

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 207—The Public Health Amendment Act

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I move, seconded by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), that Bill 207, The Public Health Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, this bill amends The Public Health Act to prohibit anyone other than a person regulated under The Pharmaceutical Act from owning, operating or possessing a pill or tablet press other than—other similar designed equipment. We've heard from addiction's advocates, front-line workers and families that this is a crucial step in the fight against opioid abuse. And currently these presses are available for only 6 to 10 thousand dollars for a professional-grade press, which can make up to 18,000 pills an hour.

Bill 207 would make it illegal for any person not included under The Pharmaceutical Act to own, operate or possess a pill press.

While this bill is just one step in the fight against opioid drug abuse, restricting the sale of pill presses could save lives of many Manitobans. We urge this House to vote in favour of it.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Kewatinook. Oh, pardon me.

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

Bill 209—The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that Bill 209, The Mental Health Amendment and Personal Health Information Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Klassen: When a person is hospitalized for an injury, a heart attack or a stroke, health-care professionals contact that person's circle of care, whether they be family or friends. Yet there is uncertainty to make that contact when it is a mental illness, suicide attempt or drug overdose due to the language used in our Personal Health Information Act and our Mental Health Act.

Madam Speaker, Bill 209 would see that language clarified so that circles of care may be notified in the case of mental or brain health issues when compelling health or safety circumstances exist.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Madam Speaker: I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Office of the Children's Advocate for the period April 1st, 2015 to March 31st, 2016.

Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Michael Wenham

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, we're all very fortunate to live in a country and in a province that is so caring, that people go out of their way to do whatever they can to assist those less fortunate, to help those in need and to promote and create awareness of some truly amazing, heartfelt cases.

Today, I stand in this very house to bring attention and appreciation to a young man who is shown so much compassion in his young 17 years. I must add, Madam Speaker, this is not the first time

this young man has reached out into the Brandon community with a heart so big, so unselfish, that he leads a great example of the type of person we should all strive to be.

In 2013, Michael Wenham, a high school student from Crocus Plains in Brandon, played a very important role in raising more than \$11,400 for a local choir director in Brandon whom he had known through his time as a student in her choir program. Michael's actions included shaving his head as part of his cancer awareness fundraiser to show his love and his support for his teacher.

Madam Speaker, Michael's desire to help those around him did not end there. He and his head will make an appearance at Michael Wenham's Head Shave 2.0 for a great cause later this year, in an effort to raise funds for his friend Mike Adamski. Mr. Adamski is the principal at Vincent Massey high school in Brandon and was recently diagnosed with brain cancer. The two have also worked together for a number of years as members of the Brandon Wheat Kings' game day staff.

Tom Wenham, Michael's father, was quoted in a Westman Journal article saying: It's really neat that Michael thinks about things like this and is so concerned. He's always been a caring kid but the fact of the matter is that he's so concerned about the people he cares are so close to him, he wants to be able to do something for them.

Madam Speaker, I ask all honourable members to join me in welcoming Michael Wenham, along with his father Tom and his sister Krista Antonio, to the gallery today and to thank him for being the type of person that so many of us can look up to.

Angie Houston

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): It is my great pleasure to honour and acknowledge Angie Houston. Angie, a St. Johns constituent, has dedicated her life to children's well-being.

Angie has volunteered at the Luxton School for 40 years in a variety of capacities, including the last 10 running the Luxton School Family Centre. Luxton students know that if they're hungry, they only need to go see Angie who will always feed them without judgment and with always a smile on her face.

Angie organizes school-wide breakfast and snack programs, ensuring students are well fueled, maximizing their learning opportunities and participation in all school activities. Angie is well known

for never saying no to an opportunity to help out, exemplified in the myriad of volunteer activities she undertakes. Angie volunteers in the classroom reading groups, spending much of her time reading with children, creating activity booklets, placing book orders, shelving books in the library and organizing interactive book fairs. Angie is also an active member of the Luxton School parent advisory group.

* (13:40)

Angie has established and maintained lasting relationships with over 260 students, with many students even calling her Grandma. Angie's smiling face, compassion and dedication has made her a cherished member of the St. Johns community and Luxton School.

And if we can honour her today, I would appreciate it.

Tim Cameron

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): It is with pleasure that I recognize recently retired Manitoba Conservation Officer Tim Cameron.

Tim Cameron wore the Manitoba conservation officer uniform from 1981 until November 18, 2016. During his 35 years of service, Tim worked in the Flin Flon, Selkirk, Thompson, Island Lake and Ashern Districts. While in Selkirk, he met and married his best friend, Jean Bruce.

During the early '90s, Tim researched canine programs for conservation work and submitted proposals to department officials. His dogged Scottish determination was rewarded.

For approximately 15 years, Tim, his first dog Duke and second dog Jake, traveled Manitoba to assist conservation officers and sometimes, police services. They found illegal fish and wildlife, firearms, spent cartridges, tracked suspects and missing persons. They performed numerous presentations for students, service groups and park interpretive programs.

It's my understanding that the dogs loved their veterinarian, especially the member from Selkirk.

When Jake was in the twilight of his career, Tim and Jean decided that the time was right for him to pursue advancement. They returned to Thompson as Tim became a Regional Field Supervisor in the Northeast Region.

Tim will forever be known as the first canine handler in the Department of Natural Resources, now called Department of Sustainable Development. Thanks to Tim, Sustainable Development now has two Canine Units, one of which is here today.

Tim Cameron was never satisfied with just going to work. He strived for learning, betterment, and professionalism.

Tim's peers chose him as the Shikar-Safari Manitoba Wildlife Officer of the Year in 1999.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge Tim and Jean Cameron, who are here with us today in the gallery.

On behalf of all Manitobans, I thank Tim Cameron for a stellar career.

Centre Flavie-Laurent

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): Madame la présidente, les Manitobaines et Manitobains ont toujours été reconnus pour leur générosité et leur volonté d'aider ceux qui sont dans le besoin. Aujourd'hui, je saisis cette occasion pour reconnaître un organisme dans ma circonscription qui incarne cet esprit de générosité et dévouement, le Centre Flavie-Laurent.

Depuis son ouverture en 2005, le Centre Flavie-Laurent a servi plus de 30 000 familles. Cet organisme récupère des milliers d'articles afin de les distribuer gratuitement aux personnes qui sont défavorisées. Une grande partie de ses clients sont des familles monoparentales cherchant des vêtements et des meubles pour leurs enfants.

Plus tôt ce mois-ci, j'ai eu le plaisir d'assister au 11^e banquet annuel du Centre Flavie-Laurent. Ce banquet recueille non seulement des fonds pour le centre, mais offre également l'occasion de sensibiliser le public aux causes fondamentales de la pauvreté. L'évènement a réuni plusieurs membres de la communauté et j'avais l'honneur de rencontrer de nombreuses bénévoles et partenaires du centre. C'est difficile d'imaginer nos communautés sans ces individus attentionnés et compatisants.

En dépit du dévouement et du bon travail des organismes tels que le Centre Flavie-Laurent, la pauvreté n'est pas un problème qu'ils peuvent résoudre tout seul. Il faut que le gouvernement joue un rôle actif dans la lutte contre la pauvreté et continue d'appuyer le bon travail du Centre Flavie-Laurent et les organisations de ce genre.

Madame la présidente, le personnel et les bénévoles du Centre Flavie-Laurent sont exemplaires de l'esprit communautaire et de la générosité. Je les remercie pour tout ce qu'ils font pour notre communauté.

Merci beaucoup.

Translation

Madam Speaker, Manitobans have always been known for their generosity and willingness to help people in need. Today, I take advantage of this opportunity to acknowledge an organization in my constituency that exemplifies this spirit of generosity and dedication, the Centre Flavie-Laurent.

Since it opened in 2005, the Centre Flavie-Laurent has served more than 30,000 families. This organization collects thousands of items and distributes them at no cost to people who are in need. Many of its clients are single-parent families who are looking for clothing and furniture for their children.

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of attending the Centre Flavie-Laurent's 11th annual banquet. The event not only raises funds for the centre, but also provides an opportunity to raise public awareness about the fundamental causes of poverty. The banquet brought together a number of community members, and I had the opportunity to meet many of the centre's volunteers and partners. It is difficult to imagine our communities without such caring and compassionate people.

Despite the great work and dedication of organizations such as the Centre Flavie-Laurent, poverty is not a problem they can solve on their own. The government has an active role to play in the fight against poverty, and it must continue to support the good work of the Centre Flavie-Laurent and other similar organizations.

Madam Speaker, the staff and volunteers of the Centre Flavie-Laurent embody the spirit of community and generosity. I would like to thank them for all they do for our community.

Thank you very much.

November

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): November is a month recognizing many worthwhile causes: diabetes awareness, Alzheimer's awareness, prostate cancer awareness and many more.

I rise in this House today to thank Manitobans and people from around the world that participated in Movember. During the month of November, men grow a moustache with the aim of raising vital funds and creating awareness to some of the biggest health issues faced by men: prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

For men in Manitoba, prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed type of cancer. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, in 2016, an estimated 710 Manitoba men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

We all know someone who has been affected by prostate cancer and would like to see a cure for this disease. During the month of November, we have all seen someone sporting a moustache that usually doesn't have one. This is not just a bold fashion statement, but in true Manitoba spirit, these folks are helping to raise funds and bring awareness to these diseases.

And in that same spirit, I would once again like to thank all Manitobans who donated to and supported this important cause.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

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

We have seated in the public gallery from Seven Oaks Met School 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Jane Samaroo and Scott Plantje. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry).

And also seated in the public gallery from Nelson McIntyre Collegiate co-op program, 17 high school students under the direction of Chris Enns. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger).

On behalf of all members here, we'd like to welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Collective Bargaining Agreements Pledge to Front-Line Workers

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): On April 13th, just days before the election, the Premier promised to all Manitobans that he would not be opening up contracts. He said he

would not do so because the honour of the government is at stake there. We agree. The honour of the government is at stake in respecting existing contracts.

Will the Premier honour his commitment to Manitoba workers and declare firmly that existing collective agreements will not be reopened?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, before I respond to my colleague's question, I just—I wanted to say how wonderful it was to hear those statements in respect of the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) tribute to Angie, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) paying respect to Michael and his work in Brandon, and I would also say, in terms of the tribute from my colleague from Swan River for a gentleman who served the people of the province well for many years. All of these individuals, each of these individuals, many more Manitobans, demonstrate compassion and unselfishness in their behaviour, and I think it's something to really celebrate.

I also believe that that compassion should extend to people like the children in our gallery today whose interests are not well-served with giving in to the tendency the previous government gave in to, to seek popularity today with money taken from future generations, Madam Speaker.

We'll fix the finances of the province, and we'll do it with the best interests of the future and of the children and grandchildren all of us love dearly.

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

Ms. Marcelino: I thank the Premier for the affirmation of the tributes we have heard; however, I didn't hear any answer to my question, so I'll ask again.

April 13th was a warm, sunny day. Just days before the election, at the Inn at The Forks, the Premier, surrounded by his supporters, said clearly to the media that he will be honouring contracts that were signed in good faith. He said the honour of the government is at stake.

* (13:50)

The Premier wants to be taken at his word, so I ask him again: Will he keep his word and honour existing contracts with front-line workers?

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

I recall the date very well. I recall that week very well. Maybe members opposite do too, and perhaps they would remember, then, that the word honour was hardly appropriate to false accusations of homophobia, accusations of money laundering, accusations that were designed to frighten cancer patients by claiming falsely that they would lose their drugs. These were all accusations made by the members opposite during the last election campaign.

Madam Speaker, they speak of honour but have failed to demonstrate it in their conduct on too many occasions. I would encourage the members opposite to recognize that we have an obligation to be straightforward—and we are—in respect of fixing the finances in this province, and I would encourage their assistance and help in this effort.

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

Ms. Marcelino: I listened intently to the Premier's response, didn't hear the answer.

On April 13th, Madam Speaker, just days before the election, the Premier vowed to respect existing contracts with front-line workers because the honour of the government is at stake. He has now publicly indicated that he has plans to reopen those contracts with front-line workers. This is an attack on front-line workers and an attack on the honour of the government.

He should answer a simple question for once: Did he really mean it when he said he will honour existing contracts, or did he just make it up?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, with respect to the member's commentary, in the weeks prior to the last election, where Manitobans spoke clearly, the NDP resorted to trying to frighten civil servants. Some of their members claimed that nurses would be fired in large numbers. They claimed that teachers would lose their jobs. They sent out mailers at taxpayer expense all across the province trying to frighten civil servants—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: —and, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, did frighten many of the children of civil servants around the province in the process, which was not only hurtful but totally selfish.

It would also be selfish to continue to believe, Madam Speaker, that we can buy sustainable services for our people in this province at the expense of the money taken from children who haven't even had the chance to get a job yet or pay taxes. This isn't right or fair.

So, Madam Speaker, the previous administration made an incredible mess of things. And we will fix the finances. And we are dedicated, in the interests of the long-term sustainability of our province and its services and the people who provide them, to fixing up that mess.

Collective Bargaining Agreements Pledge to Front-Line Workers

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, this Premier has a remarkable inability to answer even simple questions both inside and outside of this Chamber.

On April 13th, the Premier stood with the member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), now the Justice Minister, and stated plainly that he would respect existing contracts with front-line workers because obviously the honour of the government is at stake.

I agree, and front-line workers agree, that the honour of this government is at stake.

Does the Justice Minister agree with her Premier's comments on April 13th, or does she support his plans to rip up existing contracts?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, not only was there never a plan to fire nurses, as the NDP falsely claimed, but there was never a plan to fire teachers, as the NDP falsely claimed; nor was there a plan to deprive cancer patients of their drugs, as the NDP falsely claimed.

