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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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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
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Point Douglas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 3, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage please proceed with her statement.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): I rise today to acknowledge the beginning of Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Manitoba. I encourage all of us in this room and all Manitobans to reflect on the serious issue of sexual violence and commit to taking actions to stop these terrible crimes.

Manitoba consistently reports some of the highest rates of sexual violence against women among Canadian provinces. In 2015, there were 1,356 sexual assaults reported to police in Manitoba. That works out to almost four sexual assaults per day. These statistics are even more alarming when we consider that less than 5 per cent of sexual assaults are actually reported to police in Canada. We also know that women with disabilities, indigenous women and women of visible minorities are more likely to experience sexual violence.

Madam Speaker, this is intolerable. We must consider how to counter the pervasive rape culture

that supports and condones sexual violence. One of the ways that we can counter rape culture is by fostering a culture of consent, a culture that recognizes the only people to blame for sexual violence are the perpetrators of sexual violence.

This April, I encourage all Manitobans to join in a dialogue and help raise awareness of sexual violence, learn what consent means, call out sexist behaviour and believe survivors.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, an opportunity to raise public awareness about sexual assault, harassment and violence against women and girls.

Sexual violence executes devastating emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual impacts in the lives of women and girls. Particularly concerning is the pervasiveness of rape culture, where a range of beliefs encourages and justifies sexualized violence against women and girls. Rape culture further situates sexualized violence as normal and inevitable.

Rape culture even exists within the very systems that are meant and designed to punish and deter said violence against women and girls. Even at the highest levels of our judicial system, we've witnessed officials oblivious to the heartbreaking realities and experiences of women and girls who have been sexually assaulted. A quintessential example is when Judge Camp asked a 19-year-old female sexual assault victim why she, and I quote, did not keep her knees together to prevent her rape. Or here in Manitoba, when Judge Dewar constructed a rapist as, and I quote again, a clumsy Don Juan, and went on to allude, and I quote, that sex was in the air, referring to victim's manner of dress.

Rape culture swiftly blames, minimizes, ostracizes and rejects women and girls' experiences of sexual assault and violence. In addition, it requires that we all stand up for—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

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

Ms. Lamoureux: The month of April has been set as Sexual Assault Awareness Month to gain a stronger understanding of sexual assault, as well as to help promote awareness and protect as many people as possible.

This violent crime is still one of the most under-reported crimes in Canada. A recent report stated that, here in Canada, one in five sexual assault cases are dismissed as baseless. And, even if these cases make it into the courts, there are often obstacles; there are cases that are very difficult to prove, and these situations can be extremely traumatic.

Madam Speaker, I do want to commend you and remind the House that it is because of our Speaker here today, the member from Charleswood, that we recognize April as being Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

With that said, Manitoba consistently has the highest rate of sexual assault of all the provinces. We need to do more.

In closing, I would like to encourage all of the members to continue promoting awareness and spread confidence to those around you.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his ministerial statement.

Flooding Update

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Manitoba Infrastructure's Hydrologic Forecast Centre reports overland flooding continues across much of southern Manitoba, often due to ice in the drainage network.

Situations can change quickly, and municipalities and communities across the province are dealing with flooding issues quickly and capably. Municipal and provincial crews are working to thaw culverts on a priority basis. Evacuations have taken place at Peguis First Nation and Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. The Canadian Red Cross is working with both communities to co-ordinate the response.

High water advisories, flood watches and flood warnings are in place for a number of waterways across the province. The Floodway and the Portage Diversion are being operated to address high water levels and possible ice jams.

Flows on major tributaries of the Assiniboine River are still increasing, as are flows on the Souris River and in rivers and creeks in the Parkland region. In addition, runoff is starting in the Saskatchewan River and Carrot River watersheds.

* (13:40)

I want to take this opportunity to remind Manitobans to be watchful of local waterways, as flood conditions can develop quickly. Avoid driving through moving water, as the water depth can be unpredictable and currents can push vehicles off the road. Ditches and culverts contain fast-moving water and—which could be hazardous and should be avoided.

I also want to thank those Manitobans who are working hard to ensure the safety and security of properties right across the province.

We will continue to respond to issues as they arise and work with our partners across the province to ensure the safety of all Manitobans.

To stay informed during the flood, up-to-date information is available at our website: gov.mb.ca/flooding/ And you can use your Twitter account at: twitter.com/MBGov; and the highway conditions are also available at: manitoba511.ca, or call 511, too, for further road information.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Communities across Manitoba are facing some of the worst flooding in decades. It's resulted in power outages, infrastructure and property damage, and school cancellations. This year's flooding has forced 84 people on Peguis First Nation from their homes and, as of yesterday, Manitoba communities have declared a state of emergency.

Climate change has caused flooding to occur more frequently and more severely, which is why our NDP team knows that investing in flood control structures is more important than ever. Our investments in flood control measures and floodway expansion made Manitoba a recognized leader in flood management.

As the threat of climate change increases, investing in flood protection measures today can save Manitobans billions of dollars in the long run. It's important that this government focus on continuing to build flood control infrastructure in Manitoba and work in consultation with rural and First Nation communities to alleviate the struggle they have to endure, increasingly, every year.

On behalf of our NDP caucus, we send our thoughts and support to all Manitoba families affected by flooding. We would also like to thank the dedicated first responders and volunteers who are coming together and working tirelessly to help Manitoba families and properties safe.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: I want to thank the minister for the statement today on the flood situation. I also want to recognize and thank all those who are working in various parts of Manitoba to prevent the flooding or to mitigate it.

This time of year, of course, we have often had flooding concerns. I think it's actually good news that we don't have a worse situation on the Red River than we thought even a few weeks ago that we might have. But there are certainly many areas of Manitoba which are going through difficulties right now and concerns about how severe things may get along the Souris and the Assiniboine River.

I want to highlight the situation on Peguis, which is very severe right now with more than 80 people evacuated. You know, it's sad that in 17 years the former government never implemented a plan to protect adequately Peguis First Nation, and I would call on this government to act quickly because Peguis should not have to go through this problem time and time again. And there are solutions and they should be implemented quickly.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Ukrainian Canadian Women in Politics

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): This past weekend, along with a number of my colleagues from the Legislature, I had the pleasure of attending an event organized by the Ukrainian Canadian Women's Council. This event, Ukrainian Canadian

Women in Politics, celebrated the involvement of both past and present Ukrainian-Canadian-Manitoba women who served in public office.

The honourees were our own Minister of Sustainable Development, Cathy Cox, MP MaryAnn Mihychuk; former MP and MLA Judy Wasylcyia-Leis; and former MLAs Leanne Rowat, Christine Melnick and Rosann Wowchuk.

With the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage and the 125th anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, the UCWC chose an important time to celebrate the accomplishments of these women.

Across the globe women are often under-represented in leading positions whether in elected office, the civil service or in the private sector. These women have shown that no matter what the obstacle, women have the ability to overcome them.

The Ukrainian Canadian Women's Council, Winnipeg branch was created to support and preserve Ukrainian heritage and its contributions to Canada. The organization also supports programs financially and morally that deal with poverty, especially in orphanages in all nations, in particular Ukraine.

In the last number of years, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Manitoba branch has been heavily involved in assisting Ukraine with humanitarian assistance as it defends itself from Russian aggression. Shipping badly needed medical supplies, winter clothing for its troops, ambulances and many more humanitarian programs. The proceeds from last night's event will be used to pay for shipping a 40-foot container of medical supplies to Ukraine.

The following organizations are members of the Ukrainian Canadian Women's Council: League of Ukrainian Canadians in Canada, Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada, Ukrainian Catholic-

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

David Muswaggon

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Since the late 1980s, Pimicikamak people in Cross Lake have experienced three separate suicide clusters. Most recently, six young people lost their lives in just two short months and 140 other suicide attempts were made.

David Muswaggon, an elected official in Cross Lake, has been actively leading a softball program as a means to combat the social dysfunction, mental health crisis and hopelessness rampant in Cross Lake. Through Pimicikamak's softball program, the community's young people learn team skills and build self-confidence.

As the head coach of the Pimicikamak Thunder softball team, David has a strong belief any sport can bring people together with the common goal of promoting physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness. Despite every—despite very little local resources, David pushed through personal and community challenges to bring the program to life. David's commitment brought hope and inspiration to the people of Cross Lake.

The vision of the Pimicikamak Thunder is not only to win games, but to bring that hope to sustain and preserve life on and off the field. This successful program has brought a thunder of hope to many youth in the area. Younger children now look up to the players, students can't wait until they're old enough to play on the team, and Cross Lake has something to look forward to. David has become a father figure to these young—youth and installed trust and inspiration to many members of the community.

David's story is a reminder that investments in community projects contribute to happy, healthy communities. To David and the Pimicikamak Thunder, thank you for having hope, and for sharing that hope with your families and the rest of the community.

Please join me in welcoming David and the members of the Pimicikamak Thunder.

Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): Ukrainian-Canadian culture has now spanned over 125 years on the prairies, and as an embroidery thread that weaves through fabric, to alter a plain linen into something beautiful connecting one generation from across the sea to our home here in Canada so also has the Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble left an indelible mark on Ukrainian-Canadian culture for the past 55 years showcasing Ukrainian heritage to the world.

Dance expresses the emotions of life, and that graceful, elusive, mischievous water nymph of Ukrainian folklore, Rusalka, reflects the simple beauty and exciting spirit that transcend folkloric traditions to symbolize the soul of Ukrainian people everywhere.

Rusalka's history spans the globe as ambassadors for the multicultural diversity that is our province. From Kiev to Sydney Opera house, to Swan River and Kenora, most recently returning from the world folklore festival in Peru where they were awarded best performance of the festival. Audiences are enthralled with the beauty and athleticism of the dancers, the colour and authenticity of the costumes and music, and the complexity of the choreography which incorporates traditional steps, with an exciting modern flair.

I rise today as a proud alumni member of Rusalka. It is my roots, they are my family, my life. It is that way for many of those who perform with the group over the years.

As the group has now reached its first third-generation dancer from the same family, and as it has and will continue to inspire future generations of kozaky and gypsies, it has chosen to celebrate with a 55th anniversary cabaret entitled Generations, May 6th at Club Regent.

I, myself, look forward to putting on my boots for that show and performing one more time with the next generation, along with my wife, son and daughter.

Musicians play a fast dance. I have my boots on, and I will dance 'til the heels disappear. Then I'll dance barefoot.

* (13:50)

Please join me in congratulating the board, volunteers, dancers and alumni of Rusalka for your contribution to the tapestry of Ukrainian-Canadian culture here in Canada and Manitoba.

