

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

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

**Vol. LXX No. 29B - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 21, 2017**

ISSN 0542-5492

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**Madam Speaker:** Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of Bills? Committee Reports? Tabling of Reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living please proceed with his statement.

#### Pharmacy Awareness Month

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Madam Speaker, good afternoon. I am pleased today to highlight that March is pharmacist awareness month.

Pharmacists Manitoba represents approximately 1,000 pharmacists and pharmacy students in our province and this month brings awareness to the important role they play in our health-care system. Pharmacists help patients with acute and chronic disease management, preventative management and overall health consultation. They can provide up to date advice on staying well and making healthy lifestyle changes.

With more than 25,000 drug products available in Canada, a pharmacist's knowledge and expertise in managing drug therapy and providing patient care is essential and valuable to all Manitobans. Whether pharmacists are involved directly with patient interaction, research or instruction and teaching, they are positively impacting the system here in Manitoba and across our country.

Given the knowledge and services these individuals are able to provide, this awareness month recognizes the important role pharmacists have in our health-care system. In light of this month, I feel it is important to recognize and thank pharmacists across the province in every discipline of the profession. Their continuing dedication to the health and well-being of all Manitobans is certainly to be commended here today.

The well-being of people in our province is something that we all care greatly about as MLAs. This awareness month serves to remind all Manitobans about the services provided by pharmacists and how these services positively contribute to the health-care system; their contributions that extend not only directly to the patients but also into the classrooms in our universities and the laboratories across our country.

Madam Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking the pharmacists across our province and recognizing March as pharmacist awareness month.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** March provides us an opportunity to honour the work of Manitoba's pharmacists, and I'd like to welcome them again to the gallery here today.

This year's theme for pharmacist awareness month is Your Hospital Pharmacy Team: Your Trusted Medication Experts, which gives pharmacists a unique opportunity to inform the public about their overall role in our health-care system.

The scope of pharmacists' responsibility is expanding and the services they provide go well beyond dispensing medication. They are able to renew prescriptions, prescribe medication for common ailments and play an important role in educating their patients about different medication options and new medication devices. As highly skilled, trusted and accessible health professionals, pharmacists help Manitobans make informed health decisions to live better, healthier lives.

Approximately 1,000 pharmacists are working all over Manitoba, providing integral health-care services to their communities. Pharmacists often are a first point of contact for many patients and the services they provide relieve pressures from other areas of our health-care system. The vital role they play in keeping our communities healthy and thriving cannot be overstated, and they need our support.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans value the health-care services and the dedicated front-line workers who provide them. In honour of pharmacist

awareness month, and on behalf of our NDP team, I would like to thank all pharmacists in our province for the care that they provide to Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today with respect to pharmacist awareness month.

Back in October the members from this House all had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Pharmacists Manitoba at individual meetings, as well as through an on-site demonstration of some of the services that they provide.

This day really resonated with me, as there was a lot to learn. What also really stood out was the passion and volunteerism that takes place within the group of Pharmacists Manitoba. These individuals are truly passionate about what they do and it is truly inspiring.

We all know that pharmacists play a critical role, especially on a local level. They do much more than dispense medication and with that, from what I hear, they are eager in wanting to do more.

I hope that all members of the House will join them later at their reception where we can talk about the future of pharmacists here in Manitoba.

Thank you for joining us here today.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage.

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

### **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** Fifty-seven years ago, at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid laws in Sharpeville, South Africa, 69 citizens were shot and killed by police. As a result of this tragedy, six years later, in

1960, the United Nations declared this day, March 21st, as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is important to mark this date and to remember the ugliness of racism, to heal and to find a better path forward.

Today, along with the broader international community, Manitoba recognizes the day for the elimination of racial discrimination. Manitoba also recognizes the value of creating a compassionate society, a safe society where all are welcome.

We are a vibrant mosaic of customs and traditions. In Manitoba, there are more than 250 ethnocultural groups representing 150 countries and languages. It is no surprise that many Manitobans are welcoming the recent influx of asylum seekers with compassion and respect for human dignity. Now is our time to lead by example in the promotion of racial harmony and tolerance as we continue building a welcoming community.

So, while we have much to be proud of, we cannot deny that racism does exist here in Manitoba, nor can we deny our responsibility to confront and challenge it. History shows us the many times where compassion faltered and hate arose. In the past century alone, we have experienced the Holocaust, the ethnic cleansing of South Sudan and Bosnia and our own dark history in Canada with the mistreatment of our indigenous peoples.

That is why on this day, and also on the year of the 25th anniversary of The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act, I ask all members of this House and our communities to denounce forms of—all forms of hatred. As citizens of one of the most culturally diverse communities in the world, Manitobans must do our part to promote racial harmony, understanding and tolerance. We must use our voices, our efforts and our actions to stand up against racism. I believe that diversity is our strength and our greatest resource as we cultivate a better future for all Manitobans.

And we are very pleased to see the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission helping us to confront the racial discrimination and legacy of residential schools and promoting a path forward of peace, reconciliation and healing.

Collectively, through our perseverance and resilience, we are making progress. By working together, we can build a better province where all citizens are treated with respect and where racism no longer finds fuel to fan its flame. I encourage

every Manitoban to reaffirm their commitment to building a racism-free community and to continue to advocate the importance of diversity, civility and increasing connections between all cultures, faiths and ethnicities.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** March 21st marks the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Today, we stand in the spirit of inclusivity, equality and love for all of humanity while honouring our vast collective cultural, traditional and spiritual diversities. Today marks a day when we gather courage in decolonizing, deconstructing and dismantling racism, discrimination and intolerance in the myriad of forms in which they manifest themselves.

The reality is, racism and discrimination lessens our connection to one another while entrenching an environment where peoples are humiliated, abused and, in the most extreme cases, murdered.

\* (13:40)

Recently, CBC's Donna Carreiro organized a town hall on racism where Sherry Gott, a residential-school survivor, shared how she was racially profiled as a drunk Indian at a concert despite not having touched alcohol in over 16 years. And I quote: I live with racism every day. I don't take a break from it. I feel it every minute of every day.

I honour and lift up both women for their courage and conviction in confronting racism.

Most recently, our very own Premier (Mr. Pallister) racially constructed indigenous men when he remarked, and I quote: Young indigenous men, a preponderance of them are offenders with criminal records. As an Ojibway First Nation woman raising two beautiful, amazing young Indigenous men—my oldest just accepted in the political science master's program at the University of Toronto—I find the Premier's discriminatory comments particularly hurtful and offensive.

And so instead of denials and justifications, today demands standing in humility, rendering an apology with steadfast commitments toward fostering an inclusive and equitable Manitoba.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** Madam Speaker, I request—I ask for leave to speak to the ministerial statement.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** Most people believe that every colour and ethnicity in Canada enjoys equality and dignity. We know this is simply not true. Over the past year we have heard of hundreds of events of discrimination and fear here in Canada and across the world. I'm sure we have all heard of the horrific story of the young indigenous woman in Ontario who had a piece of metal flung from her at a truck—from a truck—which resulted in her needing surgery on her abdomen. She did not provoke such an action, yet she was judged as a lesser person because of her beautiful skin colour.

There are incidents that occur daily right here, but fail to make the news. For those people, know that I lend my voice to those silenced. I cannot speak freely of this today if it weren't for the work of the honourable Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Thank you.

Racial discrimination has dug so deeply in our society. Canada was built on the backs of our indigenous people and migrants.

March 21st was chosen to remember that horrific day in 1960 when police opened fire and killed those 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa.

The theme of this year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is Racial Profiling and Incitement to Hatred, Including the Context of Migration.

Refugees and migrants are particular targets of racial profiling and incitement to hatred. As many people cross our border escaping persecution and intolerance are welcomed here in our province, we should be proud that we reach out to help them as best we can. We work towards a common goal to be inclusive and accepting not only of those who flee such hostility, but for those who already call themselves Manitobans.

The UN human rights office is asking people around the world to stand up to—stand up for someone's right today. We should not only be anti-racist, we should deliberately step up and call racists for their unforgiving behaviour. I call upon everyone

in this House and every Manitoban to promote respect, safety and dignity for all people.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Heritage North Museum

**Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson):** Celebrating the northern boreal region, the Heritage North Museum in Thompson is home to flora and fauna, cultural artifacts, mineral samples, photos and artwork from our beautiful North.

The museum boasts several dioramas celebrating First Nation culture, our trapping heritage, a typical mining camp, open-air blacksmith shop and antique furniture and tools, preserving rooms from a day-gone-by era.

The museum also has an amazing collection of indigenous artwork, memoirs from many celebrated northerners, historical flags, progressive construction photos of Thompson and the Inco mine and processing complex from the late 1950s and documents the development of the mining industry in the North.

Incorporated in 1990, the museum relies heavily on dedicated volunteers, including much time donated by board members and staff to fulfill its mission statement: to promote and preserve the heritage and history relating to Thompson and area. Their dedication has been rewarded, and the museum is now a Star Attraction with Travel Manitoba.