And today they continue to add to the false claims.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, he's not getting any better at answering questions. We know that today.

Madam Speaker, on April 13th, just days before the election, the member for Tuxedo, now the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), stood directly behind the Premier as he pledged and promised to respect existing contracts with front-line workers because, in his words, the honour of the government is at stake.

These are legally binding contracts with front-line workers backed, in the words of the Premier, by the honour of the Crown.

Will this Justice Minister, the senior legal adviser to the Premier and this Cabinet, set the record straight today and will she say clearly, a deal is a deal?

Mr. Pallister: Of course, trust is an important thing.

When the member went around the constituency of Minto in the 2011 election, he knocked, he looked people in the eye, he told them he was going to not raise their taxes. And he implied, Madam Speaker, given the endorsement he had of the organization of the NDP political apparatus, he implied, at least, that he would support his leader. Then he launched a rebellion against his leader when his polling numbers showed him he was in danger of being re-elected.

Madam Speaker, these are not the actions of a trustworthy individual. And so when the member raises questions of trust, he needs to take a look in the mirror before he raises them.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, it's fine for the Premier to attack me, but when he attacks the people of Minto, that is going over the line. And I will be going around Minto, and I'll be putting his ignorant and uninformed comments about the immigrants and the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. I would just caution the member that words that he has just chosen are not of proper decorum in the House. It—we are trying to reach a higher level of respect here, and I would just ask the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Swan: I will simply withdraw that comment.

I will be going around Minto and telling people about the things that this Premier chose to put on the record about hard-working immigrants in this province, many of whom I'm very proud to represent in this Legislature.

Now, this Justice Minister is not answering the question, just as she would not answer my question about whether she had a legal opinion about ripping up labour agreements.

On April 13, just days before the election, the minister stood in support of the Premier because, obviously, honour of the government was at stake. The Premier's broken his word.

Will the minister fulfill her responsibility and take steps to preserve the honour of the Crown?

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate the member's comments, Madam Speaker. It allows me to remind him that in going around his riding, as he has done in the past, he has frequently spread misinformation, including but not limited to his intentions to raise the taxes of his own constituents. He's proceeded to do that to their detriment.

He's also gone around his own riding and belittled his leader. He's done that intentionally to try to force changes within his own political organization, which have resulted, Madam Speaker, quite deservedly, in his own caucus members having very little respect for his comments—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: And when he prefaces his comments with personal attacks, he also should mention that he tried to frighten cancer victims, some of whom were in his own riding, that he tried to frighten teachers and nurses, many of whom are in his own riding.

And in the process of raising these false allegations, as he repeatedly does, he has demonstrated to his own constituents that he isn't a man who can be trusted, Madam Speaker. [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Collective Bargaining Agreements Pledge to Front-Line Workers

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): People in Fort Garry-Riverview are very concerned that the Premier is breaking his commitment to front-line workers.

When negotiations with the front-line workers were concluded, he didn't bother to say a word; neither did any of his MLAs at the time, didn't say a word. Then he holds a photo-op press conference and says quite clearly, the honour of the government is at stake in respecting those contracts.

Will he assure the constituents of Fort Garry-Riverview that he'll keep his word to front-line workers?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, we, of course, will focus and continue to focus on

protecting front-line workers and the services they provide.

But I encourage the member, when he speaks of honour, to remember his own behaviour as he marched around his riding, went to the doors and knocked, looked people directly in the eyes and promised them no tax hikes and then invoked the largest tax hikes in Manitoba history on the backs of his own citizens in his own riding.

* (14:00)

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

Mr. Allum: It's interesting. The Premier had no objections when the contracts were signed. He was the leader of the official opposition at the time. He didn't say a word. He couldn't be bothered to comment.

But, at the same time, he rolls into government, he makes sure the people with minimum wage don't get a raise, yet he gets a huge raise himself. And now he's interested in breaking contracts that were honoured, which were negotiated fairly and collectively.

Will the Premier please stop this attack on front-line workers?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, we're continuing to give front-line workers the encouragement and support for a better future here in this province while fixing the finances the NDP left in such an incredible mess.

But, again, I encourage the member to understand, when he speaks about trust, that he went to the doors of his own constituents' homes, knocked, looked them right in the eye, said no tax increases would be invoked by his government and then was part of the Cabinet that jacked up the taxes—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: —on the home insurance of the very homes upon whose doors he knocked, Madam Speaker, on the benefits of the people who live in those homes which they purchased to support their children, to support themselves in times of need.

This is exactly the behaviour the previous government demonstrated. Members did not run on that—well, they ran on a promise they would not raise taxes, and, Madam Speaker, that's exactly what they did. And it was an incredible disservice to the very

people that we're trying to protect today and will protect.

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

Mr. Allum: Madam Speaker, the Premier's not protecting anyone. He's scaring the bejeebers out of front-line workers by—because they had depended on those contracts to put food on the table—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Allum: —they could—depended on the contracts to pay their mortgage. They depended on those contracts to send their kids to school, and now he's saying he's going to rip them right up. He said the honour of the government was at stake.

To protect front-line workers, to protect those contracts, we're asking him today to withdraw any—any—kind of indication that he'll be ripping up those contracts, and will he join with us and support front-line workers instead?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, I know that the member is grieving, and I understand that he's having trouble accepting the decision of the people of Manitoba. I know that he is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: —he is in the process of grieving, lashing out. Of course, Madam Speaker, he was doing that prior to the election and so were his colleagues when they tried to frighten nurses—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: The member specifically referenced nurses and teachers when he said they'd all lose their jobs. He went around his riding, and his colleagues did too, sadly, and told them all they'd lose their jobs.

Madam Speaker, in this litany of lies that—conducted by the members opposite, they actually did a disservice not only to themselves, but also to those people who they misled and misinformed at the doors.

So what we're going to do, while they're continuing with the agenda of fear, we'll continue with the agenda of building hope.

Teachers' Collective Agreement Government Duty to Consult

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) unleashed all this media attention because this week he's been hinting that he wants to change existing deals with teachers. He suggested he wants to—them to give up the deals they've already signed for the next two years. He's hinted at a wage freeze, and he's shown no understanding that a deal is a deal.

But what's most concerning is that the Premier has said all of this in public without even talking to the teachers first. It's a serious matter, Madam Speaker. The honour of the Crown is at stake.

Will the Premier commit to meeting with the teachers before he engages in any other misguided attempts to interfere with collective bargaining?

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

Again, I state that in these discussions, context is very important. We have worked hard to establish that context for all Manitobans. The fact that the NDP in the last year of their budget doubled their deficit estimate, produced an almost \$1-billion deficit that all of us as Manitobans must face. It cannot be overstated, the extent of fiscal challenge that all of us face as Manitobans.

What do we need at this time? We need the co-operation of all Manitobans. We need everyone at the table. We need meaningful consultation. We must solve these things together. We must fix the finances

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

Mr. Kinew: We do need everybody at the table. It would be great if the Premier would show up to the table with the teachers.

The government has a duty to consult and engage in meaningful consultation with public sector unions before they can ask for wage freezes or impinge on existing collective bargaining agreements. That affects Manitoba teachers. We know the Premier has a duty to consult in these matters, because the Supreme Court weighed in after the BC government tried to interfere with existing contracts with health workers in that province.

Will he tell us today whether or not his government will fulfill their duty to consult with

teachers and other unions before opening up collective bargaining agreements?

Mr. Friesen: The member for Fort Rouge says it's important to come to the table, and he's exactly right, but the question that our government continues to have for this opposition is where were they, and why did they not come to the table in the most comprehensive prebudgetary consultative process that this province has ever seen? Members of the Liberal Party came to the table. Manitobans came from all walks of life to that table as we went around the province. Even the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) came to the table.

But where were the members of the NDP party who would not come to the table to take part in these meaningful discussions that continue to have results and to inform our thinking on how to fix the finances of the province of Manitoba?

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, these should really be simple questions to answer. Do you respect existing agreements? Do you respect existing contracts? It should be a simple yes, we do, and then move on to the next matter.

Instead we hear all this evasion and all these reminders of the fact that we are hearing contradictions of what the PCs ran on in the most recent provincial election.

Can the Premier commit today that he will have meaningful conversations with teachers so that they can remind him that a deal is a deal?

Mr. Friesen: Well, I'm pleased to have that question from the member about meaningful conversation and meaningful consultation. It gives me the opportunity to talk once again about the meaningful conversation that we have engaged all Manitobans in.

These are significant challenges that face all of us. We have expressed that. We have sat down with labour. We will continue to sit down in labour-in consultative meetings where we discuss together. We are drawing in the ideas that are expressed at the table, and good ideas are being expressed.

I would also indicate to all members of this House that the exercise in terms of how we have invited civil servants into the process of prebudgetary consultation has also been helpful and has identified areas for exploration.

We will fix the finances of the province. It will take all of us to do it. When will they join the exercise?

Provincial Nominee Program Proposed Changes to Criteria

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Last night, I met with an extraordinary group of citizens who are very concerned with the Premier's proposed changes to the Provincial Nominee Program and the incredibly disrespectful language they heard from the Premier this week.

They spoke eloquently about their experiences as provincial nominees and the deep connections and their families have made in Manitoba. They are determined to fight the changes the Premier has proposed.

Will the Premier just stop and abandon his proposed changes?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): It's a pleasure to rise in response to that question and put a few words on the record regarding the success of the Provincial Nominee Program, one that was originally designed under a Progressive Conservative government back in the '90s.

An Honourable Member: Thank you, Bonnie Mitchelson.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you, Bonnie.

And we're—I'm pleased to be part of a government that is moving to make this program work better into the future, and as part of that, we will eliminate the years' long waiting list, which is the most frequent request we get from the members opposite.

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

* (14:10)

Ms. Fontaine: Last night I heard from business 'owners,' immigration consultants and public sector workers who explained their family ties to Manitoba kept them from moving to bigger markets in Toronto or, let's say, Vancouver. It's meant that Manitoba's established immigrants have the second lowest unemployment income amongst immigrants in Canada and the third highest employment and participation rate.

The Premier's changes to the PNP's criteria so that nominees must have a job before they are

accepted will eliminate that family connection, and will result in nominees moving out of Manitoba.

The Premier must admit that the program's current criteria is the best fit for Manitoba, and will he just leave well enough alone?

Mr. Wishart: We're certainly very proud of the Provincial Nominee Program, and we are working to make it better.

We're trying to align new immigrants that come under the PNP, an economic immigration program, with a good job in the workplace so that they do not spend years on waiting lists, as has been the case, and so that these people will be able to get into Manitoba more readily and be part of our economy more quickly.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The Premier described the PNP as a program for future welfare cases on Monday in the House. Chuck Davidson, the president and CEO of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, disagrees. In fact, he asserts that the PNP is instrumental in making sure we have the skilled workforce that we need to fill jobs.

PNP has been both praised by immigration and business community as a way to bring in skilled workers who drive our economy and build multicultural communities that enrich our culture in Manitoba.

Why is the Premier just so offside on this?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I said nothing of the kind, Madam Speaker. The member opposite's engaging in the old tactic of making false assertions. This is the day for the NDP—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: This is the day for the NDP to do false assertions.

I'm proud of the record of the Progressive Conservative Party and governments in the past and presently in not only developing this program, but in encouraging it and making it better. We'll make it better, Madam Speaker.

The members opposite are defending the status quo, but we ran and asked a mandate for Manitobans, and we were given one to repair the services of our province and this includes helping new people who

come to our country to get meaningful work by working to create better gateways to their own success.

People come here wanting to work, Madam Speaker, and we're going to give them better opportunities to find work and skills to develop their own future.

I encourage the members not to make false assertions, nor to put them on the record in effort to bolster arguments that have no substantial reason to be supported.

Northern Economic Development Sustainable Development of Boreal Land

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): We recently met with people who helped create a statement of common values, and sitting at that table was a diverse group of unconventional allies who believe the northern values vision will provide prosperity and progress to the North.

They shared with us a copy of their declaration of common values for the sustainable development of the boreal in northern Manitoba. I'd like to table it.

My question to the minister is: How will the northern values fit into this government's northern economic and environmental plan?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question.

You know, obviously, forestry, our natural resources, our lakes and rivers, are very important to us, and our department is currently examining, you know, our current plan that we have, and we're looking at ensuring that we will preserve and protect our natural resources. They are precious to Manitobans, and we will ensure that we do protect them in the future. Thank you.

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

Ms. Klassen: I come from an area that has the largest intact pristine boreal forest. It is an inhabited area.

Indigenous groups have traditional territories that span across all of Canada. Provincial lines are not an indigenous concept. Our territories are large because, being that we are the stewards of those lands, we know how to manage our precious resources and we knew not to exhaust an area.

Protection of our asset is a going concern. Many communities need help to develop land-use plans in accordance with our TLEs as we begin to engage in economic development.

What is the minister doing to ensure boreal communities are ready to engage in economic development?

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

You know, of course, as I said earlier, our forests, our natural resources, are very important to us, and we are working together with my department to actually determine the future and, you know, how we can work together with the northern communities to ensure that they are sustainable into the future.

You know, we've talked to indigenous people. I just came back from a meeting just maybe half an hour ago, actually, with Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, where we—I had those discussions and I talked to them about sustainability and climate change issues.

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

Treaty Rights of Hunters and Fishers

Ms. Klassen: We have dire issues facing many of my constituents in regards to food security. Our people need to be able to harvest our own country foods. Due to imposed regulations enacted without proper consultation of our trappers and fishermen, many are no longer able to harvest from their own traditional territories.

Hunter-gatherers need to be at the table to determine the collective best course of action.