Mnohaya lita, Rusalka [*Many years, Rusalka*].

Dyakuyu [*Thank you*].

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Transcona.

Mr. Yakimoski: Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to include names of the dancers and members of the present edition of Rusalka into Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave? [*Agreed*]

Board members: Amy Yakimoski; Jessica Fuga, chair; Peter Wasylshyn, vice-chair; Fred Mazepa, past-chair; Chelsea Perrault, treasurer; Shelley Karpa, secretary; Ken Nazarevich;

Dave Turchyn; Christine Preachuk; Antin Stowell; Valentyna Dmytrenko, artistic director.

Current dancers: David Garrity, Alexander Karpa, Orycia Karpa, Mikayla Knysh, Leanne Koriscil, Kathryn Kuzyk, Brittany Lasko, Stacie Langner, Markian Maximiuk, Oryanna Maximiuk, Liliya Medynska, Brett Odaisky, Matthew Pichlyk, Oksana Preachuk, Dawson Riley, Jordan Riley, Simeon Rusnak, Nick Sawka, Nina Semchyshyn, Alex Serebnitsky, Andriana Tarasiuk, Teeson Thompson, Andrij Tkaczyk, Daria Tkaczyk, Julia Tkaczyk, Marta Tkaczyk, Stefan Tkaczyk, Dylan Turchyn, Katelyn Turchyn, Ivanka Waplak, Alanna Wilson, Laryssa Yakimoski, Scott Yakimoski, Alexa Yasinski.

Margje Barter-Cook

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): On February 23rd, Margje Barter-Cook of Pembina Trails School Division received the Outstanding Educator of the Year award from the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children. Having attended a number of MCEC ceremonies, I can attest to the fact that this is an event that not only recognizes truly exceptional students and their families but extraordinary educators as well.

The Outstanding Educator of the Year is given to those in our education system who consistently create a caring and inclusive environment for students to learn and to grow. In nominating Margje, Dale Christiuk of Vincent Massey Collegiate says that there is no one more deserving because, and I quote, her work has provided students with special needs a starting point towards finding meaningful and sustained employment after graduation. The impact that she has had on the lives of exceptional youth is immeasurable.

Margje is a career- and community-experienced teacher for the Pembina Trails School Division, and I have had the pleasure of observing her in action. Several years ago she asked me if I would be interested in supporting a student at Vincent Massey who needed experience to help him transition from school to the working world. Given that the student was passionately interested in the environment and in politics, I was more than willing to offer him a work experience opportunity in my constituency office. Learning from Margje about what she does for her students has been one of the great benefits of this job.

Margje has spent 26 years in the—29 years in the school system, the last six of which has been a

career- and community-experiences teacher. Along with her Pembina Trails colleagues Rick House and Justin Lawson, Margje is a part of larger team devoted to ensuring that every student, regardless of the challenges they may face, has an opportunity to live full and productive lives. Allowing students to explore careers this way is a fine example of community participation in education.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Margje for receiving the Outstanding Educator of the Year award and for her incredible contribution to her students, to her community and to her province.

Royal Canadian Air Force

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): Merci, Madame la présidente.

Comme l'Envoyé spécial pour les affaires militaires, il me fait plaisir à dire bonne fête à l'Aviation royale canadienne.

Translation

As Special Envoy for Military Affairs, it gives me great pleasure to say happy birthday to the Royal Canadian Air Force.

English

On April 1st, 1924, the RCAF, or Royal Canadian Air Force, became a permanent component of Canada's defence force under the Regulations and Orders bestowed by King George V. Ever since, April 1st, 1924 has been celebrated as the birthday of the Royal Canadian Air Force. I stand today to wish the RCAF a happy belated birthday and to thank the men and women of the RCAF, both past and present, for 93 years of service.

Today's RCAF continues to provide the Canadian Armed Forces with relevant, responsible and effective air-power capabilities to meet the challenges of today and into the future.

As many of my colleagues know, the connection between the RCAF and Winnipeg has been forged over time. Beginning in April 1925, the RCAF Station Winnipeg officially opened as one of the first Air Force bases in Canada. Since that time, the base has grown and expanded considerably to where today it is acknowledged to be an integral part of the fabric of this city and our province. As one of the—Canada's first largest bases, 17 Wing Winnipeg employs over 2,900 personnel, which includes an estimated 650 local civilians.

It is said, for the RCAF personnel, all roads will lead to 17 Wing Winnipeg. The Wing, comprised of squadrons, training schools and command elements, has and continue to turn out what are considered some of the best multi-skilled personnel in the world. In addition to flying operations and a variety of training and command functions, 17 Wing supports 113 units stretching from Thunder Bay to the Saskatchewan/Alberta border of the 49th parallel to the High Arctic.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank each and every member of the 17 Wing Winnipeg. Serving is a very demanding and important role, and please know that your service and efforts are valued and make a difference.

At this time, it is my honour to acknowledge two individuals from 17 Wing Winnipeg seated in the gallery today: the commander of 17 Wing Winnipeg, Colonel Andy Cook, and 17 Wing chief, Chief Warrant Officer Mike Robertson. On behalf of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly, I thank you for your commitment to public service, to our great country and around the world. And I wish all at the RCAF a happy belated birthday.

Merci et prenez soin de vous-mêmes.

Translation

Thank you and take care of yourselves.

English

Thank you, and stay safe.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: There are some further guests that I would like to introduce to you today. I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today from Scotland: Right Honourable Ken Macintosh, the presiding officer and MSP; Clare Adamson MSP, convener, Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee; Edward Mountain MSP, convener, Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee; Joanne McNaughton, principal private secretary to the presiding officer; and Fergus Cochrane, head of the International Relations Office. And they are my guests here in the Legislature today.

And on behalf of all of us here, we welcome you to Manitoba.

Also seated in the Speaker's Gallery, I would like to introduce to you Honourable George Hickes, Jr.,

the Minister of Health from Nunavut, and his assistant, Hillary Casey.

Welcome.

And we have seated in the public gallery from River East Collegiate 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Dekleva, Mr. Allard and Mr. Adamson, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Sustainable Development.

On behalf of all honourable members here, we welcome you to our Legislature, as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Spring Flooding Concerns Assistance for Affected Communities

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, we know flooding can be the most challenging of times for many communities. It's a time when communities come together, and I know these flood-affected areas are doing so. We appreciate the update from the minister responsible for Emergency Measures.

On a broader scale, can the Premier inform the House of how Manitobans can get involved and assist the flood-affected areas of the province?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I thank my colleague for the question, and I welcome everyone back to the Chamber. I want to particularly welcome our new acting Sergeant-at-Arms, a member of long service in this Chamber, and we appreciate your work here sir, thank you.

We have—it's a little early to breathe a sigh of relief yet, but nature has been co-operative in diminishing the likelihood of floods in a number of the water basins in the province, and this is good news. We all want to continue to hope that we will have Mother Nature freeze at night and melt during the day to make the flow of water less concentrated and reduce the likelihood of flooding.

We have had some areas, unfortunately, impacted already with overland flooding, and the minister has visited dozens of communities already over the past number of days, in particular, some areas hit by flooding. Local people seem to have things in hand, but I appreciate the member's raising the issue and I know that, if needed, Manitobans will, as they always have, they will rise to the challenge.

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

Students Loss of Class Time

Ms. Marcelino: I thank the Premier for the additional update.

Madam Speaker, I've also heard reports that students in Carman have had their spring break extended by flooding. While a few days' delay can be managed by teachers and students, we're all hopeful that the school year will not be greatly affected by the flooding.

Can the Premier provide us with any information on the contingency planning that has occurred to ensure that students will not miss a substantial amount of class time due to flooding?

* (14:00)

Mr. Pallister: Having been involved in the teaching profession at a time when flooding was occurring in the Whitemud basin a number of years ago, I would encourage students not to expect too long a break. As much as they—some of them may anticipate that that might be a good thing, we know that it's not, of course. The precautionary measure that was taken today was just that, and it is expected that the students will be back in the classroom tomorrow.

But we, of course, thank all the local officials and people involved who have stepped forward to address the issue, principally, I understand, caused by ice jams in the Boyne basin, and now that has been alleviated we expect that the conditions will improve rather nicely over the next day or two.

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

First Nations Communities Federal Flood Assistance

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): We understand that Peguis First Nation has seen serious flooding. We understand there have been as many as 84 evacuations in the community.

Can the Premier provide the House with any information on the contact they've made with the federal government on what assistance the federal government can provide the Manitoba government and Manitoba officials in helping affected First Nations communities?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Yes, the Peguis First Nation and areas adjacent have been chronically flooded, as the member knows, for many, many years, and it's an unfortunate re-occurrence that prepares the community somewhat, in the sense that they anticipate the flooding and are able to work in advance of it as much as is possible there.

I spoke to the new Chief Hudson in the last 90 minutes and he is dealing with the situation from the standpoint of having over 100 people evacuated from his community at this point. With some optimism he remarked that the water levels are down pretty significantly over night, anticipates that that will continue and he is working with Red Cross officials and with INAC in support, addressing the issue as best as is possible given the challenging circumstances that he and his community members face.

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

Hospital Home Teams Program QuickCare Clinic and ER Services

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): We appreciate the Premier being forthright on issues of flooding. We're hoping he'll do the same regarding changes to our health-care system.

Madam Speaker, seniors receive the care of the Hospital Home Teams have seen their program cut with virtually no notice. At one time these patients could find support through QuickCare clinics, but we know that's at risk.

The Premier and his minister have closed the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic and ACCESS centres—open—will not commit to keeping QuickCare clinics and ACCESS centres open despite repeated questioning.

So I want to ask the Premier again: Will he keep QuickCare and ACCESS centres operating in Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I thank my colleague for raising the issue and, of course raising the issue of access, which is particularly important given the fact that under the previous administration access to health care was delayed by record lengths. And so we have in Manitoba now, as many Manitobans understand through direct experience

themselves or with their family members, the longest waits, for example, for emergency care in the country of Canada. In addition, for diagnostic testing in many areas, surgery as well, these are tenth out of 10 provinces.

So we are focused, as Manitoba's new government in our first year, on improving those wait times and making ourselves the most improved province in Canada in this respect.

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

Ms. Marcelino: So, to restate, the Premier has closed down the Hospital Home Teams. They are diminishing and even cutting supports through QuickCare and ACCESS centres, yet the Premier says it's okay that for-profit home health services are available for a fee.