In 1989 Hazel Hopkins and Doreen Lindquist were some of the original volunteers, and Doreen remains on the board today. It was their unwavering passion for the North and its people that helped create the museum and grow it into the attraction that it has become.

To commemorate Canada's 150-year anniversary, Heritage North Museum board members have decided to dedicate their art-viewing gallery area in memory of Hazel Hopkins, recognizing a founding volunteer who shared her vision, motivation and time to create the Star Attraction in Thompson.

It's my pleasure to acknowledge board member Edward Palmer here today in the viewing gallery and thank him and all the Heritage North Museum board members and staff for their hard work and dedication and for preserving and promoting northern Manitoba.

Let's all welcome—

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

**Mr. Bindle:** I'm sorry. I'd also like to request leave to have the board members and staff included in the permanent House record of this Legislature.

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

*Tanna Teneycke, executive director; Greg Stott, president; Sharon McLeod, past president; Lynn Taylor, treasurer; Grace Bindle, Doreen Lindquist, Sya Gregovski, Edward Palmer, Lee Anne Deegan*

### Health Care for Seniors

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** Madam Speaker, Manitobans want strong public health care that meets the needs of their loved ones. This is especially important for our loved ones who have trouble taking care of themselves.

Many people in our province struggle with the devastating effects of dementia and Alzheimer's. Both diseases drastically affect a person's ability to complete the simplest daily tasks. I know how conditions can improve when a caregiver is supporting them through this difficult time while making them feel supported, stable and secure.

Unfortunately, with the cuts of the Conservative government of the day—it is making to personal-care homes and front-line services, our loved ones will not get the special care and attention that they need. Without any support, they are left suffering until the end of their lives, and this is not acceptable. The one-on-one support of a caregiver is essential, and we need to provide these services.

Manitoba seniors helped build this province. They deserve to know that the services they count on are there for them, their children and their grandchildren. We want seniors to have access to the care they need, when they need it.

It's time this government puts an end to their cuts and starts making meaningful investments that help Manitoba families and seniors access the quality care that they need.

Thank you, Madam Speaker

### Women Parliamentarians

**Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital):** Madam Speaker, it was great honour that I rise today as a woman, a member of the Manitoba Legislature and as the chair of the Manitoba chapter of the Commonwealth women's parliamentarian.

I stand before you as one of 13 women who were elected almost a year ago today to represent constituencies across our province. We are 13 of just 60 women who have ever been elected to serve in this role, and, so, Madam Speaker, it is today that I wish to recognize the importance of, and to celebrate, women parliamentarians from all over our country and all levels of government.

As a member of CWP it's my role to promote equal representation in legislatures and Parliament in all regions throughout Canada. It is our responsibility to inspire women to be engaged in politics and to foster a welcoming environment for future generations.

I was honoured to represent our government while attending Equal Voice's historical Daughters of the Vote in our nation's capital just a few weeks ago. I will soon not forget what it was like to see 338 female delegates fill each seat in the House of Commons to mark International Women's Day and to represent the strength, determination and achievements of all parliamentarians who have come before us.

\* (13:50)

These young women joined together in a multi-partisan gathering to demonstrate that despite political differences it is the shared desire for equality that continues to bring us to the table.

It will take a balanced dialogue and a fighting spirit from both men and women to contribute to the global strategy of working towards gender equality through the empowerment of women. I wish to tell any girl or woman who may think that you are not capable of achieving their political potential to reach out to other woman who have tried to run for public office and to recognize that you are one of our wealthiest resources.

Madam Speaker, I would ask you and all members of the Legislature to join me as I honour women parliamentarians, both past and present, in the hopes of encouraging young girls and women who are just starting to forge their way in the world to keep moving forward and to never give up.

Thank you.

### **Recognizing Liberal Colleagues**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Everyone in this House knows the importance of valuing relationships in our lives. This is why, nearing the first-year mark of being elected, I would like to take

an opportunity to appreciate both of my colleagues from River Heights and Kewatinook. And, Madam Speaker, I should add that in preparing this statement I had to be very sly with what I was planning to talk about today.

So, Madam Speaker, allow me to start with my colleague from River Heights—or, rather, Senator, as all of you like to call him. I have known the Senator essentially since I was born. Him along with his wife Naomi have always been great friends of my family.

The member from River Heights is a huge mentor to me. I can recall in 2011 telling him that it would be such an honour to work with him here in the House and, Madam Speaker, what an honour it continues to be. I don't know anyone who knows as much as the member from River Heights does on so many various topics. His endless patience inspires me.

And, Madam Speaker, the last thing I want to share on is how last week he won the Eco-Network Reel Green gala award, also known as the Earthie award. Members, you should have seen it. At this event, they showed a recent video of him climbing a tree and he was four feet away from this huge eagle. It was unreal. It was the coolest thing you could have seen.

Now, Madam Speaker, allow me to talk about my colleague from Kewatinook. It is not new information to anyone in this House how hard this woman has worked throughout life. Something that I can share with you is her kind spirit and her heart, and we can't forget her contagious smile.

The member from Kewatinook, even when she is going through the hardest of times, stands strong; she stands united with her family, with us as her team and with—for her constituents who she is constantly advocating for. She is an inspiration to all women and she proves that we can have it all: a family, a career, a life of success and happiness.

In closing, I just want my colleagues to know how much they are truly appreciated by me and how lucky I am to learn from them in the House.

Thank you.

### **Remembering Art Paetkau and John Friesen**

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour Mr. Art Paetkau and Mr. John Friesen who lost their lives in a tragic airplane crash south of Winnipeg a little while ago. Art was a successful entrepreneur

and aviation pioneer. As soon as he learned how to fly airplanes in 1977 it became his lifelong passion. He started his own company, Arty's Air Service, which has been operating in Manitoba for nearly 40 years. Airplanes always held a special place in Art's heart and he loved to share his love of flying as a mentor and teacher to many young pilots.

In addition to airplanes, Art's business ambitions led him to open Eagle Mountain, a company that manufactured structural insulated panel systems for all housing needs.

John Friesen, with him that night in the plane, was another successful entrepreneur, dedicating nearly 20 years of his life to Border View Electric company in Winkler. John was a business leader in the community, spending the last two years in Border View Electric as a major business partner. He was a soft-spoken individual committed to balancing his work and his family life.

Both men were outstanding fathers, husbands and friends. They loved spending time with their families travelling, camping, watching and playing sports.

On behalf of this government and this House, we extend our deepest condolences to the Paetkau and Friesen families. We will miss Art and John dearly, and we are grateful to have had them in our lives and in our community.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I would like to introduce you to some guests we have in the gallery. Seated in the public gallery from St. Gerard School, 34 grade 4 and 5 students under the direction of Heather Pollock and Rita Cunningham. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

Also in the public gallery, we have Edward Palmer and Bruce Desjarlais, and they are the guests of the member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Collective Bargaining Agreements Government Negotiation Strategy

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** As we know now, the Premier's not

much of a negotiator. He demands that things are done his way or it's the highway.

Madam Speaker, this approach simply doesn't work. It hasn't worked in Ottawa. It didn't even work with his friend Brad Wall. The Premier demanded support from his friend on flood mitigation, and then Saskatchewan just authorized yet more drainage works that will send more water flowing to Manitoba.

We had hoped that the Premier might have learned his lesson, start actually doing the hard work of engaging in meaningful negotiation and meaningful consultation in areas where the Premier needs co-operation. But no, instead the Premier is now using the same tactics with our front-line workers that he is using everywhere else. He demands that things are done his way or the highway, and he is willing to use legislation—

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

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Sorry, I just heard a diatribe, Madam Speaker, and no question there. But it does give me the opportunity to say that, in our government, we value the input of Manitobans.

We just concluded a very intensive prebudget consultation, Madam Speaker, which saw over 20,000 Manitobans have a chance to participate. That's a record of listening that is not matched by any other government in the history of Manitoba, let alone by the previous government, who doesn't even listen to their own members, especially when it comes to electing their leader.

So, you know, I understand that the member has a question written and wants to read it into the record. But I would like to read into the record something else. I would like to say that we have inherited a mess, and here on this side of the House, we're prepared to do the right thing for Manitobans by working with them to clean it up.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** Previous Manitoba governments and governments in other jurisdictions have engaged in meaningful consultations to get concessions and still achieve consensus, yet the Premier holds a handful of meetings and calls that negotiation. Besides the fact that this flouts the constitutional, protected right of works to collectively bargain, this really exposes Manitoba to an unnecessary risk of a



protracted and costly legal challenge. Those risks and those potential costs are not borne by the Premier but by Manitobans.

It really makes no sense. The Premier could have bargained in good faith, and instead he uses a heavy legislative tool that is subject to legal challenge before meaningful negotiation has even begun.