What is the minister doing to ensure the—that treaty rights of indigenous hunters and fishermen are respected as we plan for economic development?

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

You know, we are working together with the indigenous communities. And we want to ensure that, you know, you have a place at the table and that you will, you know, be there, able to participate in discussions that we have. We know it's important that you are able to hunt and fish. And, you know, it is your right.

We want to work together with the indigenous communities and all Manitobans to ensure that we do

have safe and sustainable big game and fishing well into the future.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I would just like to remind the minister that when answers are being given that they be directed in third party through the Chair. Appreciate that.

Provincial Deficit Front-Line Services

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Manitoba families know that the NDP's reckless spending over a—over their decade of debt has created a massive deficit, two credit downgrades and hundreds of millions of dollars in debt-service charges.

Our government is setting a new course for Manitoba and we are focused on fixing the finances.

Can the Minister of Finance tell this House the impact of the NDP's decade of debt on Manitoba's finances and explain how the NDP deficit, if left unaddressed, threatens the front-line services Manitobans rely upon?

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

For 17 years, the NDP government spent beyond their means, leaving Manitobans saddled with an almost \$1-billion deficit, two credit downgrades and hundreds of millions of dollars each year in debt-servicing charges.

Every year, NDP spending outpaced its revenue. Manitoba's spending grew at an average of 4 per cent per year average. If left unchecked, that would mean that by the year 2019, Manitoba's deficit would have ballooned under the NDP to \$1.7 billion.

It is unsustainable. That's why we have been elected to fix the finances and return our province to a responsible fiscal track. We will make the tough decisions on behalf of all Manitobans to make this a sustainable province and to make Manitoba the most improved province in all of Canada.

Fentanyl Crisis—Sale of Pill Presses Bill 207—Request for Support

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I was pleased this afternoon to introduce a bill that calls on the government to restrict the sale of pill presses to those not covered under The Pharmaceutical Act.

This legislation is intended to be non-partisan and was born directly from discussions we've had with families and addictions front-line workers. They

say that easy access to pill presses are allowing clandestine drug labs to easily distribute unknown quantities of fentanyl in their pill form, as well as mix it with other illegal drugs.

* (14:20)

This simple bill would be a huge step forward in Manitoba's fight against opioid addictions.

Will the minister move this bill forward as quickly as possible as part of a comprehensive made-in-Manitoba strategy?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the question from the member opposite, and I appreciate all members' concern on what is a very serious issue as we deal with the issue of fentanyl, carfentanil and opiates more generally. Certainly the advice that, in talking to provinces across the country, is that we need a national restriction on pill presses.

We understand that pill presses wouldn't be constrained by borders because those who are selling drugs and who are making these drugs aren't constrained by the provincial borders, and so a national approach is the proper approach to get an actual effect in terms of the restriction. We look forward to that happening, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: The Health Minister has, over and over again, tried to shift responsibility to the federal government, but Manitoba families simply can't wait any longer. They need Manitoba to take action now, and this bill is just one simple way to get a step closer to ending the tragic crisis that is claiming lives.

After fentanyl overdoses skyrocketed last year, Alberta unanimously passed a bill introduced by the Progressive Conservative government—or Progressive Conservative member there, that restricts the sale of pill presses. The Alberta police agreed with this move and said it would save lives.

Will the Minister of Health set aside partisan differences and just vote for this bill, which will make a huge difference in the addictions crisis in our province?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I'm glad the member referenced the law enforcement. Certainly, in Ottawa, we heard from the Canadian Police

Association, represented by the chiefs, who indicated that they were looking for a national ban on pill presses.

We support that effort. We brought that voice to Ottawa, along with other provinces. We're glad that the federal government listened to us, and we asked for high-level discussions with China, an agreement to restrict the opiates that are coming in from that country. The federal government listened to us on that particular initiative. We have reason to believe they'll listen to us on the national restriction of pill presses, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, this bill banning pill presses is just one of many things that can be done to tackle the fentanyl emergency head on. I've spoken with countless families, with advocates, with addictions workers, and they're asking for concrete steps that can be developed here now, can be done now, and made in Manitoba for an anti-opiate strategy.

He can increase the access to naloxone kits. He can invest in long-term addictions treatment beds. He can create a family advocate in hospitals for families of overdose victims. He can invest in proven harm-reduction tactics like building safe-injection sites.

The minister just needs to pick one of these and do it, not wait for the federal government, and one is now on the Order Paper.

Will he make real investments to stop fentanyl from destroying families and lives?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, we've already indicated we'll be expanding the distribution of naloxone. We've already launched an awareness campaign. We've had discussions with the federal government on a number of different issues, some of which have already taken place.

But also one of the things that's concerning is false information. We need right information on the table. I know the member opposite last week told the Winnipeg Free Press, and it was reported, that pill presses are banned in British Columbia. In fact, British Columbia, which is on the front end of this crisis, has been very clear in saying that there needs to be a national ban. The member should apologize to the government of British Columbia for putting forth that false information, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Neighbourhoods Alive!–Community Places Program Status Update

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): This Premier's (Mr. Pallister) fixation with austerity measures of cutbacks and broken promises and ripped up contracts is having consequences already, on the ground, in real communities and real people.

I want to ask the Premier today if he could please inform the House what is the status of the Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places programs?

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

As per the new government, we are reviewing all grants that are in place, ensuring that there is value for money, ensuring that the distribution is fairly and equally done. And we look forward to when this is all completed and we have good guidelines going forward ensuring that all the worthy causes in this province are definitely respected and recognized when it comes to our grant programs.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: The answer the minister just gave, presumably on behalf of the Premier's direction, is different from what the government websites say.

A review is one thing; government can review whatever it wants. On the government website for Neighbourhoods Alive! and for Community Places, it says the programs are paused. They are not functioning. There are no grants being given out. There are no intakes being accepted.

Can the minister confirm that that is, in fact, what her Premier's fixation with austerity means for these programs?

Ms. Clarke: I thank the member opposite.

I think it's very clear that paused—they are paused for a reason: because they are being reviewed.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: I wonder if, when the minister gave her previous answer about wanting to confirm that these excellent programs are being dealt with fairly, if she perhaps consulted with her colleague, the MLA from Dauphin, or maybe the colleague from Portage la Prairie, or the two from Brandon or from Selkirk, all of whom have Neighbourhoods Alive! programs in their constituencies.

Now, it wouldn't surprise me a bit if the Premier has silenced all of those backbenchers and is driving ahead with his austerity agenda.

Could the minister please indicate to the House: What is unfair about allowing communities to identify their own needs and get support from a government which is supposed to care about their future?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): No wonder his board's looking for a replacement, Madam Speaker.

Now, let's talk about caring about the future. We care enough to fix the finances the NDP left in a miserable mess. What we have here, Madam Speaker, under the NDP, was a budget last year that said they'd spend \$1 million more every single day than they took in, with some of Canada's highest taxes. However, at the end of the year, it turned out it was \$2 million a day more because they doubled up on their deficit in that single year as they have doubled up on the provincial debt before.

Now, in doubling up on all this phony compassion, Madam Speaker, of buying love today, they put our future in jeopardy and they put our ability to sustain our services for those who need them in jeopardy. And they did it selfishly. And then in an election campaign, which saw them rejected by Manitobans, people, they decided they'd double down again and they put \$600 million more in the window and said, let's buy some more love.

Madam Speaker, the real love we care about generating is the love of our children and grandchildren as we build a stronger Manitoba for them to make their way in, with good management at the front of it, not the mismanagement that we've seen over the last 17 years.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Bell's Purchase of MTS

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

The background of the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

* (14:30)

And this petition is signed by many fine Manitobans.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business, I'd like to introduce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Friday, December 2nd, 2016, at 1 p.m., to consider the following reports: the annual report of the Manitoba poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy, ALL Aboard, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015; the annual report of the Manitoba poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy, ALL Aboard, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Friday, December 2nd, 2016, at 1 p.m., to consider the following reports: annual report of the Manitoba poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy, ALL Aboard, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015; and the annual report of the Manitoba poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy, ALL Aboard, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

* * *

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, we'd like to interrupt Throne Speech today to consider the government resolution on Canadian pension plan enhancements.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the regular order will be—or the Throne Speech debate will be interrupted in order to deal with the government resolution on Canadian pension plan enhancements.

GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

Canadian Pension Plan Enhancements

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk),

WHEREAS the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) is the key pillar of Canada's retirement income system; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's new provincial government successfully advocated with the federal, provincial and territorial governments for further research and analysis to be conducted on a number of modifications that would make the CPP not just bigger, but better as well; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba proposals received the unanimous support of Canada's premiers; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is now undertaking public consultations on the CPP to hear from Manitobans who contribute to the plan on how to ensure the enhancements will meet their retirement needs; and

WHEREAS the federal government has agreed to further discussion of Manitoba's proposals as part of the 2016-2018 triennial review of the CPP; and

WHEREAS the triennial review and CPP proposals will be raised for discussion at the

upcoming Finance ministers' meeting in December; and

WHEREAS Manitoba believes the CPP must continue to be affordable for workers and employers; and

WHEREAS the CPP death benefit was locked in and has not increased since 1998, while the cost of living has continued to rise.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the indexation of the CPP death benefit and the elimination of the clawback of Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments for widowed seniors' CPP survival benefits, while conducting a comprehensive review of CPP survivor and disability benefits during the triennial review of the CPP.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the—*[interjection]*

Is there agreement for the resolution to be considered as printed? *[Agreed]*

WHEREAS the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) is a key pillar of Canada's retirement income system; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's new Provincial Government successfully advocated with the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments for further research and analysis to be conducted on a number of modifications that would make the CPP not just bigger, but better as well; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba proposals received the unanimous support of Canada's Premiers; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is now undertaking public consultations on the CPP to hear from Manitobans who contribute to the plan on how to ensure the enhancements will meet their retirement needs; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government has agreed to further discussion of Manitoba's proposals as part of the 2016-2018 Triennial Review of the CPP; and

WHEREAS the Triennial review and CPP proposals will be raised for discussion at the upcoming Finance Ministers' meeting in December; and

WHEREAS Manitoba believes the CPP must continue to be affordable for workers and employers; and

WHEREAS the CPP death benefit was locked in and has not increased since 1998, while the cost of living has continued to rise.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the indexation of the CPP death benefit and the elimination of the claw back of Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) payments for widowed seniors' CPP survivor benefits, while conducting a comprehensive review of CPP Survivor and Disability benefits during the Triennial Review of the CPP.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), seconded by the honourable member for Arthur Virden (Mr. Piwniuk),

WHEREAS the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) is a key pillar of Canada's retirement income system—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: —and—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Friesen: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise and put some comments on the record in respect of this government resolution brought this afternoon.

And the time is right for this resolution to be heard in this Chamber, understanding that the Finance Ministers' meeting in December is only a number of weeks away. And it has been a process along the way this fall that has been fruitful and has produced in the federal government a willingness to undertake to study that which Manitoba has put forward. Of course, we have said the whole way along, not only to make CPP bigger, but also better.

Madam Speaker, we all understand what the context of today's resolution is, that in the last number of years in this country, we have, in a lot of areas, federally, provincially, a local level, been undertaking to understand how is the Canada Pension Plan, brought in in the early '60s, still working for Canadians. And those questions, of course, are asked on a regular basis through what is called the triennial review process, whereby every number of years, every three years, questions are asked about the health of the plan and questions are asked about the extent to which the plan is responding to the needs of Canadians.

Now, fast-forward, Madam Speaker, and we understand major changes that were made along the way in this plan, changes that were even made in the late '90s, changes that a former Finance minister, Mr. Eric Stefanson, was involved in and actually led. It was Minister Stefanson at the time who had been one

of those voices in Canada pointing to the fact that the fund was no longer sustainable in its present form, that either man—that either Canadians had to understand that the fund simply would not be there as it was originally anticipated to be there in retirement or it would need a new level of investment.

I've had conversations with Mr. Stefanson about that very, very rich time in Canada's history and how he helped to lead Canadians to an understanding that this is something we valued, something we wanted to invest in. And, on the basis of that, of course, those changes were made, changes that saw the level of investment by employers and employees increased, so as to solve and so as to 'address' the solvency issues that were emerging—I should say more than emerging—the solvency issues that were accelerating around the CPP.

Now, here we are. It is 2016, and in the spring, of course, all Canadians understood that the federal government was driving a conversation around CPP enhancement. What Canadians did not understand, that the federal government was intending to accelerate the conversation; even in the days before the June Finance ministers meeting in Vancouver, Canadians did not understand that the federal government was undertaking to get to an agreement, get to the bottom line.

Well, in that meeting, Manitoba was clear that we had an obligation as a country. We had an obligation as Finance ministers, to make sure that the plan did not simply just become bigger. Obviously, that's one part of it, Madam Speaker, understanding that as Canadians, we want to make sure that Canadians are saving adequately for their own retirement. That is not solely the job of the CPP.

I actually—I get concerned when I see the microphone put in the face of someone on the street side, and they'll ask them about CPP enhancement. I become concerned when that man-on-the-street or woman-on-the-street interview turns into a response that goes something like this: that this is the only vehicle I need, this is the only form of savings I require for my retirement.

Madam Speaker, that should concern all of us as Canadians. Not even in its inception was the CPP ever designed to comprehensively answer the question about adequate savings for retirement.

We understand that the CPP is one way in which Manitobans, in which Ontarians, in which people from BC and Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia and

across this country, save for their retirement. Of course, an individual wage earner may be enrolled in a pension plan. They will be making RSP contributions. They can have unregistered plans. They can have real-estate investment. They can own resources pertaining to their businesses and other things. There are many ways in which people prepare for their retirement.