Madam Speaker, it's not—it's simply not fair nor cost effective that those who are receiving health supports at home or through QuickCare clinics will now have to go to an emergency room to get the care they need, and even now, the Premier won't commit to keeping emergency rooms open.

Will he also be closing emergency rooms that Manitoba rely on?

Mr. Pallister: Well, I appreciate any question emanating from that side of the House in respect of timely care, Madam Speaker, or access to care, because, of course, under that administration neither of those was possible for Manitobans.

We know that seniors were waiting hours and hours and hours in emergency rooms and, unfortunately, in many cases, as many as one out of five in some of the waiting rooms, Madam Speaker, they were giving up in frustration and going home. That is a dangerous situation and one we are addressing as a government, one the previous administration failed to address—threw money at the problem, but didn't make the problem anything but worse in doing that.

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

Private Home-Care Services

Ms. Marcelino: The Premier has brought out the scissors, cutting QuickCare clinics and perhaps even emergency rooms, but then turns a blind eye to for-profit businesses setting up shop in Manitoba.

It's simply not fair that seniors in this province are told that they are losing the Hospital Home Teams, QuickCare clinics and emergency rooms, yet someone can buy their way to the front of the line based on the size of their wallet.

It's bad enough that the Premier is introducing new two-tier medicine to Manitoba, but he is doing it while cutting public funding to services that Manitobans rely on.

Can the Premier explain: How is it fair to Manitobans to cut their health supports while opening the door to two-tier medicine?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, the members of the New Democratic Party campaign team went to the doors of the people of Manitoba and they promised that they would end—they would end—halfway medicine, and they didn't, but they did create highway medicine. And so Manitobans in record numbers are driving and fuelling their own vehicles or borrowing a friend's car and going to other areas of the country and of the world to find health care that they can't get here.

The member opposite reveals that her party is still imprisoned with ideology, but we are actually inspired by better results for Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Health-Care Services Nurse Practitioners

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Without consultation, without any direction from their numerous consultants or from their task forces, this government made the heartless and short-sighted decision to shutter the QuickCare clinic in St. Boniface. To justify this closure, the government said that there was a lack—specifically a lack of nurse practitioners.

But cuts to community clinics have real consequences for the families that count on that care, and it's now opened the door to new, private primary-care services to set up shop in Winnipeg.

Rather than closing clinics and cutting health care, will this minister invest in health care for everyone and commit to hiring more nurse practitioners for everyone?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, early

on in my time as Minister of Health, I had the opportunity to speak to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority about QuickCare clinics. One of the things that they mentioned, including the long problems with the clinics in terms of actually getting care, was the fact that there were rotational closures. I asked them why there were rotational closures, and they said that the previous government had rushed into opening them without any plan or any real operational way to keep them open. They bungled it.

We're going to get better, Madam Speaker.

*(14:10)

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

Privatization Concerns

Mr. Wiebe: I think this minister would agree that every family needs access to health care, but not all of them can afford the private options that he's suggesting.

The government also cancelled the hospital home-care teams, leaving chronically ill patients without quality care that they deserve.

Private health care encroaches on the home-care services that seniors, persons with disabilities and chronically ill patients depend on to preserve their quality of life. Manitobans have fought hard to keep home-care services affordable and accessible, but the minister is jeopardizing that.

Does this minister believe that home-care and home-based services should not only be enhanced, but, most importantly, be kept public?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I'm glad that my friend raises the issue of costs within the health-care system.

One of the significant costs that Manitobans have been forced to bear over the last years under the NDP was the cost of ambulances and having to use an ambulance. One of the things we campaigned on was reducing that cost by half in our first year of government. I was pleased, on behalf of our government and all of our members, to announce the first reduction in the cost several months ago. And I was doubly pleased to announce another reduction in the cost on April 1st, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, the bottom line is that private health-care services like this are a clear violation of the spirit of the Canada Health Act, which stresses universality and accessibility. They weaken the public system by poaching staff and resources, and Timely Care is the perfect example of this happening. The nurse practitioners who work there could be staffing the St. Boniface QuickCare clinic or they could be providing home-care services.

But this government refuses to invest in a public system where Manitobans only need their health card rather than their credit card to access care.

Will this minister acknowledge that this service violates the—his responsibility to enforce the Canada Health Act and protect health care for all Manitobans?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: There are greater investments in the public health-care system under this government than there ever were under the former government, Madam Speaker: hundreds of millions of dollars more.

But, of course, it's not just about money. If it was just about money, then things would've been much better than they were under the former NDP government. We saw, under the former NDP, when it came to access and timeliness of care, that we were dead last when it came to wait times for hip and ear replacements, when it came to ER wait times.

I know that they talked about changing the name of their party at their less-last convention. They should've done it. They should've called it the DLP, the dead last party, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ride-Sharing Legislation Taxi Industry Consultations

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I have a question to the Premier. The government's legislation affecting the Manitoba taxi industry should be entitled: an act to destroy 1,600 jobs and make way for a new low-wage economy in Manitoba.

Will the Premier withdraw this bill and consult with the taxicab industry on ways to ensure all businesses operating in Manitoba have a level playing field?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): That's exactly what the legislation ensures, Madam Speaker, a level playing field. And that's exactly what the members of the cab industry want.

This is the only member that's—was in this Chamber who may remember—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —may remember me standing up for the taxi industry 20 years ago.

But, Madam Speaker, I haven't stopped, and I'll continue doing that. I have tremendous respect for the people in that industry who compete, who understand how to compete—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —who aren't afraid to compete and who have had to deal with the excessive regulation of the NDP—were no friend of them over the last 17 years at all, Madam Speaker.

The people in the taxi industry understand and they're ready to compete. They want a level playing field; so do we.

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding with questions, I would just like to indicate to our guests in the gallery that there is to be no interaction with the proceedings on the floor, and I would ask that there be no applause coming forth from the gallery, and I thank you for following the rules of our Legislature.

Regulatory Concerns

Mr. Maloway: The Premier—this Premier, who will soon be known as Captain Chaos, is creating a regulatory chaos with 137 municipalities creating 137 different sets of rules for taxis.

How can the Premier make the argument that this will be a smooth transition for the industry? This is going to be total chaos.

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding, I would just like to indicate to members to be cautious with the wording, that when we are referring to members in the House we are referring to members in a respectful manner with respectful titles.

Mr. Pallister: I don't mind, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate the member asking me a question using a word that he has some expertise in,

because, certainly, the members opposite know about the chaos they created—the chaos they created for taxi drivers when they went to their doors of their homes and looked them in the—right in the eye and they promised them they wouldn't raise their taxes, and they raised their taxes on their taxes. They raised their taxes on their home insurance, Madam Speaker. They raised their taxes on their benefits they pay at work. They raised their taxes on a thousand other things. They promised. There's no integrity represented by that party's behaviour.

We have been standing beside and with the people in the taxi industry and we will continue to do that, but the members opposite ought not to pretend in this place or anywhere else that they're anything but adversaries to small business in this province.

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

Impact on Small Business

Mr. Maloway: The Premier didn't answer the question at all about all the chaos he's going to create by having 137 different sets of rules for the taxi industry.

Madam Speaker, the elect—the legislation specifically prohibits these small-business owners from getting compensation in the subsection 10 for damages as a result of the loss—losses.

Why is the Premier abusing his power in such a callous way against small-business owners and families in this industry?

Mr. Pallister: Just a couple of facts: I know they're inconvenient for the member, but he's wrong in his assertion, that's No. 1; No. 2, there are nine other provinces across the country that do it the way we're proposing to do it. So, I mean, are the NDP rump finds itself chaotically out of touch with the reality that faces every other Canadian province.

So, Madam Speaker, again, it's an issue of credibility. It's an issue of integrity.

The members opposite now claim they support an industry that they went after. They went after it when they raised the taxes on this industry. They went after it when they raised the taxes on the cars themselves. They went after it when they raised the regulations to multiples of what they are in other provinces. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: They went after them when they taxed their homes, when they taxed their home insurance, when they taxed their benefits at work. The solution to every problem for the members opposite is raise taxes.

We're holding the line on taxes, reducing red tape, and we're going to create a level playing field for people in the taxicab industry and they'll benefit from that. They're ready to compete.

Fire in Brochet Community Assistance for Residents

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): On Sunday, a fire in Brochet, Barren Lands First Nation, broke out and destroyed the community's only grocery store. Thankfully, no one was injured. A state of emergency has been declared and the Red Cross is responding with assistance.

Can the Minister for Indigenous and Municipal Relations tell the House what the government has done to help the people of Brochet since Sunday?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I thank the member opposite.

And, yes, it's a truly unfortunate situation, actually, one that we're hearing far too often, because these individual structures house so many services that these communities—and not just their communities, but surrounding communities depend on—and I want to assure her that our department has been in touch with the community as well as INAC, and there is going to be temporary services put up as quickly as possible.

* (14:20)

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

Ms. Lathlin: I thank the minister for that reply.

Like too many First Nation communities, there's no year-round work—road service to Brochet. It could take anywhere from five to seven hours to drive by winter road to the nearest grocery store in Lynn Lake. The winter road is now officially closed, so it's going to be more difficult for essential supplies to reach people in Brochet.

Has the government so much as reached out to Brochet to see what assistance they can offer?

Ms. Clarke: We on this side of the House truly understand the issues facing the North, and infrastructure, roads is for sure one of them.

These issues have been outstanding for many, many years. They've never had a road, and there has been lots of opportunities to build roads.

If we were to begin, I don't know exactly where we'd start, because I met with groups from northern Manitoba and up into Nunavut to—for two weeks last week—or, for—pardon me, for two days last week, and there was extensive discussion. And there are many areas in the North that would like a road, for sure.

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

Northern Manitoba Communities Need for Infrastructure Investment

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Recent fires in Pukatawagan, Shamattawa, emphasize the need for central mental health services and infrastructure investments in roads, 'addewit' housing, social programs in—sorry—food security to build and maintain communities.

Has the government worked with northern communities such as Pukatawagan, Shamattawa and Brochet to begin addressing these shortfalls, and what is the government doing to resolve the underlying infrastructure deficit that keeps communities like Brochet isolated and vulnerable?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): The member rightly cites the issue regarding medical services in many communities in the North. That has been an issue for many years, and it continues to be an ongoing issue.

We continue to want to work with our federal partners to ensure that there is support from the federal government. We know there are tens of millions of dollars of outstanding bills from the federal Liberal government when it comes to transporting patients. We're concerned about that. That is money that could be used to help those in the North.

And we'll continue to work with our federal partners to ensure that we have real partners in Ottawa to help those in the North, and in other areas, who are looking for better health care, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to the next question, I would just like to indicate that we have some more guests in the gallery to introduce to you.