Why has the Premier engaged in such a heavy-handed approach? Why has the Premier chosen to use such a heavy-handed tool for matters that he could have achieved through negotiation?

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate the irony of any question emanating from that side of the House in respect of teamwork, Madam Speaker.

I understand that teamwork is important, and we have built teams already to partner with our neighbours, for example, in joining the New West Partnership. We have built teams with our other provinces and territories across the country in advancing causes such as reducing barriers to trade among Canadian provinces and territories that were never pursued successfully by our predecessors. In fact, they erected barriers in the interests of some of their special interests rather than take those barriers down in the interests of Manitobans.

They are expert in practising the politics of special interests, Madam Speaker. We are expert in practising the politics of public interest.

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

\*(14:00)

**Ms. Marcelino:** In other jurisdictions where such a draconian tool was used, it came at the end of long efforts to achieve consensus at the negotiating table. This government holds a handful of meetings and gives up before the work has even begun.

Madam Speaker, meaningful consultation to achieve consensus is difficult work that this Premier could not even bother to engage in. And how could he, when he is away in Costa Rica for two months without email?

It is all part and parcel of the same failed approach: it's the Premier's way or the highway. And now he's using the same approach with our front-line workers.

Will he get back to the negotiating table and do the hard work, or will he continue to grandstand and make demands of everyone except himself?

**Mr. Pallister:** It's always illustrative of a losing argument, Madam Speaker, when people are forced to resort to personal attack, as the member's just done. I expect it to continue because I don't see that they have any other legitimate condemnation of a perfectly well-performing government such as this one.

Madam Speaker, the members talk about consensus. The only consensus they were able to arrive at was that they should work with their special interests, set the bargaining table over to the side of the room and feast at it at the expense of taxpayers. That's what they did and they did it on a regular basis for the last number of years, so that we created in this province—they created in this province a structural deficit, which essentially means that we're borrowing money from our children and grandchildren so we can pay people to work today for services that no one in the future will manage to receive. That's hardly fair.

And, Madam Speaker, that unfairness to our young people and their future is evident in the way they managed, but it will not be evident in the way we manage. We manage in the best interests of our children and grandchildren.

#### **Advanced Education Act Request to Repeal**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** We're now starting to see just how much the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) plan is going to hurt students in Manitoba and the families that help to pay their tuition.

We now see that the universities in Winnipeg and Brandon are preparing to raise tuition at the maximum rate that the Premier has directed. That's 7 per cent more per year plus fees, which works out to \$1,250 more in the fourth year alone or \$3,000 more over the course of a four-year degree.

Will the Premier recognize that he's putting too much of a burden on Manitoba students and their families and reverse course on his plan to raise tuition?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** Our government has put legislation before this House that has provided post-secondary institutions with the flexibility to do what is necessary to develop a sustainable long-term plan for themselves and to make sure that they can provide high quality education for Manitoba now and into the future.

We have also put in place programs like the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative that, during that same four years that the member just mentioned, will put \$100 million into the hands of students.

I think that's a pretty good comparison.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, this government doesn't seem interested in protecting students and families because they don't seem to care about keeping post-secondary tuition affordable.

Under this government's plan, tuition could be hiked for more than six years before we get to BC's high level of rates or it could rise by 50 per cent before we match Saskatchewan's high tuition.

Yesterday, interestingly, student leaders said they'd met with the minister several times and not once did he share plans to raise tuition with them. No consultation with students.

Can the Premier tell us today why he doesn't think it's important for his government to consult with the most important stakeholders in our post-secondary system, the students themselves?

**Mr. Wishart:** I'd like to ask the member if he consulted with these same students before he raised the PST. And I seem to recall that they made promises in the other direction.

We have certainly consulted with the post-secondary institutions and looked at the long-term sustainability to make sure that we can give high quality education that these same students can benefit from now and into the future.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** To paraphrase the Premier, when a minister raises the PST, you know they're losing the argument.

Under this government's agenda, they'll likely spend \$3,000 more—families will likely spend \$3,000 more to send their kids to university, and you can double that if you plan to put two kids through post-secondary.

For all these extra costs that the Premier is imposing, what are we getting in return? Not a sports complex or LRSD, not an Active Living Centre for

Kelvin High School and not a small class sizes initiative.

The Premier's plan to raise tuition and higher property taxes while attacking services Manitoba families rely on just doesn't add up, so will the Premier commit to reversing course and cancelling his plans for higher tuition?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Couple of points the member might like to consider: as far as the ability to afford to go to university, I've had first-hand experience in the challenges that can pose for a young person, as have many in this Chamber; and I am very concerned about making sure that those who are less privileged in our society or challenged in their ability to go to university or community college have those burdens reduced.

And that's why we're quintupling the amount of money available to \$20 million in terms of scholarships and bursaries to be made available to young people in our province, Madam Speaker. That is a massive, massive increase in demonstrating in a real way our concern for access to education for young people.

Now, Madam Speaker, in the last few years, we've seen the highest increases on family tax, under the NDP, in Canada—bar none. The same kitchen table those members took money off of is the kitchen table where money is needed for our university students and our community college students.

The member needs to look at his own record of his own party before he starts throwing stones at a government that is putting the best long-term interests of university and community college students at the forefront, Madam Speaker.

#### **Changes to Elections Act Permanent Voter Registry Concerns**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** On November 25, 2016, before a committee of this Legislature, the Chief Electoral Officer of Elections Manitoba, Shipra Verma, said: We haven't had any complaints or any prosecutions on voter fraud in the history of Manitoba. So, probably that provides a level of confidence that the voter fraud or voting irregularities are low or nil.

Despite that, the Minister of Justice introduced Bill 27, which will disenfranchise Manitobans left off the voter registry who do not have photo identification.

Why would this minister want to make it harder for some Manitobans to vote?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I think it's important to remind the member opposite that Bill 27 also offers a voter registry, which the Chief Electoral Officer asked for for a number of years.

Members opposite never got that done. All the other provinces in Canada and territories in Canada have done it. We're the dead-last jurisdiction once again as a result of that former NDP government.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Well, Bill 27 will make it easier for absentee voters to vote earlier before they jet off to warmer places, but Bill 27 will take the vote away from thousands of Manitobans, many in indigenous communities and our inner cities, where voter registration lists will be least complete and where people are least likely to have photo identification.

The minister ignores the Chief Electoral Officer's clear statement that voter fraud is not a concern. We already have existing provisions for fair voting.

Will the minister today agree to amend her bill, or will she use a problem that doesn't exist to suppress voting by the very Manitobans hurt most by her government?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, in fact, Bill 27 brings us in line with other provinces when it comes to voter ID. And, certainly, in Manitoba right now and when members—or citizens in Manitoba go and vote in a federal election, or when they go and vote in a City of Winnipeg election, when they go and vote in an advanced poll in a provincial election, they are required to show ID. We're simply making it the same across the board there.

\*(14:10)

And so this is what other jurisdictions are doing. This is about our voter registry, which will make it that much easier for members to get their name onto a proper voter registry in order to be able to vote on election day. This is very good for all Manitobans.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Voters in northern communities, primarily indigenous communities, do not have a civic address the same way that Manitobans living in

cities or rurally in the south do. They will have great difficulty making it on to a voter registry. Low-income voters in urban communities are often transient or even homeless as they pursue safe and affordable housing. They will have great difficulty making it on to a voter registry. This government has cancelled plans for wider availability of photo ID.

Will this minister listen to the advice of the Chief Electoral Officer, or will she move ahead, Harper style, to suppress the votes of low-income Manitobans?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I encourage the member to not try to invent an issue which doesn't exist, Madam Speaker. He could do a wee bit of research; I encourage him to do that.

Here's an article from the Globe and Mail written by an expert in this field, an assistant professor of business strategy, public policy, at Carleton University. His name is Ian Lee. The member can look it up, he can google Mr. Lee. He's renowned, and he wrote an article, called *Canadians Who Can't Vote Because They Lack Any ID? Don't Believe It*, in which he concludes that the unsubstantiated, undocumented allegation that significant numbers of Canadians possess no identity cards appears to be another urban legend.

Madam Speaker, 90 per cent of Canadians—90 per cent of Canadians—live in provinces where—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —the legislation we are bringing forward—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —already exists. Madam Speaker, these members are trying to invent an issue which does not exist. Seven other provinces and territories have the same rules, exactly the same rules as we're bringing in now.

Where was the concern this past weekend for the—of the member opposite when he took away the right of his own members to vote for their leader?

#### **Wage Freezes and Tuition Increase Impact on Manitoba's Affordability**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, recently I met with Lisa—she's a single mother from St. Johns—when she came to my office to share her worry about how she's going to provide for her son with the Premier's wage freezes. Lisa

went to university, taking a student loan, now working full time managing 176 files in social assistance, far more than she should because of vacancies that are not filled. Lisa asked me, and I quote: I've done everything right in my life. I've worked hard. I've made the right choices, so why is the Premier (Mr. Pallister) penalizing me for his government's problem? What did I do wrong?