*(14:40)

I think about, in my area, the way succession planning is always going on with those in the agriculture industry and how land prices have shot up dramatically, which puts pressure on producers now, but also does create some opportunities for them in retirement. However, understand that one of the pressures that does present is in that succession process, whereby someone is trying to convey assets, land, equipment, resources to the next generation. That becomes problematic, but all of that becomes part of the equation around saving adequately for retirement.

This is the conversation that Manitoba helped to drive in June before the Finance ministers meeting, at the Finance ministers meeting, understanding that there are concerns about the extent to which this plan, if made bigger, does not also make better, does not respond to those who have paid into the plan.

Now, some of that is about financial literacy, and I know the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk) who has spent considerable time in this industry, and others in this House, will rise and probably talk exactly about this, the need for people to make good decisions, to make informed decisions about their retirement, about their needs.

But I think too often, when it comes to CPP, Canadians have had an idea that somehow this will be there for them, and I've talked to so many Manitobans who were surprised, and not in a good way, when they moved into retirement. Perhaps a wage earner had been paying into it, perhaps that wage earner's spouse had been paying into it and often is surprised to find out how thresholds work, to find out how household caps work. People whose spouse passed away were surprised, not in a good way, to understand the limitation of the CPP when it was transferred to the surviving spouse.

People who contracted an illness or suffered a disability were surprised, and not in a good way, to discover the limitations of this plan to address the

new realities of their life with their disability, or as a survivor.

Madam Speaker, this is the conversation that Manitoba drove at that table, saying we have real opportunity. If we are opening this plan at this time, as finance ministers, as the federal government, territorial governments and provincial governments, then we have not just an opportunity, we have a responsibility.

If the CPP is going to look more like a defined contribution plan, then it is incumbent on us to also say to what extent does this this plan respond to the needs of all Canadians? And, Madam Speaker, that was, I believe, some of the content of the comments that the member for St. John put on the record only two days ago in this House. The member from St. John rose in her place and said, will the government call on the federal government to improve the CPP—without saying the word enhancement. She said enhance. She said there are aspects of this plan that can be enhanced.

Now, I provide that comment, Madam Speaker, because it was only a few months earlier that the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) rose in his place only days after the federal meetings that we hosted in Vancouver, but, at that time, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview did not reinforce the same position that the member for St. John just put on the record two days ago.

What he said instead, he accused Manitoba of coming late to the party. He accused Manitoba of coming with a bunch of amendments that were tabled nine days too late and he accused the provincial government that—of being naive and not understanding that the agreement would not be reopened. He said that ship has sailed. He called it grandstanding and he said: Why did you not sign it when you had the chance?

Well, Madam Speaker, I'm so pleased to tell the member for Fort Garry-Riverview that it turns out history will reveal that the ship had not sailed. History reveals now that the bunch of amendments that Manitoba brought were ratified by all the premiers and territorial leaders in Canada only a month and a half after the June meeting when they all supported, in principle, the improvements that Manitoba was driving.

The member for Fort Garry-Riverview will understand that instead of being posturing, it was negotiating. Instead of being grandstanding, it was

corresponding, and the effort had tremendous dividends, an effort that will, we believe, with the right conversation in a matter of weeks, result in changes that will see perhaps the indexation of the death benefit the first time since the late 1990s when that benefit was actually reduced and capped with no increase.

Now the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), with his unfortunate and ill-advised comments, effectively says to Canadians, I don't care about improving a death penalty—or a death benefit to respond to the penalty it creates for Canadians. He says, I don't care that you make less in that event. He says 'effective' to all Canadians, there is no benefit from pressing the federal government to re-examine that, and yet every Canadian would benefit. Every Canadian would benefit from this change.

But what I want to convey to all members of this House is there is no way for the opposition NDP to land in a place where somehow the member of St. Johns can say, you should really be working to enhance the agreement now while you have a chance, while at the same time the member for Fort Garry-Riverview says, why didn't you sign the document and just run over the cliff like a lemming when you had a chance?

Now that member for Fort Garry-Riverview sits right next to the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) in this Chamber and, while we cannot reflect on the absence or presence of members in the Chamber, it only takes a seating chart to see that they sit adjacent to each other. Now it really speaks to the extent to which these members on the opposite side of the aisle do not speak to each other; they don't—not only consult with other provinces. It's not that they don't consult meaningfully with the federal government. It is not that they don't know how to consult with municipalities. It is not that they do not know how to consult with Manitobans in their own neighbourhoods.

They cannot even consult shoulder to shoulder to get their message straight, the result of which is they have no defensible position now to rise in their place and somehow say that we did the wrong thing, because they said, both times we did the wrong thing. They said in June we did the wrong thing and then when we received the acknowledgement from the federal government because of our advocacy, and I would suggest to all members, because of the principled position that we took.

Then—and the member laughs, when I say principled position; the member for Fort Garry-Riverview laughs. And I would want that recorded for Hansard. I'm glad to make note of the fact that when I say principled position.

So let's understand what the member is essentially laughing at let's understand that the changes Manitoba advocated for were indexation of the CPP death benefit. The member for Fort Garry-Riverview laughs at that. Manitoba advocated for a comprehensive review of CPP survivor and disability benefits: a principled position; the member for Fort Garry-Riverview just laughed. Manitoba advocated for the elimination of the clawback of GIS, guaranteed income supplement payments for widowed senior CPP survivor benefits, and the member for Fort Garry-Riverview just laughed.

As a matter of fact, when the member for St. Johns actually rose in her place and talked about enhancing the plan's ability to respond to those—and I won't say those women, it can be in many cases a woman in a relationship who will leave the workplace to go and raise children, but not in every case. One spouse may leave the workplace to go and raise children for a period of time and return.

I would want the member for St. Johns to know I raised the issue. I raised that very issue in the room with my finance ministry colleagues. I raised it on the phone in the weeks to follow.

We all know too many hardworking Manitobans who leave the workplace and they forego those contributions to CPP in those years. They return to the workforce and would gladly have assigned to them some form of additional payment, like a catch-up provision, to allow them to address those years of underutilized capacity for contribution. We raised that issue.

The member for Fort Garry-Riverview laughed at those positions. These were principled positions we took. Now the member for Fort Garry-Riverview should also understand, though, that if he's laughing at those provisions, he's laughing at Nova Scotia, because in my conversations with that Finance minister, they saw a value in Manitoba's proposals. He's laughing at Saskatchewan because that province saw a value in our proposals. He's laughing at New Brunswick because that province saw a value in our proposals. He's laughing at Quebec; he's laughing at BC. He's laughing, really, at the rest of the country.

* (14:50)

Madam Speaker, I know that we have continued to reinforce a few things. Number 1, we must understand that whatever changes we bring have to be seen through the lens of affordability. We have to understand as Canadians that there is one aggregate amount that Canadians will spend to save for their retirement. And we have to understand that if there is a desire to raise CPP to a certain extent from 25 per cent to, let's say, 33 per cent of pre-retirement income, it does not mean that that enhances the overall savings that Canadians will dedicate to their retirement. What it means is that Canadians may choose them. They will choose, with their discretionary income, to perhaps invest less in RRSPs, to perhaps invest less in non-registered plans, to perhaps do things differently when it comes to things like other passive-income arrangements, tax-free savings accounts.

There's many vehicles that are available now to Canadians that were not on the horizon when this plan was first formed, so we need to understand that it must be affordable. I assure you that even when it comes to the CPP death benefit, the changes that Manitoba has asked for are affordable, and those—and that analysis actually has been done by the chief actuarial agent in Canada, and has reported back that, in essence, these things are affordable.

But we also have to understand that these things must be affordable for workers and employers, and that is why we continue to listen. That is why this government continues to consult. And right now, we have it—in this fall, invited Manitobans to consult with their government on the CPP proposals. We have invited Manitobans to give us their feedback. We are seeking to understand, what are the concerns of industry? What are the concerns of business owners? What are the concerns of those who create jobs in this province?

We cannot run ahead in this conversation without understanding the impact. We also know, Madam Speaker, that this issue will be on the agenda for the Finance ministers meeting in December. We also know that there is commitment to address the issues that Manitoba has brought to the table in the triennial review process that I spoke of earlier in my remarks. And we know as well that, as I already stated, the changes we're making should really make the plan better and not just bigger.

Let me just leave off with a few examples. Madam Speaker, I had an individual approach me some months ago and talked about the fact that as an

individual who had contributed to CPP throughout his working life, his spouse had passed away. And, after his spouse passed, he had made the decision that—you know, that he was going to continue—he was not looking for a mate at that time. He was not looking to remarry. And we know how life is; you can't always plan those things. Sometimes you meet the right person at—you know, and people are living longer and they're more active and this happens. Romance happens in people's lives and their situations change, and we understand that.

But he pointed out to me in that conversation, you take an individual, perhaps who is unmarried and has been contributing to this plan all of their life, why is it in this modern era that a plan like CPP provides no opportunity for an income earner to check a box and waive a spousal—or, a spousal award following death? Why could that individual, when they tip into their retirement, not have the ability to receive a greater amount in lieu of the fact that there will be no spousal payoff after they pass away? Understand that an individual who has paid maximumly to CPP throughout their working life, if they retire at 65 and fall over dead the next day, the plan is enriched, but without a surviving spouse—yes, we understand there are some minor provisions for surviving children. We understand those things. But, by and large, those monies, those payments, those investments in the plan are just distributed to the side.

Now, I would suggest to all members of the House that at 25 per cent of retirement income, Canadians did not choose to quarrel too much, because they understood that one of the principles of the CPP was administrative simplicity.

The moment this conversation expands to a CPP that would address 33 per cent of an individual wage earner's pre-retirement income, we invite a different conversation. We invite a more flexible conversation. We should, as citizens, invite a conversation about the extent to which this enhanced plan does or does not address the real needs in the modern context of wage earners. That means asking good questions about the ability of that wage earner to check the box, asking about how difficult it is to actually claim disability benefits. What is that threshold test to test for disability claim?

I assure you, Madam Speaker, it is high. Does that mean we should automatically do it? No, but it certainly should mean that that is part of our triennial review. We understand there's all kinds of things

that CPP could do if the sky was the limit, but affordability matters, and we know that those concerns are being addressed now. I suggest to you, because of the extent to which the enhanced changes will be incremental beginning in 2019 and continue until 2024 when they are fully implemented, I believe that Canadians will continue to pay greater attention to these changes, and I would suggest that at this time perhaps Canadians are not paying enough attention to the agreement that has been achieved. It will affect all of us, and as you begin to look at the analysis, it is considerable. It is significant. It will have an effect.

But all of these changes we have talked about, including the fact that the federal government claws back those GIS payments, so a widowed senior who should be now collecting that spouse's portion at whatever level the actuaries determine is surprised to discover that at one hand they're saying, well, that will make things just a little easier, with all that stress and all the strain of that partner passing away in retirement, then often, and too many times, that individual discovers that the GIS payment they were receiving is clawed back. The federal government says it would be expensive. We've asked them to study it in any case.

So, Madam Speaker, I look forward to the discussion that we will have this afternoon. I would say there should be broad-based agreement in this House. I would say that, just as the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) has said, the member of St. Johns has directly addressed this government and said: Manitoba government should be working to enhance this arrangement at this time for the benefit of Canadian wage earners. The member for Fort Garry-Riverview has said something diametrically opposed to the comments of St. Johns. Let them answer for the breakdown in message discipline on their side. We will continue to advocate for a CPP that responds to the needs of Canadians, a CPP that is affordable, a CPP that reflects real situations in the modern context, a CPP that is made better, not only bigger. It's a conversation we will continue to drive at all levels in this province and across the country.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Well, I'm very pleased to get up to speak to the resolution put forward by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) this afternoon. I do have a recommendation, and Monique in the Finance Minister's office, if you happen to be listening, don't give the Finance

Minister any more coffee today. He doesn't need any more.

An Honourable Member: Maybe he needs a Snickers bar.

Mr. Allum: Maybe he needs a Snickers bar, says my friend from Lac du Bonnet. It could be, but I think the caffeine has really got to him today. Maybe he's not getting up enough in question period. Maybe he didn't sleep well last night, given the government's position on breaking fairly negotiated contracts. Maybe he's not sleeping well because there's a whole host of issues to be faced by him and he only has one answer, and that answer starts with the word a, ends with a y, and in between it's austerity.

Mrs. Colleen Mayer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

* (15:00)

And so, Madam—Acting Deputy Speaker, welcome to the Chair. You're also looking very comfortable in that chair, and, as I said to my friend from a different constituency yesterday, all of us should get the chance to do that, so welcome to the chair this afternoon.

I have to say that, on the face of it, our party, New Democrats, have no particular problem with this resolution, although we do have some suggestions for it that we will convey in the due course of time. But, on the face of it, I want to say that we have no particular issues with the resolution. I will speak a little bit about it in a few moments, but I want to go back to, sort of, the beginning, because, Madam Deputy Speaker—Acting Deputy Speaker, I've studied a lot of history in my time. I spent a lot of time in academics, studying history. Never have I heard revisionist history like I just heard from the Minister of Finance this afternoon as he wraps himself in the Maple Leaf and pretends that he and he alone made all the difference with respect to the CPP.

And so I thought it might be worth just a couple of minutes of the House's time to go back in time and remember what actually happened when the issue of the enhancement, expansion of the CPP came up several months ago—*[interjection]*

Well, I think it is important. The Finance Minister obviously doesn't remember. That's pretty clear, or he has a distorted memory, maybe, because he's not sleeping well. I'm not sure. I—and I—sure he heard me say to his very fine—not sure he heard me say to his very fine staff that he should have a

limitation on caffeine for the rest of the day. I'm a little worried about him and I would like him just to calm down.