We have members of the taxi industry who are here as guests of the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran). And, on behalf of all of us here, we welcome you here to the Manitoba Legislature.

Suicide Prevention Timely Access to Therapy

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, mental and brain health issues affect one in four Manitobans, many of whom are adults and children.

It is of critical importance that individuals who are at risk of suicide have quick help when they need it. Right now we have many parents who are frightened and frustrated because they can't get the help they need when they need it.

Will the minister act today to ensure that people who are having difficulty with suicidal ideation, who have made suicidal attempts, have access to the treatment that they need to help them and to prevent suicide?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Thank the member for the question. He raises an important issue, Madam Speaker. I think there are many in this Chamber who have been touched by the issue of suicide, either within the lives of our families or within the lives of our friends.

There are a number of changes that have happened. More needs to be done, of course, when it comes to even discharge policies. I know there's been good work when it comes to discharge policy and good work by many in the community who've been impacted—their families have been impacted through suicide, Madam Speaker. That work is ongoing.

We recognize that we need a partner in that. We would need a partner in Ottawa. We need to have real negotiations and discussions on a long-term, sustainable partnership.

There continues to be good work that is happening here in Manitoba, but I recognize that more needs to be done, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, many families, including many who are watching question period today, are being told that their loved ones, who are at high risk of completing suicide will have at least a two-month wait for the best therapy: dialectical

behavioural therapy, or DBT. Others are having difficulty even finding a psychiatrist or getting transition planning.

Two months for someone at high risk is far too long to wait.

I ask the minister what he is doing today to enable quick access to psychiatrists, transition support and DBT therapy?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, there are a number of things that are happening currently within Manitoba.

I talked in the first answer about the need to have a better discharge policy. I think that that is well underway, and we've had good support from those within Manitoba and those who have been affected by that issue.

We also have a task force coming together to ensure that we're bringing in health-bringing together mental health and addictions under one roof to ensure that there is a strategy for that going forward.

I recognize, also, the Peachey report, which was commissioned by the NDP and released recently, also talked about things we could do differently in mental health and we look forward to further examining the NDP-commissioned Peachey report.

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

Residential Treatment Services

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, some individuals, particularly with complex issues, need an approach which uses DBT in a residential setting in order to achieve successful treatment. Parents are being told by psychiatrists that there's no such service for their family member in Manitoba.

Will the minister provide provincial financial funding for such residential treatment services outside of Manitoba until such time as he's able to sort out and provide such services here in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: There are a number of different initiatives that are happening within Manitoba when it comes to mental health services. I've outlined a couple of them: ensuring that our discharge policy is better—and I think that it has been improved and has been implemented at this point, Madam Speaker, just newly implemented; we are looking, in terms of the addictions and mental health, to bring those together and to ensure that the system is well aligned.

And we will continue to review the NDP-commissioned Peachey report, which talks about mental health and how to have better services for mental health both in hospital and outside of hospital. That NDP-commissioned report has been helpful, and we continue to examine it.

Spring Flooding Concerns Preparation Initiatives

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): In Manitoba we know flooding is a reality and being prepared has become a part of life for us. As Manitobans prepare, the government is getting prepared too.

Can the minister inform the House of some of the proactive measures our Province has been doing to prepare for this year's potential flood?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I want to thank the member for that question. I know his home community of Swan River saw some flooding and ice jamming over the weekend and I understand conditions are better there.

This government has been in constant communication with potentially flood-affected municipalities. We also have a very good working relationship with Saskatchewan and North Dakota, something the previous NDP government failed to do. We believe that having this open relationship with all flood-affected communities will enable us to be better prepared before, during and after a flood event.

Lake Winnipeg Nitrate Regulations

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I'm wondering if anyone from that side of the House, from the government, could explain to Manitobans the science behind weakening nitrate pollutant regulations in terms of the health of Lake Winnipeg.

Where is the science showing that more nitrates going into the waterways is going to be good for the lake?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I appreciate a question from the member about research; it's something the members discarded as they threw dozens of farm families under the bus and banned the business of raising hogs in Manitoba.

* (14:30)

Here is a quote from a buried report that was given to the NDP by a united—a University of Manitoba expert panel that reviewed measures to protect Lake Manitoba prepared in March of 2014. It said: The panel is not aware of any research that identifies a uniquely greater environmental threat from manure from pigs versus any other livestock species or for any science-based reason for focusing proposals solely on pig producers.

Yet, the members opposite decided they'd play sport with politics—that's what the former House leader called it—and make a wedge out of this and discriminate against a small group of Manitoba families for political purposes, and they should be ashamed of themselves for doing it, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Altemeyer: I appreciate that the Premier had an answer prepared without listening to the question, but here's some additional information he may want to consider. In his own government's news release, it says they are removing the in-season nitrate limits. Doesn't say anything about where the nitrate's coming from. They are removing the limits on nitrates on agricultural fields. If he had done some research and contacted long-time water aquatic specialist, Dr. Eva Pip, she would've told him that nitrates are highly soluble.

In slightly less scientific language for the minister and Premier's benefit, highly soluble means it sinks into water real good. So the nitrates end up in the water, the water ends up in the lake. Can the Premier explain that, please?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: The member's arguments don't hold water at all, Madam Speaker, because the fact is—the fact is—again that the member opposite does not understand what experts within the government's civil service do, who support, strongly support, this initiative. And they understand that the regulations remain and in force and protect the environment. They protect the air, they protect the water, and they protect the soil. That's what this government is about.

But, again, this previous administration chose to persecute a certain small group of agricultural

producers in this province, and the panel said to them—and they knew this when they had done it, Madam Speaker—they said, in the view of the panel, that the regulations were elaborate and costly and were not necessary.

That is what they were told, but yet they continue to foist unnecessary regulations and restraints on a small group of people in rural Manitoba so they could prop up their support. And this is the result of that kind of putting partisanship ahead of politics. This is the result.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, speaking of manure, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*—the plain truth of the matter is—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

I don't think it's going to surprise the member at all for me to stand and admonish him on that—those particular comments. That was coming pretty close to being somewhat inflammatory, and I would encourage that when questions are being asked that there is some maintenance of a respectful tone to the questions.

The honourable member for Minto—or, sorry, Wolseley.

Mr. Altemeyer: *[interjection]* All right, all right.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may be allowed to continue, the context of this is very much about manure management, and if the Premier is actually serious about managing manure properly in rural Manitoba and everywhere else, then here's a really easy thing he could do: in a bill that I brought forward the last day before spring break, it required the government to provide annual updates, publicly, on how many excess nutrients there are in waterways across Manitoba.

Will he please confirm today that the legislation his government is going to bring forward will contain that important provision?

Mr. Pallister: It is the difference, Madam Speaker, in approach of this government and the previous one. We choose to put the science and the research at the forefront in making our policy decisions. What the previous administration chose to do was to try to pit

one Manitoban against another to the purposes, the partisan purposes, for which they were designed.

This was a wedge issue for them, and they admitted it. And, Madam Speaker, this member continues to do that, and the result of that is clear. Here's what Steve Ashton said just a couple of weeks ago at the NDP meeting. He said: This is one of the most important things that we can do. We now see Tories take every rural seat. One thing I'm tired of the Tories—they think they own rural Manitoba.

Well, if you want a reason why, this is the reason why. Discriminating against rural Manitoba businesses is discriminating against any—any—small business, Madam Speaker. Anybody can be persecuted by people—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —who are willing to set aside research, set aside science and play politics with an issue. That's all that party opposite did; that's all that member is doing now.

Infrastructure Spending Government Intention

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Reports indicate that the government has left nearly a half billion dollars of infrastructure money in Ottawa rather than spending it here in Manitoba.

Now, this is a government that was last to sign the deal on the CPP, a government that has failed to sign a deal on health, a government that can't sign a deal on climate change. So, I ask the Infrastructure Minister: Is he—does he have a plan for infrastructure and spending on projects needed in Manitoba, or is he just trying to set a new record for incompetence in this House?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I'm glad to see the decorum has come back so high after spring break—*[interjection]*—the—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: —former NDP government underspent infrastructure each and every year except in election—prior to election years. We will take no comfort from this government—or, from this former government trying to tell us how we should be spending the Manitoba taxpayers' money.

We will get value for money in each and every infrastructure dollar that we spend.

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Allum: Well, Madam Speaker, he should take a few lessons from us, because we invested in infrastructure in this province, and they don't spend a penny on it. In fact, they've left a half a billion dollars on the table.

They're not ready to govern, Madam Speaker. They don't know what they're doing on the other side of the House. Last on the CPP, no deal on health, no deal on climate change and now no deal on infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, I ask him again: Does he have a plan here in Manitoba or is he going to just twiddle his thumbs and let that money float away?

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): As usual, a lot of heat and no light, Madam Speaker.

The fact is that 30 days ago there was no money on the table from the federal government for mental health. There was no money on the table from the federal Liberal government on home care, and now there is. Thirty days ago there was no money on the table for indigenous health.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: There was no money on the table for indigenous people, and now there is. And the fact of the matter is our Health Minister and our government stood up for those issues—stood up for health care for Canadians while the members on the opposite side were sitting on their hands, or worse, applauding their hands, Ottawa-west being what it is.

In addition, Madam Speaker, 30 days ago, there was a threat made to this province that we would not have a \$60-million investment in a Factory of the Future that was previously committed to by the federal government. And now we have assurances that that will go ahead.

This is called negotiation. The members opposite can look it up. We know how to do it.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The—order.

The time for oral questions has expired.

* (14:40)

House Business

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business, I would like to table a list of bills in accordance with rule 2(9) that I am designating for completion in the fall sittings. The list includes: Bill 30, The Local Vehicles for Hire Act; Bill 31, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act.

I am reserving the right to designate additional bills up to the complement of five bills on or before the deadline of April 20th, 2017.

Madam Speaker: On House business, the Official Opposition House Leader has tabled a list of bills in accordance with rule 2(9) that have been designated for completion in the fall sittings. The list includes: Bill 30, The Local Vehicles for Hire Act; and Bill 31, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act.

Further bills may be designated by the Official Opposition House Leader up to the complement of five bills on or before the deadline of April 20th, 2017.

PETITIONS

Taxi Industry Regulation

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

Regulations have been put in place that have made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city, and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk,

as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation has put the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city, and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

There are no—there were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill. The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings in the industry.

The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what we've seen in other jurisdictions including differential pricing, not providing service to some

areas of the city, and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

And this petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure that there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

The regulated taxi system also has significant measures to place—in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as that have been seen in other jurisdictions including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city, and significant risk in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the travel industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Kelvin High School Gymnasium

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to 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.