What makes the Premier think he's more worthy and deserving than Lisa, forcing a wage freeze while he locks a 20 per cent raise for himself?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** Well, I'm happy to speak about Lisa, but I do reject the premise of the question. It's inaccurate.

Yesterday, our government tabled a bill that is moderate—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** —and balanced, that is time limited, that sets the reset button when it comes to negotiations of wages in this province. There is a significant challenge facing all of us; we've asked for all hands on deck. I don't think it's right to put forward that somehow labour does not want to be part of fixing the challenges—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** —that were left by the previous government and their commitment, not to Manitobans, but to debt and to taxation. We're taking a different path.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Madam Speaker, another constituent recently came to me expressing his worry about his own balancing his desire to retire and helping his young daughter make ends meet. Gary has been gearing up for retirement after nearly 40 years in the workforce. He's had to put that on hold to help his 20-something-old daughter with her monthly bills. Gary's daughter went to university, but her minimum wage job means that she can't get ahead of her student loan debt and with the recent tuition hike she can no longer afford to get a second degree to make her more appealing to the workforce. Gary's story illustrates how the Premier's regressive minimum wage freezes and tuition hikes are putting Manitoba between a rock and a hard place.

Will the Premier admit that the tuition hike and the wage freezes are hurting Manitoba families?

**Mr. Friesen:** The NDP government missed their budgetary targets and outspent planned budgets each and every time: the revenues ran under expenditures in eight of the nine past budgets. As a result, they raised taxes on all Manitobans; they took thousands of dollars out of each Manitoban's pocket as a result. What would that member say to Lisa and Gary about her own government's culpability to get us to this place?

This government is going to fix this. We've taken people off the tax rolls. We'll continue down this path of affordability for all Manitobans.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Actually, Madam Speaker, the minister is wrong, because affordability has been Manitoba's advantage over other provinces for a number of years.

But this onslaught of legislation seriously hurts Manitoban families who are trying to make ends meet every day and save for the future. Of course, the Premier doesn't have to worry about their impacts because he's locked in a 20 per cent raise for himself.

And while members opposite think it's all a big joke, the reality is the Premier has no real understanding of what his cuts and freezes will do to families and the additional stress that it puts on families.

Unfortunately, Gary and Lisa don't have a Costa Rican beach to escape to when things get stressful.

Will the Premier admit that he's out of touch and that his wage freezes and tuition hikes are putting Manitoba's affordability advantage—

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

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, the member could be forgiven because she was not here in 2010, but it was her government at that time, in 2010, when the legislation would've required every one of those members who were ministers to take a pay cut because of their inability to make their targets. They instead gave themselves a pay raise because they brought a special provision that said the rules don't count this time. Then they brought the same provision four years later and said the rules don't count now, either.

As a result, every minister in that NDP government gave themselves a \$1-million raise over four years altogether. We don't choose that path for

Manitobans. We are fixing the finances. We care about affordability for Manitobans. It is all hands on deck. We are on a road to recovery. Why don't they get on board?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

### Ride Sharing Legislation Consultation Inquiry

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** My question is to the minister responsible for the Taxicab Board.

Now, yesterday, she introduced Bill 30 in this House when this government decided to download the costs and responsibilities of ride sharing onto municipalities.

Like to ask the minister: Can she tell the House who she consulted with from industry prior to introducing this bill yesterday?

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations):** I thank the member opposite for his observation in regards to our bill.

I would like to be very clear that I think the City of Winnipeg deserves the opportunity to have the same opportunity to run the vehicle-for-hire industry as the other municipalities have had for quite some time. They are operating under an act that was originated—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Clarke:** —in 1935 when there was horse and buggies and 13 municipalities. I don't think modernization is something that they don't wish to have.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, she won't tell us who she consulted with, but the answer is no one.

\* (14:20)

Madam Speaker, for a government that pretends to combat red tape, they sure do like creating more of it. They will make municipalities create more regulations for ride sharing, but when it comes to actually supporting those same municipalities with real dollars, they're nowhere to be seen.

We know the costs of running the Taxicab Board in Winnipeg are hundreds of thousands of dollars per year and ride sharing will only add to that.

What dollar supports will this government commit to helping municipalities deal with these new

costs, and will she tell us who she consulted with from the taxi industry, or is the answer no one?

**Ms. Clarke:** I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question. It begs me to answer: Who was consulted when amalgamations were forced upon our municipalities—

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

**Ms. Clarke:** I'd also like to add that given that Manitoba, once again, is the last province in the—Canada to have a province actually regulate this industry; in all other jurisdictions it is with the cities or with the municipalities. We will get us modernized and move forward.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** This must be very embarrassing for this government and this minister to have to admit that she consulted with no one on the development of a very important bill, Bill 30.

Madam Speaker, we named important voices to the Taxicab Board in order to make sure that drivers are protected and customers are safe: voices from all communities, women's voices, voices of indigenous groups, of minority groups and many others. But this government has dissolved the board and made no concrete requirements on municipalities to make sure that these voices are heard.

What guarantee will this minister make that the voices of indigenous, minority and women's groups will be heard on the new taxi board, and why won't she tell us who she consulted with, or is the answer, as we know, no one?

**Ms. Clarke:** I would invite the member opposite to read the report. He will find many answers in there and many suggestions coming from the people in Manitoba.

I'd also like to suggest that Winnipeg is actually operating with the same number of vehicles for hire as they did in 1947. This particular party wants to move forward. We are going to be the most improved province and we're going to do it by modernizing our industries.

### ER Wait Times Reduction Plan

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, this government is only focused on cutting

the budget. This government should be focused on providing the very best quality of services for Manitobans. Indeed, when the public sector delivers the best quality of services, Manitobans are, in turn, healthier, more creative and overall more productive, and, as the result, our economy does better and we have a cycle of improvement.

Today, we have some of the longest wait times in our emergency rooms. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** People were waiting up to nine hours at Victoria Hospital emergency room last night.

I ask: What steps is the minister taking to decrease emergency room wait times?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I thank the member for the question, and I appreciated the accolades that he received from his colleague from Burrows before. He's always passionate on issues and he is passionate on this issue as well.

I think many Manitobans, of course, are equally passionate about health care and how it's delivered in the province of Manitoba. Over the last 17 years they've been very concerned that the fact that wait times in a number of different areas in health care have increased. We've been concerned about that as well.

Certainly, one of the steps that we've taken is creating a wait-times task force. It's already up and running and we look forward to the report in the near future, Madam Speaker.

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

#### Closure Inquiry

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, we wonder how long the government will defer action and wait for task force reports and other consultations.

Madam Speaker, the government has ordered the regional health authorities to make very steep cutbacks. There is now word circulating that the government's approach to decreasing wait times is to shut down one or more of Winnipeg's emergency rooms. This would appear to be a ridiculous, preposterous approach to improving ER wait times in Manitoba.

I ask the government: Is the minister planning to close one or more emergency rooms in Winnipeg?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate, again, the passion from the member opposite. I wish he would direct some of that passion to helping us with the negotiations, such as they are, with Ottawa. He hasn't said much about trying to help us in terms of trying to get a true partnership with the federal government. He's not said a lot about trying to ensure that there really is sustainable funding from Ottawa when it comes to health care.

We know that wait times within emergency rooms are an issue. They've been a challenge for the last 17 years under the former government. That is why we struck a wait-times task force with experts from across Canada. We look forward to their review, Madam Speaker.

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

#### Dedicated Stroke Unit Government Position

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, if the government had actually presented a plan, it would have been easier to talk with people in Ottawa.

Madam Speaker, the Premier has talked of bringing hope, but only a Tory could see hope and love in cutting budgets and laying off people. The total inaction to improve our health-care system in the last 11 months is appalling. Manitoba is the only province in Canada without a dedicated stroke unit. Stroke units save lives.

When in opposition, the PCs put forward three private member's resolutions in support of a dedicated stroke unit. Now, when they have the power to act, why are they choosing to be silent on this life-saving initiative?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, choosing to be silent is what the member is doing currently in the battle for health care and its future, while our Health Minister leads the way in standing up for health care. The member opposite led the way in cutting it in the '90s, is proposing to stand back and quietly do nothing while it happens again—both times at the expense of Manitobans and both times by Liberal federal governments.

Madam Speaker, the member opposite ought not to speak about standing up for health care when he fails to do so himself—while he watches us do that very thing.

### **Child-Care Standards Act Introduction to New Legislation**

**Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona):** My question is for the Minister of Families today.

Can he describe to the House the major components of The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act and why this is good news for Manitobans?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** Madam Speaker, one of the main reasons why this government was elected is to repair their services, and that's exactly what this legislation does. This legislation before us will consolidate two departments and reduce duplication, reduce red tape that's a part of this. It's something that's very much needed. It's supported by Manitoba Child Care Association. It's also a part of the legislation. The appeals process will be moving to the Social Service Appeal Act, which we think is appropriate.