But I do want him to reflect on how things actually transpired, because it's important to remember how the story actually unfolded, as opposed to the revisionist approach that the Finance Minister put before the House just a few minutes ago, because it actually doesn't accord with the actual facts of the matter.

Several months ago, it was put on the table that the federal government was meeting with the provincial governments all across the country. That meeting was going to be about the enhancement and expansion of the CPP. And at the time, what happened after the meeting occurred—this full discussion occurred by all the provinces and the federal government around this matter. Nine of the government—eight, yes, eight of the governments, provincial governments, that were there immediately said, yes, this is something we want to be a part of. This is something that we need to do for Canadians. This is something we need to ensure for generations to come, that the CPP not only remains the bedrock of retirement planning in this country, but it has other enhancements added to it so that Canadians in future generations will benefit in the same way that I will benefit someday and those who come before me are benefiting now.

And you'll recall that the Finance Minister went into that meeting and he didn't know what to do. He had no sense of what his direction was, what his job was, what his duty was. I think the reality was that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) had not given him his walking orders yet and, as a new Finance Minister, he was simply unsure how to respond to this broad, national consensus to expand and enhance the CPP.

And so what did the Finance Minister do at that time? I don't recall him wrapping himself in the flag at that point. I don't remember him wagging his finger across the table—across the floor at me. I don't remember him going before microphones and saying that Manitoba was onside. You know, in fact, what actually happened that they—that day was that unlike every other government, provincial government, in this country, he took off. He turned tail. He ran. He ran out of that meeting and got on his plane so fast that the media didn't have time to talk to him. He didn't wait around to say what Manitoba's position was. He didn't talk about all of these enhancements that he's putting forward today. He didn't mention

any of that stuff before he went to the meeting, while he was at the meeting, when he came home after the meeting. None of this was part of his discussion. It wasn't part of the story, the narrative. And so they spent several days sort of mulling it over while we got up on this side of the House day after day, all of us demanding that the Finance Minister get in line with every other government in this country, get on board with enhancing and expanding the CPP, sign that agreement and continue to work to enhance and improve the plan for generations to come.

So the victory—the victory—out of that was for Canadians, first of all, and that's the most important thing, always, from coast to coast to coast. The victory there happened. But the other victory was the NDP, in this House, held the government to account and forced them to do the very thing the Finance Minister should have done when he went that day. But he hadn't got his walking orders. He didn't know what to do. He came out; he was like a deer in the headlights after that meeting, and so what he did is he took off, turned tail, ran home and said Mr. Premier, what do I do?

And the Premier said, well, I don't have any clue. I haven't supported the CPP my whole career and I'm not about to start doing that now. I'm not sure what it is that we should do. And so the political operatives got together in the Premier's office. They had a little meeting among the—I don't know how many there are. There's probably a lot, or maybe the Premier doesn't need many, because after all, he knows everything, so we're not quite sure—but anyways, the operatives in the Premier's office got together and here, this is what they said. They said, you know what, we didn't know what to do about the CPP, but now we're a national embarrassment in this country. We're putting shame to the people of Manitoba, because we're not participating in something where there's a broad, national consensus.

So, instead of doing what we normally do, let's try to put a few amendments out there that make us look like we're sensitive, caring, left-wing New Democrats. Well, we're not going to have any problem with that. If the men—Finance Minister wants to emulate New Democrats, then good on him. So he should. I certainly know that many members of the caucus wish that they were New Democrats when they listen to the Premier day in and day out. I know that they—I'd encourage them to cross the floor, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, but they're already here on my side with me. And I know that as we—the more and more that—the more and more we chat and

the more and more we talk, I know they're coming onside with a way that favours a fairer, more equitable, more inclusive Manitoba and Canada.

And I know that they understand, because they get the same view of the Premier (Mr. Pallister), day in and day out, as we do, that the Premier of Manitoba not doing that, and so they're feeling, you know, sympathy, empathy, a sense of camaraderie and collegiality with our side of the House as more and more they begin to understand that, in fact, that if they really want to do right by the people of Manitoba, they should be New Democrats.

And so I just wanted to remind the House, remind you, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, what the history of that event was, because the Finance Minister got up, had too much caffeine today, he's not sleeping very well anyways because he's not really sure what to do. He's afraid with the budget coming up in a little while he's going to have to do more math, and we know he's not really good at that as well. And so it's important that the Finance Minister remember what actually happened.

We remember what happened. Manitobans remember what happened. He can try to change the story. He can try to revise it. He can try to change his own place in that particular narrative, but we know what happened. He knows what happened. And so hence today, here we are debating a resolution on CPP that ironically comes right in the middle of a Throne Speech on a—that has as its major theme, austerity.

* (15:10)

So there's no predicting what's coming out of the other side. They're unpredictable. My friend from Rossmere, the House leader, he's the essence of unpredictability. We just—we're just never sure what he's going to put on the table at any given point. We like him. We think he's doing a good job. We care about him, for sure. We're just never sure what it is that he's unsure about today.

So, in any event, Acting Madam Deputy Speaker—I want to get that right for you because you deserve that—the other thing about this resolution that is really—it is funny, not the resolution itself, but it's this particular clause:

WHEREAS the federal government has agreed to further discussion of Manitoba's proposals as part of the 2016-2018 'triennial'-Triennial Review of the CPP.

Well, that's good. I'm glad the feds have—I saw the letter that was written. I think it came to me in some manner, somehow, not in a brown envelope, but just came to me, that said that the feds were interested in what the Finance Minister had proposed, and I'm glad to hear that. I think we should always be working on the CPP. That's been our position since the beginning of the NDP, since the beginning of the CCF, when we started talking about pensions a long, long time ago that was resisted by Conservatives since time immemorial.

We—glad that the Finance Minister has had a change on the road to Damascus. That's a good thing; we're happy about that. But it's this thing where he's actually bragging about a federal government letter that has agreed to further discussion. That's his big accomplishment. I remember taking reports—report cards home to my dad and saying, you know, the teacher says perhaps I might possibly, sometime, get a C sometime. *[interjection]*

Yes, exactly. Big deal, right? Exactly. And that's kind of what this is. He's patting himself on the back, madding—Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, patting himself on the back because the feds have agreed sometime in the future to have a further conversation about some amendments he put forward when he was a deer caught in the headlights. He didn't know what to do, so he'd rather try to be a New Democrat than be a Conservative, and that's exactly what happened.

So what I want to say is that our side of the House will always be onside on any effort to strengthen the CPP, and I'm glad that members opposite feel the same way, at least recently. And so we're always going to be onside with that. We look forward to the minister's consultation. It's funny; he makes a big deal out of consultation. In putting this together, it appears that he consulted with Eric Stefanson, said he had a big, long conversation with Eric Stefanson. Well, that's good. Did he come over and talk to anybody else about it? No. Did he have a broad conversation with Manitobans about it? No. Did he actually advertise to anybody that he was going to be putting forward these kinds of enhancements? Well, no, but he did talk to Eric Stefanson about it, and I guess that's a big deal on that side of the House.

On this side of the House, we prefer to talk to Manitobans who struggle day in and day out to make

mends—ends meet, to put bread on the table, to send their kids to school, to pay their mortgage and to live good, solid, productive lives.

So, Madam Speaker, one of the things, however, that's become troublesome about the deal—and it's not exactly the deal itself, because the deal that was done—and I think it was Vancouver when everybody but the Finance Minister of Manitoba agreed to it. The deal that was agreed to was a good one and he should have jumped on board right away, instead of coming home and getting instructions from political operatives in the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) office to act like New Democrats instead of Conservatives. But what's happened in the interim is that the federal government has put a bill on the table to implement this, the deal that was agreed to in British Columbia. And what we've learned is that the federal legislation implementing the deal in Manitoba has actually done something that we thought couldn't be done: it penalized both women and people with disabilities in the legislation implementing the BC deal on the CPP.

The expanded CPP, as put forward in the federal legislation—and I want to make that clear—will not allow people to exclude child-raising years or time spent on disability, so the increased expansion benefits would not help those particular people with their retirement savings. Well, that's a double standard. That's wrong. That shouldn't happen. We're not—we don't agree with something that was designed to help those most vulnerable in our society, all Canadians, for sure, but those most vulnerable in society and then say: Oh, yes, in our recent expansion and enhancement of that particular program, we're going to make sure that women who are raising children, we're going to make sure that people with disabilities, aren't included, don't get the top-up that everybody else does. And I don't think there's a member in this House, at least I hope not, who would disagree with the provision in federal legislation that would leave out women raising their families or people with disabilities. That, frankly, would strike us all, I hope, as being wrong, not necessary and that something has to be done about it.

And so, Madam Acting Deputy Speaker, when something needs to be done, who do you call? You call the NDP. Who you going to call? The NDP.

Now, my friend from Emerson's not here to sing that, but, nevertheless, when you need some help, you call the NDP.

The Acting Speaker (Colleen Mayer): Order.

I would like to remind members to—that's naming the absence of members in the House is not allowable, so please—[interjection]—thank you very much.

The—sorry—the member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

Mr. Allum: Well, thank you.

Oh, so that long apology didn't quite get in there.

The Acting Speaker (Colleen Mayer): I—

Mr. Allum: Well, for the record, I said I was sorry for doing that, and I should know better, and I apologize to you, Acting Deputy Madam Speaker.

So, when there's a problem, as I said, when something's missing, when a wrong has been done, you call on the NDP to right that wrong. And, when I need help, I call on my friend from Elmwood because who's always—

An Honourable Member: Always there for you.

Mr. Allum: Always been there for me and, seemingly, always been in this House, which is a credit to him; he's a fine member of this House, a fine member of this Legislature, a fine House leader, a good friend. I think all of us should give him a big round of applause right now. Come on.

Anyway, I digress just a little bit to pay tribute to my good friend from Elmwood. But this is actually a serious matter in the sense when federal legislation designed to implement the BC deal that the Finance Minister at first didn't know what to do, came home, wasn't sure what to do, took another week and then acted like a New Democrat thereafter—when the federal government designed their legislation, they left out two significant components of our population, people who desperately matter, those most vulnerable. And so we can't simply stand and support this resolution and, at the same time, not try to rectify the primary problem with federal legislation, and we're going to call on all members of the House to help us to do that because it's unconscionable. Women raising children, and this—disabled, should not be left out of an agreement designed to ensure they're—every Canadian is included. You've heard me talk about it many times. Our values are about a fair, more equitable, more just, more inclusive society that includes every Manitoban, every Canadian and, frankly, New Democrats are internationalists as well, all around the world. Everybody needs a place. And so, when you have a program that's designed for all Canadians,

like the CPP, you cannot, you absolutely cannot table legislation that leaves out women raising children and that leaves out the disabled.

* (15:20)

And so, when there's a problem, when there's trouble, when there's a wrong needed to be righted, I say again, you call the New Democrats, because we'll have a solution for you. And so I want to do that right now, Acting Deputy—Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by my friend from St. Johns,

THAT the Resolution be amended by deleting the "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED" clause and substituting the following:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the indexation of the CPP death benefit and the elimination of the claw back of Guaranteed Income Supplement, (GIS) payments for widowed seniors' CPP survivor benefits, while conducting a comprehensive review of CPP Survivor and Disability benefits during the Triennial Review of the CPP, which should include keeping the drop out provisions in the expanded CPP plan so that parents, especially women who do the majority of child raising and rearing, and persons with disabilities will not have their CPP benefits penalized for work time lost due to parenting or disability issues.

I regard this—

The Acting Speaker (Colleen Mayer): Moved by the honourable member from Fort-Garry Riverview and seconded by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine),

THAT the Resolution be amended by deleting the "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED" clause and substituting the following:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to support the indexation of the CPP death benefits and the elimination of the claw back of Guaranteed Income Supplement, (GIS) payments for widowed seniors' CPP survivor's benefit, while conducting a comprehensive review of CPP Survivor and Disability benefits during the Triennial Review of the CPP, which should include keeping the drop out provisions in the expanded CPP plan so that parents, especially women who do the majority of child raising and rearing, and persons with disabilities will not have their CPP benefits penalized for work time lost due to parenting of—or disability issues.

The amendment is therefore moved.
[interjection] Oh, sorry. The amendment is in order. Debate may proceed.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden): I just want to put a few words on today about the resolution that was brought forward by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) on the enhancing the Canadian Pension Plan resolution. I'm so honoured to second it and—on behalf of the Minister of Finance who has brought this to the Chamber.

Myself, being a financial planner for over 20 years, I've basically had number of clients over the years, from high net worth clients who were business owners to farmers, in my area of Arthur-Virden, and I also had low-income earners who were also my clients. Being in a small town, I—a lot of people came to me. A lot of people were referred to me by some other high net worth clients but, you know, they might have had a parent who maybe didn't have as much income.

And a lot of times working with these clients, I had to review their whole financial plan. It's important that you collect all the data from an individual before you can give any kind of recommendation on what—how to plan, how to go forward. And some of the seniors who actually had lost a spouse, and they came to me because they needed help. They needed my financial expertise, and, to my sort of surprise, that a lot of them didn't have any other income besides the CPP, the OAS, and a lot of them had the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which is GIS. And I found that the CPP was very minimal—represents only 25 per cent of the income that maybe they—the spouse who passed away had, and when the spouse passed away—the husband, let's say—he was the one that worked all their lives, the wife had stayed at home with her children—a homemaker.

When the husband passed away, that individual already got 60 per cent of the death benefit—of income that the husband would have received, plus then they would also once they're over 65—and a lot of times we had individual wives—spouses—who were under the age of 65 who could not be entitled to the OAS, so they had to really struggle when it came to income because until they turned age 65, they would get the OAS.