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

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

* (14:50)

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

(6) 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.

(7) 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.

(9) 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.

(10) 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.

(11) 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 to 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.

Signed by Laurie Lamb, Judy Reardon, Louise Cont-Cona and many others.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize how important it is to provide young people with quality learning spaces to succeed in school.

(2) Sport, recreation and the spaces to engage in them are critical to the health and welfare of all students.

(3) All forms of educational infrastructure, including gymnasiums and recreation centres in general, represent an incredible value-for-money investment, whereby the return is improved physical and psychological health and wellness.

(4) Kelvin High School is one of the largest high schools in the province with over 1,200 students.

(5) Kelvin High School spent several years raising almost \$1.2 million towards the construction of a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

(6) Some Kelvin students currently have to pay to use outside facilities to obtain their mandatory physical education credit.

(7) The provincial government, in a regressive and short-sighted move, cancelled funding for the Kelvin gym and wellness centre for political reasons, despite the extensive community support, fundraising and engagement.

(8) It is wasteful and disrespectful to the dedicated efforts of students, staff and community in general to simply lay their goals aside without consultation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the need for excellent recreation facilities in all

Manitoba schools, to reverse this regressive cut and to provide Kelvin High School with the funding necessary to complete a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

Signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further petitions?

Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Wednesday, April 5th, 2017 at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 15, The Department of Justice Amendment Act; Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Wednesday, April 5th, 2017 at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 15, The Department of Justice Amendment Act; and Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act.

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, on House business I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, April 5th, 2017 at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 10, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act; Bill 12, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, April 5th, 2017 at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 10, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act; and Bill 12, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

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Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, this afternoon I'd like to call-start by calling Bill 23, The Fisheries Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the House will consider Bill 23, The Fisheries Amendment Act, second reading.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 23—The Fisheries Amendment Act

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): I move, seconded by Minister Clarke—*[interjection]*—no, the Minister for Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke), that Bill 23, The Fisheries Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee to this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mrs. Cox: Bill 23 will make a number of amendments to The Fisheries Act and liberalize marketing options to freely sell commercially caught freshwater fish here in Manitoba.

On August 16th, 2016, our government announced that we are moving to create flexible marketing options for Manitoba's commercial fishers. I provided notice to the federal government that Manitoba is withdrawing from participating in The Freshwater Fish Marketing Act. In addition, all references related to the regulatory role of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in fish marketing will be removed.

The Province will be creating new processes and regulations for the new marketing environment, processes and regulations that are not bound by past federal rules that essentially dictated that fishers had to sell their harvest to FFMC at the prices they set.

Bill 23 puts in place a new provincial marketing regime, which includes allowing any person to obtain a fish dealer's licence to buy and sell fish here in the province and for export, subject to certain conditions; allowing for commercial fishers to sell directly to consumers of fish without any additional licences to do so; enabling regulations that set out who can market legally caught commercial fish through a new licensing system; enabling regulations that require fish processing facility operators to be licensed to assist the Department of Sustainable Development to track commercially caught fish to ensure sustainable management of Manitoba's fish population; clarifying some wording to allow for conservation officers to conduct their work in this new environment more effectively.

What this means for our fisheries—the bill will remove the monopoly that Freshwater Fish Marketing Corp. has had for almost 50 years and provide flexible marketing choices for commercial

fishers and value-added processors. Mr. Deputy Speaker, flexible marketing choices mean that new buyers, processors and sellers will have the same access to market that Freshwater Fish Marketing Corp. has had—has been able to restrict from them in the past. This will allow Manitoba fishers to sell their fish in other provinces, internationally and independent of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Fishers will be allowed to choose where and how they want to sell their fish, the fish that they work so hard to catch. They will be able to choose from buyers and processors who provide them the best price, rather than having only the option FFMC gave them.

By gaining access to new markets in Canada and abroad, fishers will see opportunities for rough fish that have previously been priced too low by FFMC. These fish frequently become wastefully discarded as bycatch, instead of adding value to fishers' incomes and supplying food to markets.

This legislation clearly sets July 1st, 2017, as the transition date so new processors can confidently prepare to invest in Manitoba. Our government will be encouraging new, viable enterprises to look to Manitoba's liberalized commercial fishery and capitalize on opportunities in this new era.

The bill will enable the establishment of a new provincial marketing regime that includes bonding requirements for buyers to ensure that their contracts with fishers are upheld.

Through the new fish dealers licensing system, buyers, processors and those who sell directly to consumers will have standard record-keeping requirements that will be used for effective provincial fisheries resource management.

* (15:00)

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation will be free to become a fish dealer under a provincially issued licence, like any other new dealer, to continue to market and sell fish. This will allow any commercial fishers who wish to continue to use the FFMC as their marketing agent to do so.

There will be more opportunities for fishers to sell and market their fish. This will improve their incomes and benefit their families and communities. This is about more than adding flexibility or opening up a new market. This is about selling our made-in-Manitoba brand. We have a world-class

product for fisheries, and we have world-class conditions here for doing business. Manitoba's strategic geographic location and the excellent transportation infrastructure allow businesses to have low-cost access to markets around the globe.

We have many advantages to doing business in Manitoba, including the province's clean and low-cost electricity, skilled labour and affordable real estate. When it comes to fisheries, Manitoba has a long history of high-quality commercial fishing in our freshwater lakes. Implementing flexible marketing measures now will create economic opportunities in the future. It will showcase our wild fish around the world, and it will showcase the great business climate of Manitoba and Canada.

To ensure that Manitoba's diverse fisheries are represented by individuals, by fishing operations and by co-operatives, we consulted in going about this transition by engaging a special fisheries envoy. We are pleased that the fisheries envoy, Signature Mediation, has worked with all stakeholders for the past few months to discuss this important transition. Since November, Signature Mediation has held 25 community meetings across Manitoba with more than 375 attendees. The envoy also met with Lake Winnipeg commercial fisheries co-management board, and I attended that meeting, as well, to hear directly from fishers. The board represents hundreds of fishers from Lake Winnipeg, and I appreciated hearing from these knowledgeable men and women.

As mentioned, the envoy travelled a great distance to many communities, including Thompson, Leaf Rapids, Norway House, Grand Rapids, Gypsumville, The Pas, Swan River, Eddystone, Matheson Island, St. Laurent, Gimli, Fisher River, Berens River, Lake St. Martin, Hollow Water, Poplar River, Wabowden, Brochet, South Indian Lake, Cross Lake, Island Lake, Pukatawagan, Red Sucker Lake, St. Theresa Point and Garden Hill. The envoy has also had the opportunity to meet officials from the federal department of fisheries and oceans, as well as senior staff from the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, discussing our desire for a smooth transition to flexible marketing.

Through this extensive consultation with stakeholders, including FFMC, we ensured that all communication channels were kept open and our process transparent as we moved to freedom day. I have also discussed our shared goal of a smooth transition from a single desk to liberalized fishery

export markets with Minister LeBlanc, the federal minister of fisheries and oceans. I am pleased that the federal minister supports a smooth transition by working together to ensure that we have a thriving commercial fishery throughout the province within this objective of enhanced market access.

The envoy has also included sustainability, fisheries and eco-certification as one of the topics discussed with fishers. The changes needed to improve the 'sustainability' of our lakes will occur in partnership with fishers. The envoy's initial view is that sustainability is in the best interest of all industry stakeholders. The bill is an important step in opening our commercial fishery markets to the world, where demand for quality proteins from fish and other products is growing. As we open our market for new, international opportunities, fishers will soon realize that they have an even greater earning potential if they can market their fish under eco-certification labels. We are confident that the demand for eco-certified fish will move towards eco-certifying our lakes and fisheries. Our government has committed to a sustainable Manitoba commercial fishery, ensuring that there is a steady and growing supply of fish that will not only benefit current and future generations, but also our indigenous 'subsistence'—subsistence fishers, and recreational fishers.

Our credible strategy to secure certification of Manitoba's fisheries will make the Manitoba freshwater brand even better than it is today. The strategy will provide enhanced market opportunities for our walleye, sauger, lake whitefish, northern pike, goldeye and lake trout, as well as fish currently harvested outside of management quotas, like carbon-like common carp and tullibee.

Thank you.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period up to 15 minutes will be held.

Questions may be addressed to the minister by members of the following—by members following sequence. First question by the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions asked by each independent member, remaining questions asked by any opposition members and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Can the minister please explain to the House her understanding of the Crown's duty to consult with First Nations?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): Thank you so much for that question.

Our department has gone out and we have consulted with the federal government, talked to the Minister LeBlanc, and he has indicated that he is pleased to move forward on this very important task that we have undertaken for Manitoba commercial fishers to ensure that they actually are able to sell their world-class product on the international and provincial market.

We've also been out talking to Manitoba fishers about the plan and the process moving forward to ensure that they're involved in all of the steps that we're taking to provide them flexible marketing for their product. So we have moved forward. We've had those discussions—

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

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Has there been an interest by investors since notice of withdrawing from FFMC, including First Nation fishers?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you for that question.

I did speak to Minister LeBlanc last year—I believe it was August the 16th—and had the opportunity to speak to him with regard to our plan to withdraw from the single-desk marketing plan, Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. And, since that time, I've had further discussions with Minister LeBlanc with regard to the process of moving forward before that one-year time period. Minister LeBlanc is working together with us and indicated that, you know, he does feel that Manitoba fishers should have the opportunity as well to market their fish, you know, in a way that will provide them the most income.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Does the minister realize that the federal government is not, in fact, a First Nation? My question—first question was, what is the minister's understanding of her duty to consult, her constitutional obligation to consult directly with First Nations. Her answer referred—referenced speaking to the federal minister.

I'll give the minister a chance to answer again. What is her understanding of her government's duty to consult directly with First Nations?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you again for that question.

And this is a—the fresh—the—commercial fishermen fall under the responsibility—or, not commercial fisheries, but the lakes and streams, fall under the responsibility of the federal government, minister Blanc [*phonetic*]. We have had discussions with him; we have talked to him about our plan moving forward, and those discussions have taken place.

We will continue to have discussions to ensure a smooth transition moving forward before that July 1st date, and we know that Manitoba fishers look forward to having freedom and being able to sell their product in a manner that will provide them the most money and keep more money in their pockets rather than that of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Mr. Johnson: Do you have the authority to close FFMC? Are the members opposite fear mongering?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you so much for that question.