We encourage all members to get with us, reduce red tape, reduce some of the—streamline the system for the child-care system in itself, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

\* (14:30)

### **New Public Services Legislation Consultations with Nurses**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Madam Speaker, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) pretends to listen to front-line workers, but there's one group of front-line workers that we know he isn't listening to and that's nurses. This is what Sandi Mowat, the president of Manitoba Nurses Union, had to say regarding the government's proposed legislation: There has been no discussion with front-line staff.

Is this correct, Madam Speaker? Did the minister not consult front-line health-care staff regarding this legislation before he introduced it?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Madam Speaker, one of the things I've been most impressed in meeting and discussing issues with health-care professionals, whether that is doctors, whether that's nurses, whether that is pharmacists, paramedics, many people within the different parts of the health-care system, is they understand what this member doesn't understand. They understand that the health-care system has to be sustainable. They

recognize, being on the front lines, that it's important not just to ensure that health care is there today, but also for tomorrow for the young people who'll need health care.

They recognize what sustainability is in the health-care system. This member fails to recognize that, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** We know what it's like for front-line workers when the Premier was last in power. Their heavy-handed approach and unfair tactics led to over 1,000 fewer nurses in Manitoba in the 1990s. Contracts with Manitoba nurses are set to expire in just a few days. We know that there's a nursing shortage across the province, especially in rural and in the North, and this bill will only make that worse.

Why does this minister think that Manitobans need less nurses rather than more?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Of course, many untruths in the comments from the member opposite. But there certainly is a significant truth, and that is, those who are working within our health-care system understand more than most, understand, I think, more than anybody in this House, the need to have a sustainable health-care system. They want to work in a health-care system that is providing care not just tomorrow, but 10 years from now, 20 years from now, 30 years from now, for many of them, Madam Speaker. They want to have a health-care system that is there to help everyone within the health-care system.

They know that the greatest threat to the health-care system is unsustainable spending. Unsustainable spending, not just in health care but in different parts of the government, is something that the previous government didn't understand for 17 years, and part of the reason we're in the challenge that we are in, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just like caution the member that the word untruths is language that comes very close to being unparliamentary language. And I would just encourage—I would encourage more of an effort by members to try to keep their language in here as to the rules that are acceptable for our parliaments.

The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a supplementary question—a final supplementary.

**Mr. Lindsey:** The Premier had an opportunity to actually consult front-line workers. He had the opportunity to actually listen to Manitobans. Instead, he's decided to vilify our front-line workers. He refuses to be accountable for the consequences of his actions. Manitoba will have fewer nurses, and they will be expected to do much more with fewer and fewer resources.

When will this government listen to our front-line workers? When will they actually stop undermining the work that they do?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I recognize that the member wasn't here previous to the last election. He wouldn't know about the lack of consultation by the previous government. He'll recognize that the previous government didn't consult on increasing the PST, didn't consult on expanding the PST to things like insurance and to haircuts.

In fact, it was his predecessor that said being on the team of the former NDP government was like being on the Titanic, Madam Speaker. That is what his predecessor said when he was in the House. We are righting the course. Far from the former government, which was steering the Titanic, we are heading to safer shores.

#### **Rail Line Service Reduction Impact on Churchill Residents**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** Cuts to northern infrastructure threaten the safety and livelihood of people who rely on winter roads and freight delivery by train.

Until yesterday, the people of Churchill faced empty grocery shelves and dwindling supplies because the resupply train was blocked by snow. That same train service has been also reduced on this government's watch.

Can the Premier tell me how his plan for the North will ensure families in Churchill will have access to food? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, the train has arrived in Churchill. The store has been restocked with food. It is not empty of shelves, as the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) stated earlier today.

But our infrastructure all across this province is being improved each and every day by this government because we understand the importance

of infrastructure in moving goods and products and people all across our province.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** When two unprecedented blizzards hit an isolated community like Churchill, everyone becomes a vulnerable person. Police and fire services in Churchill were immobilized and 90-kilometre-plus wind shut down the local health clinic. This government stood by while Churchill's rail service was cut to once a week.

What steps will the minister take to ensure the health and public safety of people in Churchill? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, we believe the Golden Boy faces north for a good reason; we believe that northern Manitoba will be the site of much great development and prosperity in the years ahead, and we're focused on assisting and working with the communities and groups across the province and in the North who share that goal and share that vision.

The previous administration found its way into the households of all Manitobans, Madam Speaker, and took money off the kitchen tables and used it for failed projects like the bipole waste line that they proposed to expand hydro for the sake of exporting it to Americans. This money, billions of dollars, is gone now, but to no good end. That money could have been put to great use in Manitoba building better roads for the people of northern Manitoba.

We're going to—we've been handed a massive mess, Madam Speaker. The difference between us and the members opposite is we recognize there's a mess and we're willing to face up to the challenges of fixing it while they sit aside and sit on their hands.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

#### **PETITIONS**

##### **Neighbourhoods Alive!**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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



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

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

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

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

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

(7) Neighbourhood renewal corporations and their communities are concerned this funding freeze is the first step in a slow phase-out of the Neighbourhoods Alive! grant program, which would have severe negative impacts on families and communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

### **Kelvin High School Gymnasium**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse its decision and to provide the remainder of the funding

needed to build the new Kelvin High School gymnasium as soon as possible.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, under orders of the day, we would like to proceed with royal assent for Bill 8.

### ROYAL ASSENT

**Madam Speaker:** I am advised that His Honour the Administrator is about to arrive to grant royal assent to Bill 8. I am therefore interrupting the proceedings of the House for the royal assent.

*His Honour, Justice Michel Monnin, Administrator of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed His Honour the Administrator in the following words:*

**Madam Speaker:** Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks Your Honour to accept the following bill:

Bill 8—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017

**Clerk Assistant (Ms. Monique Grenier):** Loi de 2017 portant affectation anticipée de crédits

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** In Her Majesty's name, the Administrator of the Province of Manitoba thanks the Legislative Assembly, and assents to this bill.

*His Honour was then pleased to retire.*

**Madam Speaker:** Please be seated.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, this afternoon we would like to call in the following order for second reading: bills 9, 11, 10 and 12.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the order for second reading of bills this afternoon is: 9, 11, 10 and 12.

**Mr. Micklefield:** Madam Speaker, we would like to proceed with Bill 9 for second reading.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 9—The Advocate for Children and Youth Act

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will resume debate on second reading of Bill 9, The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for River Heights, who has 23 minutes remaining.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I will bring my remarks to a quick conclusion just to say that as Liberals we support the bill, but hope that the minister will take into account some of the suggestions that we have made during this debate.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 9, The Advocate for Children and Youth Act.

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

\* \* \*

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, we'd like to proceed with second reading and debate for Bill 11.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 11—The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Staff Qualifications and Training)

**Madam Speaker:** We will now proceed to second reading of Bill 11, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Staff Qualifications and Training).

\* (14:50)

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** I'll move, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Mrs. Cox), that the bill, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act, now be read a second time and be referred to the committee of the House.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Families, seconded by the honourable Minister for Sustainable Development, that Bill 11, The Community Child Care Standards

Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Mr. Fielding:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Mrs. Cox), that bill—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker, this bill is—will make—it is an important bill before us, and it is in line with the priorities of this government, ensuring that red tape and streamlining of the system happens. This is a good example. The bill will make changes respecting the Child Care Education Program Approval Committee, which currently establishes by the authority of the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart).

CCEPAC was provided essential support for the province since the 1980s. CCEPAC sets standards of practice and training qualifications for staff of licensed child-care facilities. These standards guide the decisions of the director of Early Learning and Child Care, who certify graduates of early childhood education programs to provide high-quality early-learning education in Manitoba child-care system.

CCEPAC also supports decisions made by Manitoba Education and Training on academic programs in the early-learning and child-care field. My esteemed colleague, Minister Wishart—*[interjection]* Minister of Education—thank you—and I determine that the CCEPAC's function would be better suited within the Department of Families, where the overall responsibilities for the child-care sector resides. The bill proposes to move CCEAP responsibilities from Manitoba Education and Training to the Department of Families.

Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to state the proposed bill supports the government's commitment to reducing the number of legislative committees. The proposed bill would eliminate CCEPAC and a second redundant committee. The proposed amendment would merge the overlapping responsibilities of these two committees into one newly established committee under the Department of Families. The new committee would be called the Child Care Qualifications and Training Committee.

These changes would allow the new committee to continue the outstanding work that supports the province to ensuring that early-learning and child-care training truly aligns with the best practices that meets the sector's needs.

The new committee would also be able to review and access curriculum in early childhood education programs and study for the purposes of the director's certification decisions. It would also allow the new committee to make recommendations to Manitoba Education and Training respecting early-learning and education programs of study.