And so then they would get the supplement, too, so that the—certain income. And now, I think this is very important that we look at these situations where there is a death of an individual CPP contributor and,

having a spouse who maybe never contributed to CPP, to have the benefits, to have more income when it comes to—and not having to be—to claw back on their supplement, because maybe they had to sell some property, some assets in their—at their home. Soon as they sell property, it's considered income, and they get clawed back on their supplement.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when I try to do financial plans with my clients, I also—I try to look at the whole picture. We just can't rely on CPP anymore. Even though that this amendment when it comes to reviewing—the revising of the CPP, the enhancing of the CPP, increasing from 25 per cent of the pre-income—retirement income—to one third, it's still not enough.

I have a lot of clients, retired clients, who find it's hard to make a go. Hopefully that their house is paid for, but also have that income coming in on a regular basis to fulfill their 'expensate' needs. What I try to do with my—had done with my clients over the years was—I had to—make sure that if they weren't part of pension plan, a company pension plan, they should actually consider putting money into an RRSP. But probably—the RSP would be able to put away 18 per cent of their gross income based on for the next year's contribution room.

And so I tried to do up a plan. I tried to put all that information into a financial plan, and then we could—what these plans did is give projections of where would they—would be at if they—if both husband and wife survived to retirement, and what happens if we lost one spouse, and what the income—what the impact would be. And it was great, because they could see it by graphs, they could visualize it and it was great.

I felt that I did my part to give that added service, to say that, look you guys will be taken care of if you do the right things. And I think a lot of people go to day-to-day thinking that by not putting the money away, extra over this UP, they always think that CPP and OAS will take care of them themselves. But the reality is that it doesn't.

And so this is why, by enhancing the CPP—but financial literacy is so important. And that's what I try to do with my clients over the years, was to create financial literacy. Soon as they came in, we sat down. I explained to them exactly where they are today, where they're going to be in five years, 10 years, 15 years. It's like building a house. You can't build a house without a plan. You need to—a plan to start from where you—the foundation to the

actual structure, to actually putting everything into place with—that makes—it make the house functional.

*(15:30)

And that's what a financial plan is all about, and when it came to the CPP, that is one of the components that we always used. And I believe that using the CPP, we need to make sure that we enhance that, but also at the same time, financial literacy when it comes to also saving for retirement. I do like group RSPs. I tried to go to employers to get group RSPs signed up because it doesn't cost much, the employer sets up a plan, they actually take the deductions off the employees during—off their payroll, they don't have to take the tax rate off of that—the amount that is being put into RRSPs, and so then they get—they don't get so much taken off and they get the benefit right away by having it go in directly to an RRSP. Then the employer matches it, so then what happens is it accumulates—and accumulates greatly.

Other things I tell, if a person has a low income but they can still save some money, I always say, instead of putting it into an RRSP, which might not benefit you in the long run—it might even hurt you, if you put portions away and it grows and then you start taking more out as retirement, I try to tell them if it's—if their lower income is put into a tax-free savings account, a tax-free savings account allows money to be put in regularly and it grows—any growth of that tax-free savings grows compound, and any time that money gets taken out it's not taxable.

So the retiree, if they take money out of a tax-free savings account, it doesn't get penalized, their income; it doesn't affect their supplement. So there's a lot of planning that could be done and, like I said, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) went to the meeting in June and talked to other Finance ministers, along with the federal government, it was the NDP across the aisle that said that we need to get signed on right away, and I think there was even the leader—the interim Leader of the Opposition said that we're leaving money on the table. But the fact is it is not money that was left on the table by the federal government.

Who pays for it? It's actually employees and employers. The government doesn't put in that money forward. We, as—when I was an employer and my employees are the ones that financed wholly on all the contributions.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Colleen Mayer): Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I didn't wish to stop the member in full rhetorical flourish, but the fact of the matter is that once an amendment is made to a motion, the debate is supposed to concentrate on the amendment as opposed to the main motion. I'm—you know, he would be allowed to stray somewhat here, but certainly there should be some attention made to the fact that we are off debating the motion—or the amendment to the motion at this point.

The Acting Speaker (Colleen Mayer): The Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, on the alleged point of order, our member is fully in bounds. We've been following this closely, and following the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), he, I believe, left—we've been following it along closely for a full nine minutes now. This member has been addressing the amendment. He has been addressing reasons why this amendment, the essence of it, he's been commenting on the broad areas of financial prudence, which is absolutely germane to the amendment, absolutely germane to the discussion. There is no point of order.

If the member opposite would listen, as I assume he has been doing for nine minutes, he would know that this member is in fine form this afternoon and completely in bounds.

The Acting Speaker (Colleen Mayer): Order.

I want to thank both honourable members for their comments on point of order. I would like to recognize that the Official Opposition House Leader does have a point of order. I would remind the House to focus on their comments regarding the amendment. I would encourage the member speaking to focus those comments on that amendment, and there have been copies distributed throughout the House, but if more is needed, you may receive them from the table.

* * *

Mr. Piwniuk: Like I said, when it comes to this resolution, I—like, I guess when it comes to the amendment, we want to make sure that, again, when it comes to the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Friesen) getting together, when it comes to the overall review

of the OA—CPP, those are the items that are going to have to be looked at and very carefully decide what direction the CPP enhancement is going to go towards.

They put up an amendment, and I guess that's something that has to be debated. And right now, when it comes to enhancement, when it comes to the 'dess'—deaf—death benefits and disability benefits, we have to look at it very closely. It—this—again, we have an aging population going forward here. A lot of our retirees are approaching—the baby-boom generation right now is approaching—I think the youngest baby boomer right now is about approaching 50 or just over 50 years old. I believe that 1966 was the last baby boomer. They're—they turn six—they turn 50 this year. I even have a colleague who is one of them.

And—but anyways, that is the start of the baby boomers. As our population ages, we have to be very careful of what the money that we get in there—at one time, Madam Deputy Speaker, there was a time where the CPP contributions went directly to the general finance, to the federal government. It's only been until 1990—1998—late '80s, early '90s, that actually now that money's been specifically put into that CPP pool of money.

And so this is why we have to be very careful going forward here. That is why the—my colleague, the Minister of Finance, along with the Premier (Mr. Pallister), was very careful. When we got elected in May and took government in—and got elected in April and took government in May and this—you know, the meetings happened in June. We were very careful. We wanted to not just make it better, but we wanted to make it in—better. We wanted to make it—enhance it more for—to take advantage—or, take in consideration when it comes to our aging population. The costs begin.

Who pays for it at the end of the day? It's going to be employees and employers. We wanted to make sure that the money that goes into this plan is going to be very—is going to be allocated properly; it's going to be spent wisely and it's not going to be underfunded. We have to fund this thing properly. We got—we have to address this in very good detail, but we also want to make sure that there is the benefits for widows and for surviving spouses, our children, when it comes to disability, finding out who is actually—qualifies, who is—who's disabled, what it classifies disabled. You know, a lot of people might—taking advantage of that. But we want to make sure that we're very careful when it comes to

allocating resources to the right people and in making sure that Manitobans, along with Canadians, have a proper retirement income.

* (15:40)

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the amendment, we're speaking on that, but like I said, we got to review it. We got to review it carefully, and we got to go forward, because we just don't want to make some harsh decisions where it's going to pay and it's going to hurt us in the long run.

And, like I said, being as a financial planner for over 20-some years, these are the people that I've—clients I've worked with, and I understand.

I actually, Madam Deputy Speaker, when it came to my own mother—when I lost my dad, you know, we had some hardships. We had—my father built up a dairy farm back in the '70s. And the interest rates skyrocketed. We got into a lot of debt and the interest rates were 20-some per cent. It was very hard to make the ends meet. And I remember when there was a drought in 1980s—early '80s, right after that. We had to make some tough decisions. We had to sell our dairy herd and we had to start all over again.

And the thing was, that was supposed to my parents' retirement income. And we had to start over at a later age. And so, when my mom lost my dad in 2005, we basically lost a lot of income. My mother ended up getting a death benefit of only \$2,500. She had to sell some assets that—her GIS. She also had to—she struggled. And thank God there was opportunities to sell some assets to keep her going. My dad still was considered driving a school bus. He got some life insurance that helped her out.

And I've seen all that. I've seen how worried she was. And this is why we have to really look at enhancing this CPP, when it comes to looking at amendment we've got to be very careful but, at the same time, we've got to make sure that Canadians and Manitobans can afford all these benefits because, at the end of the day, who pays for those benefits? It's taxpayers. It's employees. It's employers. Who is government? It's taxpayers. It's ourselves. So this is—when it comes to this whole arrangement, we've got to be very careful when we go forward and looking at the CPP.

You know, the other thing is, you know, for the last 17 years, the NDP government had the opportunity to make sure that the federal counterparts worked on enhancing the CPP, and it

hadn't happened. And now the Minister of Finance, our Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) and our Premier (Mr. Pallister), knows—and actually our Premier, who comes from the same industry as I do, who has basically the same background, we believe—we've seen that first-hand with our clients how important it is when it comes to someone losing a spouse, and how making sure that there's enough retirement benefits for that individual.

And we want to make sure that we look at this very wisely, take very—because once we set this up, we can't change it. It's—we've got to make sure that it's going to be done right. It's going to have to be actual calculations. We've got to make sure that the funding is right. It's just like our own pension plans in our own Legislature, or for government employees. You know, we have to make sure that the money that is put into as contributions and the money that's being paid out is retirement income, we have to make sure that our—all our pension plans are fully funded. Because if it isn't, it's taxpayers that are on the hook for the shortfall of the funding of these programs.

And so that is why ministers of Finance across the country have to get together and review this, because at the end of the day, they're all going to be on the hook when it comes to underfunding of these programs. And the thing is, you know, this is not just found money. This is money that actually is contributions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on about the difference of these programs, and, like, again, CPP is like a defined benefits pension plan. I know yesterday we were supposed to bring forward a private—another plan when it comes to private pension plans that we hadn't had the opportunity to do it because it's probably coming on Friday, but that is important, too, that we look at all different avenues when it comes to retirement savings.

Right now, again, we're having a waging population, immigration coming into our country is so important, because those are the ones that are going to replace our retirees. Once they retire, I always—people always tell me, what's going to happen—why are we getting all these immigrants coming in? I say, they're so important to have. My mother-in-law is an immigrant. When she came to this country, she educated all her children. Every child that she has is a university graduate. My wife worked for a medical transportation co-ordination centre. She's one of the managers there. My

sister-in-law is a teacher—a guidance counsellor, and my brother-in-law is a educated hockey player. He's now assistant coach of the Calgary Flames.

So this shows you that we need immigration to come and that, when it comes to the—bringing in immigrants into this country, it's so important, because the fact is, with our aging population, we need new workers. We need workers to replace the workers that are retiring, but, at the same time, we want to make sure that we educate them, because, at the same time, with such a growing population that's—that are going to become retirees in the baby boomers, it's going to be a impact, not just on retirement revenues but also on health care and when it comes to ambulance costs; they're all going to go up because of our aging population.

So this is why I think it's so important to look at the amendments and making sure that we look at it very closely, Madam Deputy Speaker, because, again, we want to make the right decisions.

And, on that note. I would—I'm sure there would be more people that want to speak on this topic. Thank you very much.

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): This is an important resolution that we have in front of the House to improve the Canada Pension Plan. It is one of the seminal achievements of the post-Second World War government at the federal level to bring in the CPP. It followed on the heels of Old Age Security and a Guaranteed Income Supplement. It was first introduced in the 1960s. It's one of the tiers that we need to build income security for people as they move towards retirement and allows them to build that security throughout their entire working lives. So the general notion that the Legislature of Manitoba support enhancement to the CPP, I think, is a very important initiative on the part of all of us in the House here today.

It's even more important these days, because we are finding now that more and more young Canadians, hand that includes Manitobans, are involved in precarious work, where they do not have the opportunity to have a pension plan that's part of their workplace even though in Manitoba, workers—about 50 per cent of working people have pension plans. That—still means 50 per cent don't, and that 50 per cent rate of participation is one of the highest in the country, which means that other parts of the country even have a lower rate of pension plans attached to the workplace, and the CPP becomes even more important to them.

So, as we move into an economy where there is more precarious work and workplace pension plans are not there anymore for people, the CPP enhancement will make a very important difference to people throughout their working careers. It'll give them that tier of income security for retirement that they might not have otherwise had access to because of the changing nature of the economy and the workplace, something that we can do something about. But today I want to speak in favour of the amendment, which I think is an important part of this discussion that we're having today. The amendment reads that support the indexation of the death benefit, which the members opposite have proposed would allow them to say that they did the right thing by joining the CPP. No problem improving the death benefit; I think that's an excellent idea. And the elimination of the clawback of the guaranteed income support payments for widowed seniors, CPP survivor benefit, that totally makes sense as well, particularly when the next proposal that is in front of the ministers of Finance right now to improve the CPP includes enhancing the Guaranteed Income Supplement; it includes 'hancing' the working income tax benefits, called the WITB after James—Jim Flaherty, who brought it forward with the ministers of Finance so that you could have the Guaranteed Income Supplement available to people. When they retire, you could have the working income tax benefit available to people during the course of their working lives to offset the costs of additional premiums that are necessary to improve the Canada Pension Plan from about \$13,000 a year to about \$17,000 a year. And these are important provisions.

* (15:50)

So why would we, then, come to this issue of the drop-out provisions that would allow somebody who has a low income during the period of time when they are dealing with a disability, or during the period of time when they're raising children, to eliminate those low earning years so that when they take the average earnings of a person during the course of their working lives, they can use the higher income years to allow the calculation for what the pension will be.