And in fact, you know, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation will continue to operate and those fishers who feel that that is the best option for them will have that ability to continue to have that relationship with them, will have the ability to ensure that their product is purchased by Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

We are not, in fact, telling, you know, commercial fishers that they are bound to sell their product to one processor, one individual or another. Freshwater fish is still a very viable operation for them and will continue to be well into the future.

* (15:10)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, my question relates to the fact that it's all very well to open up the fishing, but one needs to be absolutely sure that the fish are there and that they're managed properly.

There are concerns in a number of our lakes, including Lake Winnipeg, and I would ask the minister: What is she going to do because—to make sure that the fisheries are sustainable?

Mrs. Cox: I thank you so much. That's an excellent question, and, as I indicated, you know, in my earlier comments, we will still ensure that processors and dealers will be responsible for ensuring that quotas are kept—records are kept in a manner so that we will have a sustainable fish population well into the

future for future generations. That's very important, not only for commercial fishers, but recreational anglers as well, and it's very important to us members on this side of the House to ensure that we do all that we can to have a sustainable fish population well into the future.

Mr. Altemeyer: While I thank the minister for her clarification on her previous answer, my follow-up to that now is: Can she please confirm for the House that all of the consultations that her government has had with fishers has been done by Signature Mediation?

Mrs. Cox: Thanks to the member opposite for that question. I also participated in discussions with the Lake Winnipeg commercial fishers and had a very healthy dialogue with them back in December, so we did have an opportunity to talk first-hand to commercial fishers through that process.

And I've also had discussions with Chief Ron Evans when I was up in Norway House and did have the opportunity, in fact, to visit the packing house there in Playgreen Lake. So, you know, as well as having consultations and discussions with—by median—mediation services, I have also had discussions first-hand with some fishers.

Mr. Johnson: Is there anywhere in this legislation that changes the quota or increases the quota threatening any lake in this legislation?

Mrs. Cox: I'd like to thank the member opposite for—the member on this side for that question. It is a very important question.

And we will, in fact, not be increasing quotas at all. There's nothing in this piece of legislation that does that. We will, in fact, put in more regulations to ensure that quotas are monitored and are managed and that conservation officers will also have the ability to monitor and ensure that we have a sustainable fish population well into the future.

That's a primary concern for us on this side of the House, and I think it's a concern for all Manitobans. I mean, Manitobans love getting out on the lakes, fishing, angling. Commercial fishermen have a lot invested in their commercial fisher operation—

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

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): I would like to ask: What guarantee can the government offer that the fishing industry won't end up in the hands of a

few large outfits squeezing out First Nations 'fissing' associations and other fishers in Manitoba, especially in northern Manitoba?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you so much, and I—you know, we've gone out and we've talked to northern communities, northern fishers, you know, and I've personally met with Skownan First Nation and they tell us that they're actually absolutely thrilled that they're going to have the option of selling their product—their world-class product—to other processors and dealers, so that they can, in fact, keep more money in their pockets. So we feel that by opening up this—or making these amendments to the legislation, northern fishers will have more opportunity for selling their fish.

Of course, freshwater fish will always be an option for them, but they will have more options for selling all of their fish—bycatch and everything. We've already talked to some, you know, potential dealers and they tell us that there's a real market for all—

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

Mr. Johnson: Is there going to be any sort of licensing process for the proposed new dealers, or is it just going to be an open system altogether?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you so much for that question.

Of course there will be licences required, and together with those licences we'll have to ensure that those individuals are bonded so that when a commercial fisherman approaches a commercial dealer—or, a dealer to purchase their product, they will, in fact, ensure that they will get paid for that product and they will have the ability to deliver that product.

We put these regulations in place to ensure that commercial fishers are, first and foremost, protected. We don't want to have—put any sorts of regulations in place that will not protect commercial fishers. It's very important for us to ensure that they can sell their product—their world-class product—to dealers where they will, in fact, be able to—

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Can the minister inform the House if she has consulted directly with the Fisher River Cree Nation, or if any of the civil servants from the government have conducted direct consultations with that community?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you so much to the member opposite for that question and, in looking at the comments I made in my earlier speech, it does indicate that mediation services was out to that—he was out to Fisher River, Berens River, Poplar River, all of those areas, having discussions with those commercial fishers, ensuring and providing them some certainty with regard to the process moving forward.

So I do feel that mediation services has gone out to 25 communities, talked to over 375 individuals who attended those meetings, have had very fulsome and open discussions with them. We want to ensure that there is a smooth transition, that we provide—

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

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): My question is: What is going to be done in terms of opening up the markets for international development?

There's so many red tape blocks in place for my communities—the Island Lake communities, in particular, who are very hopeful about this new system of opting out of the freshwater. But they want assurances that they're able to sell their rough fish and their good catch internationally.

Mrs. Cox: I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question.

And we know that there is uncertainty with some of the commercial fishers but, you know, we do have—commercial fishers will actually have the ability to sell their product directly, internationally, interprovincially, and it will open up more doors and more opportunities for them.

As well, dealers will be able to actually market the entire fish, unlike what happens now, you know, there's fish that are less important and less valuable, and we find that quite often they are thrown away as bycatch. This will ensure that fishermen have—fisher—commercial fishers have more opportunity to market their fish, more opportunity for the entire fish.

I mean, we've already been approached by many potential dealers, and they tell—

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

Is there any other questions?

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli): I have a question for the minister. Are there any First Nations that have

been consulted with that are looking at potentially economic development in their regions?

Mrs. Cox: That's an excellent question.

We have been approached by, you know, a number of First Nation organizations who have indicated that they are interested in becoming dealers and fish processors and, you know, ensuring that they are a part of this new freedom for commercial fishers. It's going to open up a number of doors for commercial fishers throughout the entire province and give them the opportunity to sell their world-class product internationally, interprovincially and, you know, just put more money in their pockets rather than having only one source, a single-desk ability to sell and market their fish.

This is a real opportunity for commercial fishers, and we know that many of them are very—

* (15:20)

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, it doesn't do much good to catch fish if you can't get your fish to market. And in recognition that some fishers are much closer geographically to Winnipeg than others, our government maintained a community fund, an economic development fund, which fishers from the north basin and elsewhere could access so that they could get their fish to market in an equitable fashion same as everyone else.

Will the minister commit today that that fund is going to continue going forward at at least the level of funding that it has been at?

Mrs. Cox: I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question. And we know that northern fishers have, you know, received subsidies. There's some type of assistance with regard to marketing their fish and getting it down to the fish processing plant at Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. There will be opportunities for them to market their fish and have it processed in areas that are closer to where they actually catch the product. We do know that there will be some opportunities for assistance for transportation for them, as well.

We want to ensure that fishers are not at a disadvantage by this process. So we know that it will be of great benefit.

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

Question period has now expired. Is there anybody—any speakers?

Debate

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): That was an interesting question-and-answer session, and I think it speaks well to the fact that we've added that component to all of the pieces of legislation that come forward in the House today.

It was quite clear in her answers that the minister is not up on the Crown's constitutional duties when it comes to proper consultation with First Nations. There have been numerous Supreme Court rulings which have made it pretty clear what the Crown's obligations are. Those obligations cannot be delegated to a third party. And I'll have to correct the minister. She was not listing her designated organization properly. It was not mediation services it was Signature Mediation that was going around to those different communities meeting with them. But that's a rather minor point. The name of the organization compared to the lack of respect that the government has shown when it comes to their constitutional duty to consult with First Nations.

Gone are the days, thank goodness, when governments or anyone else could just decide that they were going to do whatever they wanted to do without any respect to the first peoples of Manitoba. And I think the minister is going to be hearing about that in the days ahead. And I'm sure her staff are aware of this in the department even if somehow she is not.

And the other thing that just has to be mentioned in the context of this is that the very people conducting these consultations admitted publicly in the media that the consultations were a sham because they asked the person who hired them to go around and talk to these communities, what happens if we come back to you as government and tell you, in no uncertain terms, this is the worst idea in the world.

And the direction that the consulting firm got from this government was that, oh, that doesn't matter we've already made our decision, we're going ahead with this.

So I don't know how anyone with two brain cells to rub together could reach the conclusion that the consultations (1) meant anything and (2) were anywhere close to constitutional. And these decisions that this government is making in such an incredibly reckless manner are probably already damaging their relationships with First Nations communities in

Manitoba, and a violation of a treaty right with one community is certainly going to send a wide-range of concerns throughout all of the First Nations communities in Manitoba.

Members opposite may not want to enter the 21st century where First Nations communities actually have rights and that those rights are respected and they have to be. But they're going to be dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st century by those First Nations communities themselves.

Numerous court actions have been launched—successful court actions—and each time additional clarity and additional prominence to First Nations rights is being given, and the laws on the books right now are going to indicate very clearly that this minister's actions and the actions of her government are probably not constitutional. And we may well have to wait for a court to rule on that officially, but there's just so much risk involved in what they are proposing to doing.

This is not related to just one community in Manitoba, Mr. Acting Speaker. As I mentioned, any time a treaty right is threatened, that should be a concern to every single one of us in Manitoba from a jobs perspective. This government seems to be overlooking the hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands, of families that are directly or indirectly supported—are supported—by this very important fishing industry. We're talking about over \$20 million a year in economic activity from just this income for the Manitoba fishers themselves, whether it's from, you know, lake whitefish or walleye, goldeye, northern pike, sauger, and selling their products internationally.

You know, the members opposite speak as if, you know, no fish from Manitoba is sold outside of Manitoba, and it's only through their new approach, well—that this is going to change. Well, fish from Manitoba is already sold to the United States, Europe, Israel and China. Granted, it's not quite the entire globe, but I think there's a fair bit of distance between Manitoba and China. That argument that they bring forward simply does not hold much water, no large pun intended anyway, Mr. Acting Speaker.

And, you know, the—for a party that claims, and a government that claims, to understand how markets work, well, lo and behold, when you privatize a market, what happens? The producers, especially when there's a lot of small producers, each of them producing more or less the same product or a similar product, well, lo and behold, all the power ends up

shifting to the buyers, and we've seen this already with the privatization and dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board. It's not the agricultural producers that have come out ahead. A fantastic study done by the National Farmers Union has shown the dramatic shift in where all the money from the grain—from grain revenue has gone. It's gone to the grain companies themselves, and it's gone to the railroads, and the producers themselves are not retaining the amount of revenue share that they used to have in that market—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: And if members opposite don't believe me, they can just contact the NFU, and the NFU'll provide them with the info.

So it's not my own stats I'm citing on that, and I don't understand how this government can believe that by dismantling the single desk, which was designed to work for all fishers on the lake, is possibly going to avoid a situation where you end up with winners and losers.