The amendments would enable Manitoba Education and Training to work with the early-learning and child-care sectors in the same way it works with other sectors that regulate the entirety and practices required, for example, through professional or regulatory bodies.

The proposed changes, Madam Speaker, would allow the Province the flexibility to request advice on other issues as needed, such as regulatory amendments. The proposed bill would also assist in modernizing and maintaining quality standards in early learning and child care.

In my view, the proposed amendments also supports the opportunity to access and review current competencies of early-childhood educators with a view towards honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action among cultural competencies.

Two other departments—or two departments, Manitoba Families and Manitoba Education and Training, have a shared role in expanding training options for early-learning and child-care sector staff. As such, the proposed amendments before us today were jointly drafted by departments to grow Manitoba's high-quality early-learning and child-care sectors. We'll continue to work collaborately across the sectors and departments and with key stakeholders.

We consulted with a number of different groups in terms—members of the CCEPAC to develop this bill. We also consulted with Manitoba Child Care Association, the—child-care association, the child care coalition of Manitoba, and the chair of the social services appeals committee, amongst others.

The proposed changes before us, Madam Speaker, in the legislation, are positive for early-learning and child-care sector stakeholders. They also support private vocational institutions that are seeking to 'liver academic programs in the sector. Establishing new committees in legislation supports government's vision for early learning and child care. The early-learning and child-care systems require a dedicated and well-established, trained workforce.

These proposed changes to the bill support the delivery of high-quality training, and more academic institutions increases the number of well-trained, licensed early-learning child-care educators. These are also both key aspects at making sure that more Manitoba families can access high-quality child care for all our citizens and for all our children and families here in Manitoba.

Very happy to support this legislation. It is something that we think will make a difference in terms of streamlining process, reducing red tape and barriers in terms of—and duplication that's a part of the current system, Madam Speaker.

Thank you very much.

**Madam Speaker:** To clarify for the record, I would ask if the Minister of Families, could just repeat the title of the bill.

**Mr. Fielding:** Okay—The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act.

I move that the—I move, seconded by the member from River East, the Minister of Sustainable Development (Mrs. Cox)—by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), that the Bill 11, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Staff Qualifications and Training), be now read a second time and referred to committee of this House.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Families, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 11, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Staff Qualifications and Training), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Hopefully, that will clarify the issue for Hansard.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** The—a question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: First question by the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties, subsequent questions asked by each independent member, remaining questions asked by any opposition members, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Will the minister commit to giving early childhood educators a raise in this coming budget?

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

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** This—that is not part of the bill before us here today, Madam Speaker. I actually couldn't convey any items. The budget is the budget, and we'll be making decisions and announcements once the budget is tabled.

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** I just want to thank the minister for bringing this important bill forward that will help clean up some of that red tape mess that was created by the previous government.

And I just had a question: How does this bill support the government's commitment to reduce the number of committees in legislation?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, thank you, Madam—thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A part of the government's process, going forward, is to repair the services of the government of Manitoba. We think a part of that, obviously, is streamlining, making the system more efficient, reducing barriers, reducing red tape. That's a part of this. This is one of the items, a part of many other processes that will be a part of this, not just in the child-care system but across government in terms of committees to reduce the amount of committees, to reduce the amount of red tape and streamline the system. And this is one of the steps that's involved in that.

\* (15:00)

**Ms. Fontaine:** Will the government ensure that supports are in place for daycare workers to attain their ECE qualifications?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, of course, this bill looks to amalgamate two different committees. I can tell you that one of the committees hasn't met in well over five years. We think it makes sense to reduce some of the—to streamline the system, to reduce some of the red tape, to reduce some of the barriers that—not—people in the child-care system face on an everyday basis. This, of course, talks about the qualifications. It also talks about the curriculum, which, we think, is extremely important. So it is something that can streamline, making the system more efficient.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** Manitoba Education and Training, or MET, currently has a committee that sets standards of practice and training qualifications required by staff to work in licensed child-care facilities.

Why is this role being transferred to the new committee under the responsibility of the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding)?

**Mr. Fielding:** This is something that we think falls in line with our process to reduce red tape, to make it easier to streamline systems. We know that both committees had similar roles, and we think that it makes sense to amalgamate them together to make a more efficient system, make a more effective system. And this is one element of the plan that the government has overall in terms of making a more efficient and effective system.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Can the minister tell the House how many people will be appointed to the Child Care Qualifications and Training Committee?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, a number of the committee members that's a part of it, we believe that all committee 'membersh' should be people that have qualifications as deemed appropriate for the Minister of Families; the Minister of Families make the determination, but one thing I do want to assure the member opposite is that we want to ensure people that have the right qualifications and standards that are a part of that. You want people that are part of this industry making some key decisions that's a part of it. That is at the discretion of the minister, and we take that responsibility seriously.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** And it's clear that this bill, obviously, is trying to streamline some of these services and make it a clearer avenue for our child-care workers and our child-care facilities to get answers and to seek training.

I just wanted to know: Do the stakeholders support the proposed amendments to this bill?

**Mr. Fielding:** Yes, we did extensive consultations, that's a part of it. I'm—referenced in my initial speech that talked about the organizations that we did consult with, some being the Manitoba Child Care Association, the coalition. We also, too, consulted some of the—or the groups that are part of the committees in and itself. And we have full support from all the organizations and stakeholder groups that were identified.

**Ms. Fontaine:** The minister talked about qualifications of individuals that are going to sit on the Child Care Qualifications and Training Committee: Would the minister be so kind as to list what some of those qualifications will be.

As well, the minister didn't answer my question when I asked how many people will be appointed to that committee.

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, the answer to the—to question, it is the discretion of the minister. It's—the minister is responsible for this, and we want to make sure it's deemed with—the minister deems that someone has qualifications and aspects.

The numbers are right in the legislation. I encourage the member to review it. That's part of it.

But we want to make sure people have the qualifications, the standards that are part of it. But it—that is the discretion of the minister in his or her opinion, if they are qualified to sit on this committee.

I can tell you this is something that we do want to make sure that people that have appropriate qualifications are a part of this committee. It is an important aspect in terms of all aspects of the child-care system. And so we do want to make sure that people are qualified for this.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister relates to the fact that currently we usually consider child care to be twinned with early learning, so it's early learning and child care.

And so my question is to the minister. Will this committee be involved in setting standards with regard to the early learning component as well as to what would be traditionally have been considered, 15 years ago, as child care?

**Mr. Fielding:** Right. We do see amalgamation of most of the functions that were previously carried out: one with the Minister of—through the Minister of Education and one through the Ministry of Families. We think that the roles are very similar.

So, to answer the question, yes, that is the case. And we do think that having the roles together is something that would be appropriate, does make sense and will, essentially, streamline the system—make it more efficient and effective. As mentioned in my preamble, there is one of the committees that hadn't actually sat or heard things in close—over five years.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** We all know that when we're making amendments or producing new bills, that it's very important to have an exclamation for some of the reasons why the changes are coming forth. So I'm just wondering, if the minister could explain, why are we transferring appeals related to early

childhood education certification to the Social Services Appeal Board?

**Mr. Fielding:** And that is—course is something that we think is appropriate body to do that. It's something that helps streamline the system to be more efficient. The social appeals board is something that hears cases on an everyday basis. We think it's entirely appropriate to have them ruling on these types of functions. It's also something that would be more efficient and effective, and that's why we've assembled it together in terms of the functions of that board.

**Ms. Fontaine:** The minister advised that it's up to the discretion of the minister to set what the qualifications will be of the individuals who will be appointed to the committee. So, surely, then, the minister has a understanding of what qualifications those will be.

So will the minister advise what qualifications will he be looking at in respect of his appointment to this board?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, that is something to the discretion of the minister. If you're asking my opinion, I think it's important to have someone that understands the child-care system. You probably want to have, in some capacity, some people that have worked in the system or access the system. We all have people—and use different types of child care, whether it be a home-based care, whether it be a centre-based care, whether it be parents that's—that are truly parenting their individuals.

I think all aspects—people are involved in the child-care system would be appropriate. But it is discretion of the minister. I think I would, if it was my decision, upon this legislation—to yield towards people that have some sort of involvement within the system.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** My question is: Does this act put on an additional responsibility to the social services board? If so, how can this burden be remedied?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, we think that amalgamating, putting some committees together is a process. It's something we talked about not just in this area, where you're seeing two committees revert into to one but also ensuring that where there's a body where they're—normally sit to hear appeals would have an opportunity. So we think the fact that you're able to amalgamate, reduce the amount of committees that would be part of it and have a body that's already in

place hearing other items makes entire sense and would streamline the system.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** Mine's a quick simple question here regarding funding.

Is funding required to support the work of the child-care qualifications training committee?