And the pension is modest, so to be able to drop out those low-earning-years provisions for the responsibility of raising children, a responsibility from which we all benefit as Canadians, for the necessity to deal with disability, which is a reality for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Canadians,

those—being able to drop out those low income years and use years where you've had higher earnings to calculate the value of your pension is fundamentally important to women, fundamentally important to persons with disabilities, and I would hope that all members of the Legislature could support that today.

Members opposite have said we have to make sure that this is affordable. It is affordable. It has very low administrative costs. The Canada Pension Plan is an enormous fund and the administrative costs are low for the amount of money that they are managing on behalf of all Canadians. It has good rates of return. It has an excellent investment record, and the investment committee has demonstrated that they can do a good job investing this money on behalf of all Canadians.

Those investments often fuel growth in the economy as well. They're investing in various sectors of the economy, which allows Canadians to have access to jobs and allows us to grow the economy.

So the Canadian Pension Plan, I think, is a very important plan. The desire to improve the benefits available to Canadians is a necessary and important step forward to ensure that Canadians can have income security when they move towards those retirement ages. It goes along with the new federal government's decision not to increase the old age security eligibility to 67 years old from 65. So many people work—just work very hard to make that 65 age. If they had to wait another two years, that would be an extraordinary hardship on them.

So keeping the old age security eligible for all Canadians at 65 is an important step. Allowing people to have a better Canada Pension Plan with a higher pension that comes out of that is an important step.

The amendment, which requires us to support that the drop-out provisions be part of this new expanded CPP, are fundamentally important for women and persons with disabilities. And we can say to ourselves we are building, truly, a pension scheme in this country that will be the envy of the world, and not going in a regressive manner where we see many pension plans around the world are moving away from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan, where all the risk is shifted onto the shoulders of the working people themselves, the middle class families and people that aspire to be in the middle class. They have to carry the whole burden under a defined contribution plan.

This is a defined benefit plan where the risk is shared by the people that are running the plan on behalf of the employers, on behalf of the people of Canada, and the people that are contributing to the plan as employees. So a defined benefit plan has many advantages in terms of risk management for Canadians to know that they'll have security for their pensions.

But I want to say that this amendment—we should not be overly concerned that it will be extraordinarily expensive because the federal government has designed the expansion of the CPP in such a way that they will also enhance the working income tax benefit so low-income Canadians will be able to afford it. They have designed it in such a way that, if we support this motion to not take this GIS off, that will also allow additional benefits for seniors. And what do seniors do with their money? They invest them right back into our economy. There's not many senior—most seniors stay in Canada the bulk of their time. They might take a holiday for a period of a—short period of the year, but most of those benefits and most of the expenditure that they make go right back into the community in local goods and services—increasingly services. As people get more elderly they buy more and more services, and all those services are provided by local people working in our local economy, which I think is a very important feature as we think about enhancing pensions in Manitoba.

So there's a lot of benefits to having this plan improved. There's a lot of benefits to supporting the amendment. I hope the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) across the way will consider the amendment that we've put forward that the drop-out provisions be added in to this new enhancement to the CPP. The drop-out provisions will help women; they will help all people that take time out to parent and, yes, it is mostly women that do the drop-outs for parenting, but more and more men are starting to do that now too.

I know young families in my community where the father is staying home for a year to do the job of child rearing and to look after the children while his partner is working, and that's okay. We want that kind of flexibility in terms of parenting roles, but if they take a low-income year, they should be able to drop it out when it comes to the calculation of what their CPP will be.

Similarly, a person with disabilities, we want people with disabilities to be able to enter the labour

market. That's good for them, that's good for us—thank you—and that is good for the whole community. But if they have to take time off because their disability makes it impossible for them to carry on in the workplace, why should that count against them when it comes to enhancing the CPP?

And I note some of the members in the Chamber are listening to this. I hope they would consider the value of ensuring that persons with disabilities in the labour market can drop out their low-income years because of the need to look after themselves while they have a disability and have a better pension when they retire.

Because we know who has the worst, and poorest, lowest pensions in this country: women and persons with disabilities. They wind up having the weakest pensions in terms of the amount of income that they generate after they retire. This amendment would allow them to have a better income. This amendment would allow them to live with greater dignity when they retire and to be able to make a choice to retire earlier if they feel that's in their best interest for their health, for their quality of life, and for their families.

So there's a lot of good things that can come out of this amendment today. It would empower the minister who's, I believe, going to meet the other ministers of Finance before Christmas as I understand it, and it's very unique in Canada that the trustees of the Canada Pension Plan are the ministers of Finance. It's a huge role and a great honour to have that role, and to be able to provide leadership and improving these pension benefits for all Canadians. You're not just doing it for Manitobans; you're doing it for people in Canada.

And what's the advantage of that? That allows Canadians to work wherever the jobs are. Portability—huge important benefit of the Canada Pension Plan, and allows us to attract workers to Manitoba and people that want to live here from any other province in Canada without having a penalty for moving here.

So that's an important feature of the plan, and we know that there's huge popular support for the Canada Pension Plan. About 75 per cent of Canadians think it's a good idea to enhance it; they all understand the value of that. It's a universal plan; it's available to all people working within this country. The benefits are secure and predictable because it's a defined benefit plan. I've mentioned the portability, that's hugely important. Many people

in this room have worked in other parts of the country during a portion of their career, whether some of them worked in—go to the west, some of them worked to the east, some of them worked outside of Canada. But they've had the ability to come back if they've worked in Canada and maintained their CPP, no matter where they worked.

The mandatory contributions feature of it is important as well, because it means everybody's contributing. That means there's a larger pool of resources to invest in making sure the pension is there; there's a larger pool of resources to invest in the Canadian economy as well as the global economy. It's integrated with workplace pension plans as well. The CPP easily integrates into the workplace pension, and that is a good feature as well because it allows less complexity, greater predictability in what your total pension will be.

It also is sustainable. The chief actuary of the Canada Pension Plan that reports in successive, triannual, actuarial reports that the CPP is sustainable for the next 75 years. Does anybody have an investment, a private investment, that they know is going to be sustainable for the next 75 years? We need not worry about adding the drop-out provisions back to this plan because it will give us the ability to ensure that it is sustainable over the long haul.

But to have a 75-year sustainability for the Canada Pension Plan gives great comfort to all those people that will retire within the next 75 years, which I dare say will be everybody in this room, including the member from Lac du Bonnet. Even he will retire within the next 75 years and have the security of this plan, and—*[interjection]*—yes.

So there's a lot to be said for supporting this amendment today, because it will treat women equitably, it will treat persons with disabilities equitably, it will allow them to ensure that when they take on important responsibilities outside of the labour market to look after their health, or to look after family members, or to look after children, that they will be able to do that without penalty.

* (16:00)

And why would we want to penalize parenting? Why would we want to penalize disability? It's already a challenge to overcome barriers when you have a disability to enter the labour market.

So I commend the amendment to all members of the Legislature today. I think it will make an enormous difference. And I think it will allow us to

take a strong position to the ministers of Finance meeting. After all, all of this—these enhancements are going to be phased in gradually. It would allow the minister to put these proposals forward as part of the triannual review and to make sure that they're phased in gradually. But it'll also mean that we protect the universality of the program and the inclusiveness of the program. Nobody will be left out. Nobody will be put in a second-class position.

And to eliminate the drop-out provisions is actually a derogation of the existing base plan. It's a move backwards. And we're trying to make things better. I've heard the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) say that on many occasions: we're not just trying to make it bigger; we're trying to make it better. So to include this amendment which allows persons with disabilities and parents to be able to have that dropout provision would only make the plan better. To leave those provisions out, and I don't—I'm not assuming the member was aware of that when he decided to join the plan—but to leave those provisions out would make the plan weaker, would make it less better, would make it worse.

And that's not the direction we want to go with pensions in this country. We want to move in a direction where we're making pensions available to all Canadians in a universal way, in an inclusive way, in a portable way, in a way that it shows that things can be improved in this country, even though we're going through challenging times in terms of the economy, globally as well as nationally, and even locally, it turns out, with the number of full-time jobs we've lost.

The reality is we can make this plan one that serves all Canadians without regard to their circumstances or their status. It will ensure that all Canadians are treated equitably. It'll ensure that all Canadians and Manitobans are treated fairly. It'll ensure that women are not put at a disadvantage for the responsibility of parenting, or anybody that takes on the responsibility of parenting. And it'll ensure that persons with disabilities have that right to take those years to look after themselves without fearing that their pension and their income security when they retire will be weaker and poorer and of a lower value than other people that have participated in the workforce for an equal length of time that they have.

So I commend to the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, the value of this amendment. And I hope we pass it unanimously, because if we pass it unanimously, we will be making the Canada Pension

Plan not only bigger, but better, and universal, and inclusive, and still maintain its affordability, because we know that the actuary for the CPP has said it is sustainable for the next 75 years. And I can tell you, any time you have a plan that's sustainable for the next 75 years, we've done well as a country.

And just the history of that, it was Paul Martin, when he was the minister of Finance, in the mid-1990s, around '95-96, that decided that he would put money aside in the Canada Pension Plan to invest in the economy. It wouldn't just be bonds. Bonds are useful. They're very good; they're very worthwhile. We know the returns are extremely low. But he also allowed it to be invested in other classes of investment, including real estate, including equities, including companies that grow the economy.

So we have a good plan here. It's the envy of the world. Let's make it better. Let's make it more generous. Let's make it more available to Canadians as they move through different jobs throughout their careers and don't have the opportunity to be involved in local company-driven pension plans. Let's make sure the CPP is there for everybody qualitatively and quantitatively.

Thank you, and I appreciate the opportunity to address this today.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to put some comments on the record in respect of the amendment brought by the opposition this afternoon.

Madam Speaker, I thank the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) for his comments on the record. It's good to hear him speak on this subject. And I know he has sat in those Finance minister meetings many times. One of the longest serving—one of the longest serving—Finance ministers in the history of our province, so the member for St. Boniface has been in those meetings with his colleagues from other jurisdictions many times in that seat representing our province.

And I appreciate the comments he makes this afternoon in terms of agreeing with us that the changes that Manitoba should be advocating are in order to make these enhancements to CPP better, not just bigger.

Now, Madam Speaker, I want to address specifically the language that the opposition party has introduced. And I want to make it very clear, as I did in my remarks, that at the Finance ministers' meeting in June, and in the conversations that ensued, in the conversations with other Finance

ministers, both the federal Finance Minister and my counterparts in other jurisdictions, Manitoba has continued to ask questions and raise specifically the issue that is identified in the amendment.

We have raised specifically the issue of drop-out provisions for parents who leave the workforce for a period of time, for children—in order to have children, as the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) said, there was a time, historically, where you would say that would be predominantly women, now it is one or the other of the spouses who do it. But, by leaving that workforce, they forgo a contribution they otherwise would have made to the plan, and it is reasonable to ask a plan that is proposing to replace 33 per cent of pre-retirement income to be flexible enough to respond to the needs of real Canadian workers and their contributions and ask the question whether a provision could be contained to allow them to catch up in subsequent years after they re-enter the workforce.

So I want to convey very clearly to members on the other side, we asked those questions. We raised those questions in the room in the finance ministers. We used it as an example of the type of discussion that would be cut short were members in that room to sign on the bottom line too soon and forgo the opportunity to improve the plan and the provisions. So I state that for the members, for the member of St. John, who raised it in question period only two days ago, for the member of St. Boniface, who raises it now, I want to make that clear.

Also, Manitoba raised specifically in the June meeting, in the weeks and months thereafter, in pursuit of what we've said would be measures to improve the plan over all in this historic opportunity, as there have been other historic opportunities in the past. Some of which the member for St. Boniface alluded to. One I alluded to being in the late '90s when ministers at that time, including Mr. Eric Stefanson, moved in conjunction with their colleagues to understand the pressure, the severity of the deterioration of the plans assets and the pressure on those assets to continue to be there, hard questions had to be asked about whether Canadians still valued this and, if they did, were they willing to pay more to preserve it?

As a matter of fact, of course, Canadians did decide to pay a little more and to save this and to strengthen the plan to answer the questions of solvency that had arisen at that time. I and so many others in this nation are thankful for those

individuals who went before us who made those tough decisions.

But I want to be clear we raised these issues about disabilities, persons with disabilities, who would be penalized. We've said that this is the right opportunity to ask the question. So, first of all, I would say to the members of the opposition that the amendment they bring is somewhat redundant. We have already said these provisions are contained. But, if members of the opposition actually understood the triennial review or if any of them had sought to educate themselves as to what the triennial review would do, they would understand it is all of these aspects that are addressed reflexively through that study.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

So for them to indicate that it is very important to them in the triennial review of the CPP—now I'm reading directly from the amendment which should include keeping a drop-out provisions, and then going on and persons with disabilities. They must understand that they are asking to be contained in this resolution, this afternoon, provisions that are already in place in the triennial review. So I assure the members that in the triennial review, as finance ministers including myself, we'll undertake the study of these things. This will reflectively be part of that study.

The changes that Manitoba sought, though, were different not only were we flagging these issues of importance to the federal government, not only were we saying that issues, the ones we raised this afternoon and identified, specifically indexation of the CPP death benefit, a review of CPP survivor and disability benefits and the elimination of the clawback of GIS payments for widowed seniors' CPP survivor benefits. Not only should they be done in the triennial review, it was Manitoba's actions, Manitoba's advocacy, Manitoba's position that said, hold it, before all provinces sign on the dotted line on the agreement that was accelerated in June, we must, as Finance ministers, put this discussion front and centre.

* (16:10)

The agreement that was achieved was to make CPP bigger, was—it was agreement to push out the eligible contribution rate from the \$54,900 at which it now stands, to somewhere in the neighbourhood of something like \$76,000. It was an increased from 25 per cent replacement income to 33 per cent.

