared so that Manitobans weren't left uncertain, unsure as to the further direction that he's taking us. We've asked. Of course, he's—he says he's gone out and done a research; he hired a consultant company to do a value-for-money 'audit'—audit. I think that he's calling it fiscal performance; I'm not sure. We've asked him. We've asked politely. Asked him— I said yesterday, could he just be a good sport; release that document so Manitobans can digest it fairly. After all, they've spent a billion—\$1 million on that report. I think it's only fair that the Finance Minister let us

know the substance of the things that he's working on if he won't deliver a budget.

And there's a second principle there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not so—not only just the substance of that report, the recommendations, the analysis, the details involved in it because that's important. It's also when you do a value-for-money audit, I think it's only fair to see, for Manitobans to see, whether they got value for their money in spending \$1 million on a consultant's report. We haven't seen that. We'd like to see it. It would be only fair. It's the honourable thing to do, and it's unfortunate that the Finance Minister decides to hide behind a consultant company rather than coming clean with the people of Manitoba. It's not that hard to do. He campaigned, as did his Premier (Mr. Pallister), as did his Minister of Health, on a agenda of transparency and accountability, but it appears that they have confused the terms of transparency and translucency. Transparency, you can see right through it; translucency, you can't see anything, and that's exactly what we're dealing with here. We're not getting the information that Manitobans have paid for.

An Honourable Member: Opaque.

Mr. Allum: Opaque is another word to describe it, that's for sure. My friend from Logan helping me with his tremendous knowledge of the thesaurus.

So and then we have the Minister of Health sitting on any number of consultants' reports done that we—I think Manitobans have paid for; they have a right to see. And we're not seeing it. In fact, we're getting a dribble of information from the government in not giving us or Manitobans the ability to assess both the value of the information and the dollars spent on them. For a government who places so much attention on value for money and then not to let Manitobans see whether they got value for the money they spent, I think is not a tenable position, one that could be defended. In fact, it strikes me as indefensible and I think the reason for that, why we're at this situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is because the—they spent \$4.2 million on an untendered contract for Manitoba Hydro in which, as was pointed out by several of my colleagues in debating on this bill, those folks in Boston, from Boston Consulting Group, never left their office in Boston in order to put that report together. They do have emails, so I'm assuming Hydro sent the email of information over to Boston Consulting. They printed it off; they put it in a report; they charged

\$4.2 million, and that report, as we now know, was not worth the paper that was written on.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we're doing here for the past few days has been holding the government to account and debating the key public policy issues of the day. Now I'm not sure that that fits well with the Finance Minister. He seems to just want us to blink and let things go by and we don't operate that way. Like him, when he was in operation, we're going to work—in opposition—we're going to work hard to unpack his bills, to make sure that they're properly understood both in this House and out in the community and in our constituencies so that the public understands the direction of this government.

By all accounts, what we hear in our constituencies day in and day out is this wasn't the government we bargained for. I don't think what the MLAs in the backbenches—this isn't the government they campaigned to be a part of. Certainly, this was not part of their election platform. It was a minimalist platform, I'll agree with that. It could have been written on a very small piece of notepad, and so much more has evolved since then, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So what we've done during the course of this debate is simply this: We've done our job and we're going to continue to do our job whether it creates discomfort for the Finance Minister, whether he doesn't like it, we're going to stand with the people of Manitoba every single time.

Mr. Chairperson: We should now proceed to consider the bill clause by clause.

The title and enacting clause are postponed until other clauses have been considered.

Clause 1—pass.

Shall clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

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

Mr. Allum: Point of clarification, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I—although I was briefed quite well by the Clerk, my understanding was that we were going into a question and answer period. And so—

* (16:50)

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. We're going to go into answer and question on clause 1, here, so.

We can ask, like, we'll go through question—clause 1 has been passed, and we'll go—we can be asking questions in clause 2 if you'd proceed, okay?

Okay, shall clause 2 pass?

An Honourable Member: Pass.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Question on—Fort Garry—Riverview.

Mr. Allum: I thank our fine clerks for clarifying this process for us. After all, we've been in government for a long time, and so we're learning some of the art form of opposition.

So I'm asking questions on clause 2, which is, in my bill, deals with authority for operating expenditures. Is that correct?

Mr. Friesen: The member is asking a question in clause 2. There's a number of appropriations that are requested in clause 2. If he is in 2(1), that is having to do with the 35 per cent of the total amount of the appropriation. That is Part A.

Mr. Allum: Well, thank you. I appreciate the Finance Minister helping me find my way here. That's always very valuable.

He says that up to \$4.7 billion, which is approximately 35 per cent of the total amount authorized. One of the difficulties with this particular process is, is there's no itemization of what's included in the \$4.7 billion.

I wonder if the Finance Minister could help us to understand kinds of things are included in clause 2(1).