**Mr. Fielding:** There is a small—no—amount of money that will be associated with this. I think it's in the range of \$5,000. What this bill really does and what this legislation does—it streamlines the system, makes it more efficient and effective, reducing from two committees to one committee. The appeals process goes to a body that's already hearing appeals on a number of different items that's a part of it. So we think it's a process to streamline the system and is much needed.

\*(15:10)

**Ms. Fontaine:** Can the minister advise who currently has the authority to set standards of practice and training qualifications?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, obviously, when you look at the 'reest' curriculum that was a part of the education system has—there is a separate role that's a part of it. What we're suggesting, a part of this, is do you amalgamate them together or does it make sense to house it and have the criteria that's a part of it, making 'stablish, making rulings on this in terms of under the Department of Families. We also think that it's a streamlined process that will be more efficient and effective for the system as well as having a body that's already hearing appeals to the social services appeal committee to make rulings when there isn't agreement on this. So we think it is entirely—makes sense and streamlines the system.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** I think that we all in the House can appreciate how much work can go into looking through bills and trying to find different efficiencies and savings within our systems. I'm just wondering if maybe the minister could explain why does the child-care qualification and training committee need to be established in legislation. Thank you.

**Mr. Fielding:** We think that ensuring that there is more efficiency, more effectiveness in the system is something that's extremely important. And so that's what's part of it. There's a difference between the categories that are there. It allows one body to make rulings on this. It also allows the appeal committee that's a part of it.

I do want to answer just for the member from St. Johns who raised an issue in terms of the new committee: there's a maximum number of nine members that will be a part of the board, going forward.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech to the minister for that answer.

Would the minister tell us how are other jurisdictions handling the review and assessment of early childhood educator qualifications and training?

**Mr. Fielding:** Different jurisdictions have different abilities and different avenues. What we have, of course, is a kind of a made-in-Manitoba approach to this. We have, of course, in different jurisdictions—you look at even Ontario, there's a number of jurisdictions that deal in a whole bunch of different facets. Even if you look at the child-welfare system in Ontario, there's three. In fact, we had our social service ministers meeting recently. They have three different ministries that was a part of it.

So my point is it's really hard to measure our approach versus other jurisdictions. What we really want to do is get something where there's some consensus amongst the stakeholders, which there is, have a made-in-Manitoba approach to be more streamlined and more efficient in terms of the approach to this area.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Can the minister tell us how many new child-care spaces did the government fund in 2016?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, it's—it allows me, on my last question, to answer a few questions. We're very happy, just recently, to announce two things: No. 1, 15 communities-based projects that will have in the range of 739 different spots that was part of it; in 2016, there was over 900 spaces that were created.

And what's really important about our plan for child care is, No. 1, to reduce some of the red tape and the streamlining 'proaches' that were there. We had a number of stakeholders that were a part of our announcement. We're very happy with the first element of our long-term plan for child care.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Time for question period has expired. Is there any speakers?

#### Debate

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I'm glad to just put a couple of brief words on the record in respect of Bill 11.

So, of course, the NDP was committed to high-quality, affordable child care that supports families and strengthens our economy and gives children a strong start. Since we had taken government or formed government in 1999, we actually created 14,000 licensed child-care spaces and built 100 new facilities, and, more importantly, as well, which the two are married together, improved the wages and training for early childhood educators. We have the lowest child-care fees outside of Quebec, and we recognized that we need to keep building to make quality, affordable child care available to more families.

I think I know that it's been noted here many, many times that, you know, Manitoba's demographics are going up. We know that there are young families with children that need child-care spaces and that those numbers continue to go up.

And so we started implementing, in respect of that, started implementing a five-year early learning and child-care plan which sought to create 5,000 more funded child-care spaces which was investing \$25 million to build at least 20 new or expanded child-care centres in schools and \$2.8 million per year to build child-care centres outside of schools; again, increased the wages and improved training for child care.

We ensured that, you know, Manitoba children got a strong start in licensed child-care centres with professional staff. We invested in early childhood educators by increasing wages for front-line child-care workers by 54 per cent since 1999. I think that that's a huge indication of the commitment and appreciation that the NDP had for front-line child-care workers.

It's a hard job. Any of us that have dropped our children off at daycare know how hard child-care workers work, and actually the myriad of different skills that they have to have in order to ensure our children have a good learning environment, are safe, are healthy; it certainly is something that eases some of the guilt. I'm sure that many of us, when we were dropping our children off felt guilt when you're dropping your baby off, and it certainly helps to ease parents' worries that our children are in safe hands.

And I know that when I had my children many, many years ago, I was a student. I got—I actually got pregnant in my second year of my first degree, and I was taking a full course load and certainly needed daycare. And I remember that we were really lucky to find Carter Day Care, and I have to just put it on

the record that Carter Day Care is just a phenomenal daycare that actually relieved so much of my stress, that when I was able to drop off my oldest, my first born. And, actually, one of the beautiful things about Carter Day Care is while—was that if you paid an extra two days, you had food included in everything, so you actually didn't have to, you know, make your lunches, which—making lunches is the bane of everybody's existence, I think, anyways.

And so my oldest really thrived in that daycare and, in fact, he started at that daycare when he was 22 months. By that time, I think I was trying to finish off my first degree, and then that daycare, they also would walk your children to school and then pick up your children, so you really had this sense of just—security that your children were doing good.

And I have to say that the staff—and, of course, actually, both my boys went to Carter Day Care, so it's my only frame of reference—but I have to tell you that the staff there are some of the most extraordinary people, and I really do want to just take a moment to acknowledge and lift up people who do this child-care work. It's certainly not a job I could do. Too many kids and me are probably—it's a lot of screaming with a lot of kids always running around and everything. It would kind of get a little—but the workers that are able to do it are extraordinary that they're able to show just—and demonstrate such patience and such love with children.

So I'm really, really proud to belong to a party that understood the importance of supporting child-care workers and understood their worth and not only in words—it's not enough to kind of just expend air and say, yes, we support front-line workers, but actually not put anything attached to that.

\* (15:20)

So, you know, I'm really pleased to be part of a history that, you know, increased wages by 54 per cent. And that really is real support for early-childhood educators.

We also invested \$2 million to create—or 70 new training spaces for early childhood educators, bringing the total number of early childhood educators trained per year to 135, created the first ever province-wide pension plan for early childhood educators and child-care workers outside of Quebec.

Of course, everybody, and I'm sure in this House, knows that our NDP team is committed to

universally accessible, public child care that supports our families and, again, strengthens our economy.

I can't think—I think that we can't stress it enough how important child care is to Manitoba economy. It is, in many respects, what it is predicated upon. If you don't have safe, secure child care, then you're not able to go to work or you're not able to go to school, because where are your children going to go? So it really is one of the conditions or founding blocks in—for a strong, healthy economy in Manitoba.

We committed to eliminating the wait-list by adding 12,000 new spaces. That was our commitment. That was our commitment to Manitoba families and to Manitoba children.

And, you know, I think it's important to note and put on the record that Pat Wedge, from the MCCA, commended us for, and I quote, recognizing most young families need accessible and affordable early learning and child-care spaces. The Manitoba Child Care Coalition also noted, as broad—as a broadly based coalition whose membership also believes in universally accessible child-care system, we congratulate you. That was actually in a letter to the Premier, January 19, 2016. I think that that's important to note on there, that we did have that recognition and appreciation for our efforts.

We increased the support that foster parents received by 25 per cent since 2006. We made kinship care a priority and added over 5,000 new safe places for kids in foster homes, shelters and care facilities. And we introduced extensions of care of youth from 18 to 21 and launched the Building Futures and tuition waivers for more supports up to 25—age of 25.

So, you know, we ended the Conservatives' clawback of the National Child Benefit and made sure that the Universal Child Care Benefit stays with parents. These benefits can put upwards of \$533 per month into the hands of a single parent with two small children, which helps them pay for necessities like food and clothes. And I think it's important to put on the record that the Conservatives actually slashed \$150 per month of benefits for the poorest families and actually cut income assistant rates three times. So that works out to about \$1,800 that the Conservatives took from working-class, low-income families.

So, you know, I think it's, again, really important to put it on the record that, you know, where the Premier's (Mr. Pallister)—where is he going to find cuts? And, clearly, that's going to be in public,



affordable child-care spaces. And the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the minister refuse to clearly commit having to make sure child-care spaces will be incorporated into schools. He wants to privatize our child-care system, which would more than double fees for parents to over \$1,500 per month per infant. That's an extraordinary, high amount of money that individuals, that Manitoba parents will have to pay and, you know, really limits, then, the ability for parents to be able to participate in the economy. And, you know, there are so many, you know, young, single moms that, you know, that need the support to be able to continue on with their training and education and really require child-care spaces.