None of those changes would do what the opposition is suggesting today that should be contained in the resolution. It is Manitoba's actions, and the actions of Quebec and other provinces now in agreement even at the premiers conference in the summertime. Those actions, this effort, that is having the effect of driving these decisions—or driving this discussion into the December meeting coming up in a few weeks.

So let us be clear that the amendment to the resolution is a bit redundant, it demonstrates a bit of a lack of understanding of how the 'triennial' review works, and it does, to a certain degree, negate the important contribution that Manitoba has made.

But let me come back to what the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) just said. He said it was important for Manitoba to take a strong position to the Finance ministers' meeting in December. I agree wholeheartedly. It is that strong position that we took in June.

So I will accept this amendment to the resolution as a form of an apology from the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) because, in June, he said hurry up and sign the document, it doesn't matter what it says. He said it doesn't matter what it says. He said you're missing your opportunity, the ship is leaving the harbour; he says you're grandstanding, hurry up and sign the document.

We came back to the Province, and he said it was embarrassing the conduct we had done, and yet the conduct that we undertook was exactly the conduct that resulted in a commitment from the federal government. And the member may want to listen to this, because he may be unaware of this, it was a commitment of the federal government to convey to the Office of the Chief Actuary to do a cost study of the measures that Manitoba was suggesting.

That cost study came with the commitment of the federal government to return that evidence and data to all Finance ministers in advance of the December meeting. That information has been now received by all Finance ministers. It is information that will inform the decision making in that room. So, clearly, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview is flip-flopping. He's now standing on the side with the member for St. Boniface. I welcome him to stand on side for the member for St. Boniface. I welcome him to stand on side with the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) who said earlier this week: Now is

the chance for us to make the CPP better, not just bigger.

So the member for Fort Garry has been the lonely voice in the wilderness who is finally coming inside the fold and finding his place of agreement alongside all those of us this afternoon who are advocating for a strong Manitoba position. But let us be cautious; when the member for St. Boniface says: Are all these things affordable? Of course, they are. The member understands that it is not for us to say but, rather, we must look carefully to the evidence presented by the Office of the Chief Actuary in the annual report where those calculations are done to look at the relative security of the plan's assets, to look at risk, to look at annual levels of growth.

We understand that the estimates as confirmed by the Chief Actuary now show that the Manitoba's proposal in respect of a death benefit is, indeed, affordable, meaning the maximum death benefit could be indexed to inflation within the existing headroom that exists between the current MCR, 9.79 per cent, and the LCR of 9.9 per cent.

But understand, that in no way suggests that all of the suggestions that we are making are affordable. And we might have the opinion come back to say yes they are, but we need to pay more. And then we need to have ears that are open to listen to the opinions of Manitobans, to understand from all Canadians what the implication, what the ramifications of these things are for income.

You heard the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk) talk to today about the need to save adequately for retirement. We must understand that CPP is one important vehicle by which Canadians do that. So I would say with all of the cautions that I have provided, understanding that the amendment is in some respects redundant, that the amendment in some respects does not show an understanding of what the triennial review 'accomplishes'—accomplishes, and that the amendment does not signify the contribution that Manitoba and this new government has already made and is making.

Even so, I would say that this government would, in the interest of being able to pass this resolution this afternoon, we would accept that resolution, and the amendment to it, and seek to have the agreement of all members at the end of the day to vote for this. Even the intransigent member for Fort Garry-Riverview, who is finding his way cautiously back into the fold, into agreement with the statement and the content of this important resolution.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I want to rise and to talk a little bit about this resolution. We've just had some fairly heated debate on certain aspects of it, and now an amendment which is, from what I can see, a positive amendment put forward in good faith.

I want to talk about the areas which the government has recommended that we pay attention to and that the changes be looked at in terms of the CPP. The first is the Canada pension plan death 'benefish', and supporting its increase and its indexation. Clearly, the death benefit has not, in recent years, been indexed. It's time that this happens and we are, on this side, fully supportive of an effort to index the CPP death benefit. It is important—the cost of looking after a loved one at the time of death are going up. There has been, I believe, an increase in the veteran's death benefit federally; it is time that there's an increase in the death benefit generally for people in—who are getting CPP, which is—applies to a very, very large number of Canadians.

Second, eliminating the clawback of the guaranteed income supplement payments for widowed seniors on their survivor benefits. And certainly this, again, I think is a sensible measure. It is important that individuals who have been widowed, that they are able to get those survivor benefits. I want to be sure, however—sometimes the word widow is used in a gender-specific way, and I want to make sure that there's no intention to use this in a gender-specific way. We are increasingly, obviously, having primary earners who may be one sex or another. We are increasingly having families which are LGBT families. And we want to make sure that this provision for survivor benefits is inclusive, and that there is nobody here who would be left out, and that there's not a bias against somebody because of their gender. My understanding is that it could, potentially, even be a human rights issue, but it is certainly something which I hope that the minister is not only aware of, but made sure that this is looked after appropriately.

So, with that change, I would think that there is the potential—right?—that you may have some widows who are millionaires. It will not be very many, and that—under those circumstances—it would—clawing back, a survivor benefit may not be totally unrealistic. And whether there needs to be some look at total income is another factor. But I think, in general, we are certainly in strong agreement with this clause just to make sure that it is implemented in a way that is fair and is reasonable.

* (16:20)

The third issue is conducting a comprehensive review of the CPP survivor and disability benefits during the triennial review of the Canada Pension Plan. And this is something again that we are strongly in favour of. We think that it is important to have this comprehensive review, and fully support this initiative.

And lastly the amendment, which has been put forward by the NDP, which would deal with the drop-out provisions being dealt with in an expanded CPP plan so that parents, especially women who do the majority of child raising and rearing, a person with disabilities won't have CPP benefits penalized for work time lost due to parenting or disability issues. And I think this is a very reasonable amendment and we are ready to support this amendment as part of the package of changes.

I would hope, and I was pleased to hear that the government, in spite of the fact that they may not fully support this because they think it's covered in other ways, is ready to support, and I think, vote for the amendment, and hopefully it will come to a vote and we can, in fact, achieve that consensus.

I want to now spend a few minutes because I think there is some considerable urgency at the moment to move forward on this initiative to give people some certainty in terms of the CPP plan. And one of the reasons is that we are in a time right now of a lot of uncertainty so that the more certainty that we can give people in areas like their pension plan, then the better off we are going to be as a province, and people in Manitoba will also be better off.

And I think that there is, as I've said, some urgency at the moment because there is a lot of uncertainty and that uncertainty is being created by the current government, which is making cutbacks, is pausing many funding initiatives, is creating uncertainty by talking about reopening signed contracts or labour agreements, and all this adds to a significant level of uncertainty in Manitoba. And so it is important that we are moving forward on this CPP initiative.

I will speak, as an example of one recent cutback, the knowledge that was just learned the other day, that the funding of the Manitoba Metis Federation's efforts to keep Metis people healthy and reducing the incidence of diabetes, that this is a substantial cutback and an important initiative being carried forward by the Manitoba Metis Federation.

And, of course, this will create uncertainty to those who are being employed in this initiative and that we need to make sure they have greater certainty in other aspects of their lives, like the CPP.

But it will also create more uncertainty in terms of the help that's available to people who have or could develop, for example, diabetes, which is a significant threat. And there's been a large health study of the Manitoba Metis and that's one of the major issues is that they have a high incidence of diabetes. And so preventing diabetes can have an important impact on the long-run health of people in the Metis community, as well as—let us say it—in the general community and in other communities who are at higher risk.

So this can have—the CPP needs to—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order please.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Micklefield: The member wanders all over, and now we're talking about diabetes. The subject at hand, I would like to remind him, is the amendment; not many of the issues which he has been raising.

Madam Speaker: Oh, on the same point of order?

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, on the same point of order.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, it is really important to point out why this change, why this resolution is so important to create better certainty for people.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate that, while some of the content has been relevant by the member for River Heights to the amendment—or to the resolution, but I would urge the member to address the—his comments towards the amendment that is put forward at this point.

* * *

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I will talk specifically about the people who are included in the amendment, that is, people with disabilities. And people with disabilities include people with diabetes and many other disabilities as well. My point is absolutely on the mark here, that we need this resolution; we need it to address the uncertainties;

we need it to address people with disabilities and make sure that we are all together because we live in a time of considerable uncertainty, and some of that uncertainty has been created by this government.

Madam Speaker, I have put my words on the record. I am fully in support of this. I hope that other members will be 'abet'—well, and that we can move forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci.

Madam Speaker: The honourable—Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I was speaking to this amendment.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate that, according to the established rotation, the speaking order is now towards the member for the Interlake.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Madam Speaker, as I put on record in my inaugural speech, I have worked as a financial adviser since 2007, so my job is about educating people in how money works. So I appreciate the time to speak on this amendment.

First off, if it pleases the House, I would like to give a small overview of the Canada Pension Plan. The Canada Pension Plan, or CPP, provides contributors and their families with partial replacement of earnings in the case of retirement to disability or death. Almost—[interjection]—already? Oh. Almost all individuals who work on Canada outside Quebec contribute to CPP. If you have lived or are living outside of Canada, you may qualify for pensions from that country as well.

The CPP operates throughout Canada, except in Quebec, where Quebec has a QPP, and it provides similar benefits. The CPP and QPP work together to ensure that all contributors are protected no matter where they live.

If you have only worked in Quebec, not the rest of Canada, you may only be eligible for benefits under the QPP, but if you've worked anywhere else in Canada you're eligible for CPP benefits.

I'm going to list a few current benefits that the CPP currently has: Of course there's a retirement pension. You can apply for and receive a full CPP retirement pension at the age of 65, or receive it as early as 60 with a reduction, or as late as 70 with an increase in payment.

Some people choose to use the post-retirement benefit. If you continue to work while receiving your CPP retirement pension and are under the age of 70, you can continue to participate in the CPP. Your CPP contributions will go towards post-retirement benefits which will increase your retirement income.

We have the safety net of a disability benefit. You become severely—if you to become severely disabled to the extent that you cannot work at any job on a regular basis, you and your children may receive a monthly benefit.

Most of us have heard that the survivor's pension—when you die, a pension is made—to be made to your surviving spouse. We also leave a death benefit. This provides a one-time payment to, or on behalf of, the estate or a deceased CPP contributor. Children's benefits provide monthly payments to the dependants' children of the disabled or deceased CPP contributors.

*(16:30)

There is a severe—series of provisions that CPP includes as well. One is pension sharing. Married or common-law couples on an ongoing relationship may voluntary—voluntarily share their CPP retirement pensions. Credit splitting for divorced or separated couples—the CPP contributions you and your spouse or common-law partner made during the time you lived together can be equally divided after a divorce or separation.

CPP has a child-rearing provision. If you stopped working or received lower earnings to raise your children, you may be able to use the child-rearing provision to increase your CPP benefits. Caring for young children can mean leaving the workforce for working—or working fewer hours.

If your earnings stopped or were lower because you were the primary caregiver raising your children under the age of seven, you can request the child-rearing provision if you are deemed eligible. The child-rearing period will be excluded from the contemporary period, calculating your CPP benefit amount ensuring that you get the highest possible payment.

But my time is short here, Madam Speaker. So, in conclusion, I would like to close with a quote from the MLA for Tyndall Park: Manitoba government is currently spearheading the expansion of Canada Pension Plan, together with other governments. This quote was from earlier this year.

I believe the MLA for Tyndall Park may be the only opposition MLA that understands how hard our new Progressive Conservative government is working for Manitobans. And, Madam Speaker, he needs to convey that to the rest of his caucus to get them all on board to benefit all Manitobans in this case, also all Canadians.

Our provincial government is spearheading change, in the words of the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), not only for Manitoba, but all of Canada. We are focused on fixing the finances, repairing our services and rebuilding the economy, not only for today, Madam Speaker, but for tomorrow and generations to come.

Thank you.

Mr. Maloway: I'm very pleased to speak to the resolution here today and our amendment to the resolution. And I know that in a few minutes we'll be having a vote on these two—on the motion and—on the amendment first and the motion as well.

And I have to say that, at the outset, that this is not a new subject by any means. Back in 2008-09-10-period, the federal government of the day was actually making it tougher for people to collect CPP. They were increasing the age at the time. But it was a minority Parliament, and there was negotiations that were nearly concluded at one point for the NDP to support the Conservative Harper government for one more year on the basis that we would double, actually double, the CPP.

And so what we are talking about here in this whole proposal is that we are talking about an increase of, not doubling the CPP, we're talking about a 33 per cent increase. It—so it's modest. It's a modest increase in the system. The maximum benefit—right now, the benefit is \$550 a month or a maximum of \$1,200 per month. When this works its way through over the next few years, the maximum benefits are only going to go up a modest 33 per cent to increase from \$13,000 a year to \$17,000 a year. And I think we would all agree that that is not an enormous amount, that the workers of this country deserve that and more, and that our doubling of the CPP idea back eight years ago was actually a better idea than we're working with right now.

So thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) to the government resolution Canadian Pension Plan Enhancements.

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

Recorded Vote

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

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

* (16:40)

Order please.

The question before the House is on the proposed amendment of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Bindle, Chief, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Fontaine, Friesen, Gerrard, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Klassen,

Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Saran, Schuler, Selinger, Smith, Smook, Squires, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 50, Nays 0.

Madam Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

* * *

Madam Speaker: We will now deal with the resolution as amended, brought forward by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), on the Canadian Pension Plan enhancements.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

I declare the motion passed—carried.

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I'm wondering if you could canvass the House to call it 5 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

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