So, sure, there's a diversity of opinion out there, but I happened to be at a press conference; I was very honoured to be asked to participate in it just before the holidays. It was organized by our hard-working northern Member of Parliament, with the NDP, Niki Ashton, and she brought a number of the fishers from the north basin down to Winnipeg and worked with them, and they spoke first-hand of what the impacts of this is potentially going to mean for them and for their families and for their communities.

And the concerns cover a very, very wide range. I—one of the reasons why I asked the question that I just did during the Q & A section, Mr. acting 'speaker,'—Speaker, about whether the subsidy is still going to remain in place—it's a very fair policy. It recognized, and we recognized when we were in office, that fishers who happen to catch their fish in the south basin, whether it's around Gimli or elsewhere, they're much closer to the fish processing plant in Winnipeg than is someone in Norway House or someone who fishes in the north basin.

So, in order to level the playing field and make sure that northern communities do not suffer just because of where they happen to be located, there's a subsidy fund available to help make sure that those fish from the north get down to the south. I mean, otherwise you're talking about a scenario where it's every fisher for themselves and the fish processing

plants are going to be located wherever they're located, and how on earth is a northern fisher going to get their product fairly to a private buyer?

* (15:30)

I mean, they're talking about Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation still operating. Let's be clear; they're not talking about completely dismantling it. I get that. But, in the absence of that subsidy being available, in the absence of, you know, resources available so communities can get their fish to a fish-processing plant, it doesn't matter how many fish they catch, if they can't get it to market then that's going to be a huge hit for those communities. And then what happens to their quota?

Is this government prepared to put, in writing, in their new regulations, that they are going to ban the sale of fishing quota in an open market? Right now, as I understand it, fishers within different communities are certainly able to buy or sell or trade fishing quota amongst themselves, but there is not, and, as I understand it, they do not want there to be, an open selling and distribution of quota between communities on a large scale.

All of the communities rely on those fishing quotas to be able to go out and fish on our amazing lakes and earn their living and support their families, provide sustenance for their communities. But, if you end up in a situation where fishers in a north basin—or anyone else who's economically disadvantaged for whatever reason, if they suddenly don't have the supports that were there before, if they're not getting the price that they used to get before, if they have less revenue coming in, they're in a situation where, tragically, they may have to look at other options.

And this government needs to make sure that overfishing is not one of the results. They need to make sure that local communities are not victimized by, you know, big, powerful buyers with deep pockets from, you know—they might not even have any connection to Manitoba. Some of them might; some of them might not. These are some of the concerns that are going to have to be addressed by this government if they want anyone to believe that they actually have the interests of all fishers at heart.

And the First Nations' rights are just so paramount in all of this. The treaties indicate, and the Supreme Court has listed these things time and time again, that there is—for instance, 2004—if the—this may be news to the minister, but, in 2004, there was a Supreme Court decision where the Haida Nation

had taken the BC provincial government to court and part of the ruling that came out of that determined that, quote, ultimate legal responsibility for consultation rests with the Crown, and the honour of the Crown cannot be delegated.

That means that the consultations this government has pretended to take part in, the same consultations that the people doing admitted ahead of time were a sham because the decision had already been made, but, legally, those consultations do not pass the test of that legal ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada.

So, I don't know what the minister thinks she understands better than the Supreme Court of Canada, but we will find out in the days ahead. And there's every possibility that this government's entire plan for fundamentally changing the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is going to end up going nowhere except court. And all of the plans that they've laid forward and all the private-sector interests that they're hoping to engage here are all going to be left in a holding pattern until that court case is heard out.

And I'm not in any way going to try and pre-guess what the court decision may be. I'm just astonished that the minister bringing forward this legislation doesn't seem to realize that how she's implementing this legislation is contrary to the existing laws of the country.

And that's just one Supreme Court of Canada decision. Here's another one. And again, it's not like these things just happened. It's not like these were fairly recent. You might be able to give the government the benefit of the doubt and say, oh, well, you know, maybe they weren't aware of it yet. This is 2005. The first example I gave was 2004, then in 2005, there was a subsequent Supreme Court decision on another matter where the Mikisew Cree nation took the Government of Canada to court and part of that ruling was that First Nations are, quote, entitled to their own consultation process separate from the general public.

So this government has merged consultations; they're having the same entity go and meet with people who are First Nations and meet with people who are Metis and meet with people who are neither, all as part of the same consultation, contrary to the Supreme Court decision. And they've also delegated their responsibility to that organization.

To top it all off, the Fisher River Cree Nation—and this has been reported in local media outlets. They wrote a letter to the minister making her aware of the mistakes that she's making time and again when it comes to the duty of consult and the way that she and her department have—well, the way that she has directed her department to carry it out. And she's written that she's actually denying that they have any constitutional rights to fish for economic purposes. The quote from her letter is that the department notes that under existing jurisprudence, commercial fishing is not considered an Aboriginal or a treaty right.

Well, the band council, oddly enough, didn't think very highly of that point of view, and they called it, quote, an ultimate reflection of the current government's prejudiced view of our constitutionally protected rights, end quote. And they went further and pointed out that their specific treaty, Treaty No. 5, which dates back to 1875, specifically indicates they have the right to fish and conduct agricultural activities for economic purposes, and that this right is constitutionally protected.

So everyone in that caucus, everyone in that Cabinet, right up to the minister, is basically saying, through this legislation and the way they have gone about implementing it, that the constitutional rights of First Nations people don't apply, that they don't count, that they don't matter and they don't need to be listened to. And the members in this Chamber—it might be the first time that they're actually hearing about this, and that's fine. Part of what you do here in this Chamber is you learn, if you're willing to listen. But the plain truth of the matter is all of their attempts here are on a collision course with existing Supreme Court rulings and the treaties that this government is supposed to be helping to implement, and in the spirit and duty that non-indigenous people have towards reconciliation.

And, you know, it's just—you've got another case back in 1999, the Fisher River Cree Nation council cited the case of *R. v. Marshall* in 1999, which confirmed that fishing for economic purposes is, in fact, a treaty right. So, this government is completely at odds with existing laws, with the—existing Supreme Court rulings, and it'll be very interesting to see what the next chapter of this is on, especially with the minister confirming today in the Q and A section that all of their consultations have, in fact, been conducted by the mediation consultant that they hired rather than by the government itself. You cannot ask Signature Mediation or anybody else

to take on the role of the Crown when direct consultations with First Nations are required.

And—I mean, certainly, we have huge questions now around eco-certification. Eco-certification is the way that the marketplace is moving for freshwater fish all over the world. The first lake in Manitoba to ever receive an eco-certification designation occurred under our government's watch. That would certainly be wonderful to see replicated going forward, because that would actually open up more markets for Manitoba's fish. That would actually help make sure that the share of the market that Manitoba's fishers currently enjoy is sustained.

* (15:40)

I mean, if we end up in a situation where many other fisheries become eco-certified around the world and ours are not, you could see significant loss of market share until we play catch-up. The ecological sustainability of the fishery in Lake Winnipeg should be a prime concern, and I know it is a prime concern for the fishers. They know full well that their livelihood, their future livelihood, that of their family members that they may wish to pass their fishing quota on to, it depends on a sustainable harvest now and a sustainable harvest every year after this one.

So, if you have to bring in a large number of different individual private sector interests, who may or may not be interested in eco-certification, who may or may not be encouraged or forced by this government to pursue eco-certification, that opportunity is going to be lost. And that would be a very tragic thing.

And this is no small consequence. We've got companies which members opposite may have heard of: Walmart, Sobeys, Safeway, the Federated Co-op, you know, my favourite of those, High Liner. They've all indicated that they're going to stop buying non-certified products from Manitoba if a plan's not put in place to secure eco-certification for our fisheries.

So that's—again, if the government fails to put that very important criteria front and centre, and not on the backburner, as it's pursuing this agenda, then that—there's going to be very severe potential consequences for fishers, their families, their communities and for our entire province down the road.

And if the members opposite don't want to believe me, here's some quotes. And I recognize

there's a diversity of opinion. I recognize that there's indigenous fishers who believe this could be a good thing. And it's my sincere hope that everyone ends up better off as a result of this. I don't think the way the government is implementing this meets the standard that they should be meeting when it comes to the duty to consult. And there's certainly not the unanimous opinion that this government would like to have us believe when it comes to this issue.

For instance, Langford Saunders, who's the president of Norway House Fisherman's Cooperative—just happens to be the single largest commercial fishing operation in our entire province—his comment was, and I quote: The fishing industry is going to collapse if the government continues with its headlong pursuit of pulling out of the monopoly of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Jim Churchill, who's owner of the Churchill fisheries in Denare Beach, he worries what the end of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation monopoly will do for northerners: This is going to squeeze out all the small fishermen.

And Sam Murdock, who's Fisher River's director of operations, said: The Province didn't even talk about how you monitor the fish stocks. Who's going to do that? And what about enforcing the regulations? They utilize Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation's numbers when they're monitoring the different lakes as to how many kilograms of whitefish came out of it, how many pickerel, how many sauger. Without that body in place, how do they know? And do they even care? It's going to affect everybody. Even the sports fishermen are going to be affected because there's going to be more fish taken out. End quote. That's from Sam Murdock as Fisher River's director of operations.

And that's a pretty important point. I'm hard to think of a more important one, from an ecological perspective, that the government has not addressed the issue of how are they going to ensure that proper monitoring and proper enforcement of regulations, which make sure that harvests remain sustainable and do not become unsustainable, how are they going to do that with all of these different private sector entities that they believe are going to set up shop here in Manitoba?

If the fish are overfished, nobody is going to end up better off. That is a certainty, and we need look no further than our easternmost province in Newfoundland, to see what happened to the cod fishery there, what happens when you stop taking

science seriously and you don't take the obvious steps that are necessary to protect the fish stocks.

And, you know, there's other quotes here, as well, that I can cite. The, you know, *The Express Weekly News*, in—on Thursday, March 9th, 2017, wrote that Fisher River Cree Nation and its members are right holders and not mere stakeholders; therefore, to characterize our rights in the vein of a stakeholder works to diminish our constitutional rights.

All of this is on the public record, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it begs the question: How on earth can the government believe that it can just ignore the existing laws of the country, the existing jurisprudence that has come out of none other than the Supreme Court of Canada, on multiple occasions, and think that their proposal is, (1) going to be accepted by the First Nations people in particular, who are being so directly impacted; and, secondly, how can they expect Manitobans to believe that the fish stocks are going to remain sustainable; and, thirdly, how on earth can they expect anyone to believe that this is anything other than an ideologically driven privatization scheme that's coming straight out of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) office in contravention of all the facts that are available?