Mr. Friesen: The member should know that the method and manner of the interim appropriation act for this year does not depart in any way from the way the bill was previously presented. Year by year, this is the format the bill always takes.

So the Part A expenditure is inclusive of all Part A expenditures and the appropriation is to a 35 per cent of the appropriation that was sought a year ago, which is always the backup of this appropriation.

Mr. Chairperson: Any more questions?

Mr. Allum: Actually, is a point of clarification again.

I'm prepared to move on to 2(2).

Mr. Chairperson: It's all of part 2, so.

Mr. Allum: Okay, so in 2(2), Authority for capital investments, I read that as for the fiscal year up to \$528 million.

I wonder if the Finance Minister would be so good as to try to itemize what would be included in that \$528 million.

Mr. Friesen: So the \$528 million that the member references is exactly that, it's the capital investments and it again reverences—references the amount that would have been sought the previous year in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

The reason it's 75 per cent instead of the lower number, the 35 per cent, is because, of course, we have to respect the construction season. And, if we were to seek a lower amount for authority, it would mean that we would jeopardize the construction season, possibly incurring additional cost.

We want to enable the tenders to get out there. We want to enable the businesses to be able to see those on MERX and advertised elsewhere and to be able to have the broadest opportunity to bid and, then, at the award of those contracts, to accommodate that within our spring-summer-fall construction season. And, of course, that would be inclusive of new capital projects into the—into this coming year.

Mr. Allum: So I appreciate the answer from the Finance Minister. So am I understand that this doesn't include capital projects that are currently ongoing? This is just for new capital projects?

Mr. Friesen: So this would be for capital investments that are under way and it would be for capital investments that are advancing into the 2017 and 2018 year, so the member is right on both counts. It will be to enable the investment that is ongoing to continue.

Mr. Allum: So would the Finance Minister, then, be able to articulate what new projects are—would be included in this particular amount of money? I want to reiterate this is \$528 million—that's a significant sum of money—are there new projects that he could advise us about?

Mr. Friesen: So the appropriation will be inclusive of both the existing capital projects which will have a multi-year requirement and it will be also including the commencement of new projects.

If I could give him some indication, I know that the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) just yesterday or the day before announced a list of capital projects for child-care spaces. There might have been a list of—I'm not sure exactly how many that would have included, 50—[interjection]—15? Fifteen community projects.

So this capital authority would allow these projects to continue. As well, I know that the member—the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart) likewise indicated just yesterday or the day previous, \$19 million in new and important school projects. That list is public; the member will have it. It goes for everything from roof and building repairs, accessibility issues, structural issues, all of these would be included in that capital requirement.

In addition to that, the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen) has talked about the need to get a good start on the summer construction season.

Our government has, of course, committed to no less than a billion dollars per year in capital investment in this province, a significant investment. And I know that the minister has said often in the past that those projects need to advance now in order to get better value for money. We cannot wait; it's why the Minister of Infrastructure has even spoken about that need to accelerate decision making and get those tenders out on time. I believe there's been already a list that's been sent out to quantify exactly which roads and which bridges and which other linear infrastructure would receive funding out of this capital fund.

Mr. Allum: I appreciate the few items that the Finance Minister just itemized there.

It looked to me like the Infrastructure Minister was looking for the list in his desk. So I wonder if it would be so kind if the Finance Minister would be a good sport and provide that list to us and to Manitobans for the purposes of us understanding precisely what's in there. This is a matter of being

transparent in terms of your expenditures. Could he provide us with the list that he's discussing?

Mr. Friesen: I would be happy to provide the member with the exact list that was sent out with the press release yesterday and the day before that. These are good announcements and that's why we put them out there. Nevertheless, perhaps I could just give him some clarity if he's seeking it.

When it comes to the community-based capital projects creating 739 new licensed child-care spaces, this funding includes in Winnipeg: Les Heures Claires Inc., 56 spaces in River East; Campus Day Care Centre Inc., up to 52 spaces at the University of Manitoba; Soul Sanctuary Preschool, up to 40 spaces in Fort Garry; Little Saints Learning Centre Inc., up to 48 spaces in St. Vital.

There is the Qualico-Sage Creek with community partner, up to 74 spaces in Sage Creek; Kookum's Place Preschool Centre, 24 spaces in south Point Douglas; YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg at Great-West Life, up to 100 spaces in the downtown area; University of Winnipeg Student Association Daycare Centre, up to 32 spaces in the downtown area; Ka Ni Kanichihk Daycare, up to 32 spaces in central Winnipeg; and Ryerson School Age Centre Inc., up to 48 spaces in Charleswood. However, that is only the Winnipeg list.

I want to now itemize for the member other community awards as well: La Salle KIDZ Inc., up to 60 spaces in La Salle; Pembina Valley Child Care Centre, up to 52 spaces—

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

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

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