So I'm certainly very, very concerned about this legislation. I can assure the minister that we will not be voting for it when it comes time for votes, but those are my introductory comments on the legislation itself and perhaps the minister will be bringing forward some very, very significant amendments at various stages of the debate on this. But even that is not going to fix the fact that the consultations have not been conducted in the proper manner heading into this debate around the legislation in the first place, and we will see if this ends up in court, and if so, we will see what the rulings are.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): It's an—unfortunate that the member opposite failed to attend Manitoba Wildlife Federation AGM this past weekend, where he would have had the opportunity to speak first-hand with fishers that are supportive of our progressive agenda for the fishing industry.

I would like to take a few minutes to put some words on the record in regard to the FFMC and the monopoly on fish in Manitoba with Bill 23. I'm not

sure if many of the members in this House are aware where the Interlake riding is located, but it's massive, not only in size but in cultural diversity. Where I grew up, fishing is part of our heritage. St. Laurent has an abundance of fishers, and I have some very, very good friends who are fishers.

So this bill is extremely important. This allows fishers to market their own fish. They're not stuck in the monopoly with FFMC. They can expand their horizons. It doesn't matter where you are in the province; you will be allowed to market your own fish. If you choose to continue selling to FFMC, by all means, FFMC is not on the block, so to speak.

So there's excitement in the air in the Interlake. There are piles and piles of rough fish that are being bushed and thrown away, and there are a half a dozen new fish plants that are in the talks for the Interlake region alone.

There's eight First Nations grouped together in the southeast part of Winnipeg that is excited about this. They're looking at processing, they're even considering their own branding for First Nations. They're going to give it the touch, the finesse of a knife. So far, their plans are to process it all by hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and have their own logo. This'll go a long way for having First Nations and their freshwater fish. I wish them the best of luck. They are excited about this. They've been years, years and years in waiting to be able to do this.

David McKay [*phonetic*] and three of the eight chiefs attended right in this very building, Mr. Deputy Speaker, along with the minister's staff. So they are excited about moving forward on creating a First Nation branding.

* (15:50)

Riverton. Riverton is north Interlake, northeast Interlake; they're looking at a processing plant. There's lots and lots of investment in the Interlake area. Gimli. Gimli has had numerous news articles on fish-processing plant, northern walleye, I believe it is, and they're just in the process of getting a shovel in the ground. That'll be a huge, huge step forward for the Interlake.

St. Laurent has two potential projects. There's offers on land. One big plant is looking at upwards of a \$178-million investment. This includes not only privately caught fish from the fishers but also potentially a fish farm all in the Interlake, all with jobs to follow.

There's another one—another around \$10-million investment in St. Laurent as well, and they're focusing on what we call the rough fish or fish that was just thrown away by the fishers—just thrown in the bush because it went against their quota. They are planning on marketing fish heads, of all things. These are things that we used to put into pet food. They've put them in a hot—in a pot of boiling water, and they present them and they cook them right in front of the people in the restaurants. This is a delicacy over there, and we're throwing it away. There's lots of money that can be made here by the fishers. All this stuff is thrown into pet food, and it can be sold. Something as simple as the air bladders in the fish—they need to be delicately taken out and they sew the ends up, they throw them in a pot of water, and when they cook, they expand and they float to the top; this is a delicacy. This is stuff that we're throwing away in pet foods, and it will be utilized by the private industry and sold, and the fishermen will make the money off of this.

FFMC has no sale for all—any of this. It all gets thrown in pet food.

So, and as some people in this Chamber, if they've listened to me before, which looks like not many are right now, but I have personally set foot on the ice helping a commercial fisherman. I understand how hard they work or how little money they make. I was even fortunate enough to go out on a float on the ice and go for a ride, which, as I stated in this House, was my first and my last day fishing.

But I see my time here is running short, so I just want to conclude that FFMC remains a viable option for all fishermen. FFMC is going to be one of the fish buyers. There's just more now that are utilizing the fish that is being tossed in the garbage, for the lack of a better word. So, as a matter of fact, we support FFMC, but we also support private industry to get more money for the fishermen.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with everything that a commercial fisher must endure, including put his—putting his life on the line, I feel they should have the right to freedom of marketing their product. That's all this bill is about—freedom—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

I just want to just remind the members here that the amount of conversation happening, it's very hard to listen to the speaker, so if everybody could just tone their conversation down a bit and allow the minister of the—Interlake to finish his—

Mr. Johnson: Well, thank you very much, but I can see the excitement in this room, so I'm 'suxcited'—excited to bring this to a vote, so I will sit down and go from there.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our province, we are gifted with a bounty of natural resources available to us. Many living throughout Manitoba depend on Manitoba's vast natural resources to survive to make daily ends meet. For over 100 years, Manitobans have enjoyed having access to some of the world's largest lakes for both recreational and commercial fishing. Commercial fishing contributes over \$30 million to our economy, providing jobs and opportunities to many living near Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. This includes those living within our North whom have not had other economic prospects without the work of the fisheries. With Manitoba's high quality freshwater fish, this sector of our economy represents a tremendous opportunity for growth. Fishing in Manitoba has high potential for both northern and southern commercial fishers with many companies looking to our province for future investments.

Bill 23 has been divisive initially among fishers within my entire riding of Kewatinook. While our northern fishers look forward to the freedom this represents, some of our southern fishers have expressed desire to remain within the freshwater marketing corporation, and they can. By allowing fishers the option to choose between the FFMC or the option to create their own companies, we allow the fishers to make the best choices for themselves and for their families.

I have heard from many fishers that it is common practice to throw away the rough fish as it goes against their quota, and a lot of fishers in my area in the Island Lake communities sometimes barely break even after going out and spending a day on the lake or they make as much as a dollar twenty-five a pound because they had their subsidy cut off from them for several years now.

Under the FFMC, in order not to interfere with the quotas, it was very detrimental for our fishers to throw away, leave the fish on the lakes as they knew it contravened a direct law of respect for when we take wildlife out of our own lakes. We are not to throw these away. We are not to disrespect the spirit of the fish in that order, and we see that we pay for it these days because for a long time Lake Winnipeg has—had not a lot of pickerel and walleye in their

lakes. And that's the punish—that's the price you pay when you disrespect the natural law.

However, there's a lot of international companies that have expressed their interest in our northern fisheries. These companies are willing to purchase the fish that would otherwise go unused and go to waste. Many fishers have also stated that they would love the opportunity to sell their catches locally to co-ops or our own northern stores. It's quite astounding that our fishermen were never allowed to sell our own fish to northern stores where we—most of our communities have had a northern store in—ever since I can remember it is our one—one of the only stores in the North and it was so detrimental to our economic—trying to grow our economic standing that we couldn't even sell our own fish to northern stores.

As we know, our Liberal caucus put out a brain health report and one of the key omega fatty acids in fish directly inhibits suicidal ideation because of the DHA that is present in the omega fatty acids. The ability to increase the sale of fish locally allows the possibility of increasing the flow of money within the community and reduces the risk of it going outside our community. That freedom allowed—allows the fisher to open up new economic growth opportunities to people living within the North as a potential for more money to flow in our North.

In the Island Lake region, we see high costs of transportation which impedes greatly our economic progress in the North. Many fished for love as sometimes they don't even break even. The market, while allowing fishers the chance to pursue higher economic opportunities, is reduced as the cost of transportation is so prohibitive for the potential of—for the potential future of Manitoba fishers to be maintained, we must see protections in place that prevent overfishing.

* (16:00)

Poor management of fisheries has seen—has resulted in a loss of millions of dollars for Manitoba fishers. Areas such as Lake Winnipegosis have been impacted significantly because of overfishing. For those choosing to remain or choosing to leave, we must see implements put in place to protect and conserve fish within Manitoba, whether or not a fisher or fishery opts in, properly—proper ecological management is needed to sustain such a valuable resource in our province.

Deputy Speaker, many fishers within Manitoba will continue to fish regardless of what they are paid. Manitoba fishers are passionate about their craft and their work. Supporting our fishers is as important as supporting any other industry, and we must ensure that our fishers are able to make a sustainable living off of their craft.

The amendment creates opportunities for our fishers while ensuring the protection of the FFMC is available for those that—who do not wish to opt out.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before we continue with the next speaker, I just wanted to let the House know that to my right, in the loge, is my predecessor, the honourable former member of Arthur-Virden, Mr. Jim Downey.

* * *

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak just briefly to make a couple of points. And I want to refer to a report which was delivered on Lake Winnipeg in January of 2011 to the former government. And this report was very clear in terms of the Lake Winnipeg fishery. It was a wake-up call, and it contained a number of significant recommendations. It pointed out that at that point there was some significant concerns about the management that was occurring, and the data being collected, being inadequate.

There was a series of recommendations put forward, and essentially the report said that it is absolutely essential that these recommendations are implemented, and if they are not implemented, the fishery on Lake Winnipeg as a sustainable fishery is at risk.

The report cited what had happened on Lake Erie and Lake Winnipegosis when, after a number of record years, all of a sudden, the walleye fishery crashed. And the walleye fishery on Lake Winnipegosis which crashed in 1960 has never come back as it should have. The walleye fishery on Lake Erie also crashed in about 1960, and it took, in Lake Erie, with much better management, 'til about the mid-1980s, say, about 15 years, for the Lake Erie fishery to start recovering. But we certainly do not want this happening for Lake Winnipeg.

Now, sadly, after this 'resport' was presented in January 2011, the government of the day, an NDP government, failed to implement these

recommendations, and they have put the sustainability of the fishery—the walleye fishery on Lake Winnipeg at very significant risk.

The minister, when I asked a question earlier on, said that they were very concerned about making the fishery sustainable, but the fact is that since the minister has been in office, in fact, although there's some talk, there's very little that has actually been done, and not much progress on meeting these recommendations has actually been made.

I just would like to point the importance out to people in the Chamber of making sure that we do have sustainable fisheries, and that would apply, whether it's Lake Winnipegosis or Lake Winnipeg or northern lakes, that this is absolutely vital.

Thank you.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I move, seconded by the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino), that we adjourn debate.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All—agreed?

Is it pleasure of the House?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No?

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in—say nay. Opposed.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I believe that the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested.

Call in the members.

* (17:00)

The question before the House: Shall the debate be adjourned?

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

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

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 12, Nays 38.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When the Bill 23 is next called for debate, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview must speak immediately or else lose his right to speak on this bill.

The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 3, 2017

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