And so, you know, I know that in the House we've repeatedly, you know, spoken about how divorced the Premier is from the reality of indigenous—or, Manitoba families. I would also say that, you know, he—the Premier is completely and wholly divorced from the reality of indigenous Manitobans and the supports that are required to ensure a full participation in the economy. And, again, I want to go back to—I know that, you know, we've repeatedly heard the Premier in this House talk about, you know, commitments to indigenous women and somehow take credit for, you know, work that's gone on in respect of real matrimonial property rights and try to kind of construct on himself as, really, indigenous women's liberators, which, I think, is so offensive that the Premier would talk about the work that he's done in concert with indigenous organizations and indigenous women, because I can tell you that most of—and, well, not most; actually, all of the community organizations or the provincial-territorial organizations or the national Aboriginal organizations, and just indigenous women in general, you know, have repeatedly told me how offensive they think it is that the Premier stands up in this House and tries to stake claim on movements that have been done and fought for and lobbied for many, many years, well before this Premier was even on any stage, and that it is incredibly offensive that he would talk like that.

And why I bring that up is because, you know, you can't, again, you can't say one thing, that you support indigenous women, but then you don't put the conditions in which to actually execute and what, though, that support is actually predicated upon, which one of the big, huge pieces is child care. And I know, like I said, a lot of the young indigenous women who have children, who love their children,

who are good mothers, who want to be able to go to school or training—I recently had an intern come and do her practicum with me. She was doing a 'pract'—or she was doing a training program at Ka Ni Kanichihk. And Ka Ni Kanichihk is a really good organization to kind of illustrate the importance of a holistic view and practice in how you actually support indigenous women.

So Ka Ni Kanichihk, you know, I don't even know what year it developed; I would say, well, certainly about maybe 15 years ago. And it means those who lead. And it's a social service development organization to really lift up indigenous women and be able to provide the myriad of different supports that indigenous women need. So they do training. They have an administrative assistant training. They do ceremonies. In fact, they have what was or maybe still is, I'm not sure, the first victim services program for families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls—I'm very proud to have been a part of that, to bring that proposal forward in concert with my work as a special adviser—and it received both provincial and federal funding.

\* (15:30)

And it—and, again, I'm not sure if it's still the only victim services program that's specifically geared towards families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, but certainly it is a best practice across the country. So that's also one program that they have. I'm not sure if it's still the only victim services program that's specifically geared towards families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, but certainly it is a best practice across the country. So that's also one program that they have.

They've got computer training. They do all kinds of community supports, but I think, again, in this kind of holistic practice or analysis on what indigenous women need, they actually have a licensed daycare in Ka Ni Kanichihk. So, and I'm really proud to say that that was a partnership between actually Cora Morgan. So Cora Morgan now is the First Nations Child and Family Services family advocate for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, but several years back in—what year would that have been? I'm not sure, but many years ago, she was working at Ka Ni Kanichihk, working on a bunch of different projects, but one of the projects that she worked on in concert—and put a proposal forward to our government was the development of a daycare, a child-care centre, in—embedded, literally,

in Ka Ni Kanichihk. And so she worked very, very closely with the minister of—at the time, Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross. And they were able to work together and get this child-care centre right in Ka Ni Kanichihk, and so, if you haven't been to Ka Ni Kanichihk—and I would suggest that people go and visit and make yourself acquainted—it's really a beautiful place.

And so, as soon as you walk into the front door and you—here's the reception area, and then right here is the daycare. So when you're walking in for your meetings or your feasts or your community meetings, whatever it is, the first thing you see are a whole bunch of little indigenous children and indigenous workers. So it's quite something and quite extraordinary to see young women come in, in the morning, drop their children off at the daycare and then go to do their training and be able to, you know, when they're on break, pop in and see their baby, spend lunch with their baby if they need or if they can, and then, as soon as the training is over in the afternoon, pop back in and pick up their children—their child. The daycare also acts as a place where families and community can drop their kids off, if there's community meetings, and the workers will stay a little bit longer to help support community.

So I think it's a really, really good example of, first off, the need for more daycare, but also the need for culturally appropriate child care that really acknowledges and appreciates and understands the needs of different communities. And so I actually just want to put that on the record, that it's a really, really good project and certainly was—done something in partnership with our government, and we're very proud of that.

So, again, you know, it's one thing for, you know, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) to talk about supporting indigenous women, but actually not putting those supports in place like we did in respect of Ka Ni Kanichihk and the daycare. Certainly, I think that if the Premier wants to be serious about supporting indigenous women or, you know, walking beside indigenous women—like, I mean, I want to make it clear that indigenous women don't need men to speak on our behalf. We are our own liberators; we always have been.

But certainly if he—if the Premier wants to engage in some of that real work, one of the places that the Premier can support is in increased child care because if you really do want to support indigenous women, then we really do need to put in those

supports that allow indigenous women to pursue the things that they want to pursue in order to be a part and be wholly included within the Manitoba economy. And so, certainly, that's something he could do and if you—if he did that, if he made a concerted effort and a real effort and not try to appropriate our liberation or anything like that, but actually supported and walked beside, certainly, I would be the first one to say *miigwech* for that because, at the end of the day, you know, the indigenous population is one of the main two groups that are growing here in Manitoba.

And, you know, when we provide those supports, the consequences or the benefits are exponential. So, when we're able to support—and, in fact, I was talking about a young woman who did her practicum from Ka Ni Kanichihk. Her name is Brandy [*phonetic*]. And so she utilized daycare, but she's extraordinary.

So, she went through this program at Ka Ni Kanichihk. She's feeling empowered; her daughter was part of a community. And now she is wanting to go into—she wants to go to university. I can't remember if she's—she wanted to go into the health-care field. So I think that that's a really good illustration of—that when you provide those supports, the benefits are—they're generational; they're actually transformative. They're actually transformative in the lives of women, of indigenous women.

And I started by talking about my own experience as a mom, with daycare, and, you know, certainly, I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the for Carter Day Care, and the ability to have a safe place for my sons to go that allowed me to do my work and my education. In fact, my youngest, who started Ka Ni Kanichihk—or, I mean, Carter Day Care—I think he started when he was a little under two. I was just starting my Ph.D. program, and so he went to Carter Day Care, and it allowed me to go to university and take all my coursework and start my dissertation and all my research while I was actually working full time at Southern Chiefs' Organization. I was—as I mentioned earlier, I was the director of justice and had a multitude of files that took me all over Manitoba, all over Canada, actually—actually, many places around the world, on all the different files that I was working on. But I was also doing my Ph.D., having to go to classes, having to start my research, and—but I was able—I had that security that my son, my youngest, was okay because I had known the great people that work at Carter Day Care with my oldest. And, you know, when we invest in

child care and publicly—in public child care, again, it is transformative.

So it's interesting that when my oldest was required in high school or whatever—junior high to do volunteer work, he actually went back to Carter Day Care because it had made such an impression on him. And he had such good memories of Carter Day Care and the people that work there that he actually went and did his volunteering at Carter Day Care and while my youngest son was going there. So I think that that's illustrative of how transformative good child care can be in the lives of families, that it becomes a part of your family.

And it certainly—like I said, I'm very, very proud of the work that we did on this side of the House, and I suspect that we all know that certainly more work has to be done in respect of child care. You know, we've heard for months and months, almost a year now, of the government, you know, how the minister, how excited he is for this plan, this child-care plan, and we had to wait a very, very long time, and Manitoban—Manitoba families actually had to wait a very, very long time to actually get any sense of—and I think families are still kind of confused at what the supports are going to be or what the plan is. But we certainly did have to wait a long time. Now, is that indicative of the commitment or lack of understanding of how important child-care centres are in the lives of Manitoba families? I would say that it actually falls in line with a lot of the things that the government is doing that kind of illustrates that it doesn't really understand what Manitoba families need, and, certainly, you know, this plan that, you know, again, I think that there's just bits and pieces.

\* (15:40)

We haven't heard whether or not there's going to be any wage increases for early child care—childhood educators. I think that that is a fundamental piece of any commitment that we make in respect of child care. The support and the financial recognition that we give to workers for the work that they do—the very, very important work. Like I said, not everybody can do that work, not everybody has the enormous amounts of patience that you need.

So, you know, I hope that when—and I hope that the minister is listening; that he will advocate really, really hard for raises for child—early childhood educators, because certainly, they absolutely deserve their—well, any raise. I mean, I would suggest, I would put it on the record that, I mean, why not give

them a 20 per cent raise. That would be excellent because if there's anyone that deserves it, it certainly is early childhood educators. And again, you can't just espouse hot air about commitments to child care and to families without actually putting the infrastructure and the supports to be able to support that work.

So I do just want to quickly put on the record here that, you know, we really haven't heard from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or the minister about, like, eliminating the wait-list or—and providing those spaces for working in middle-class families.

I remember during Estimates, I repeatedly asked the minister, you know, in respect of this plan that the minister is so excited about, you know, what was this government's access target rates. And the minister kind of didn't want to really talk about it. He made it sound like my question was, you know, so kind of bourgeoisie that he didn't even want to answer it when he said, well, you know, when he talks to families, they don't ask him about access target rates. I'm sure they don't.

But certainly, this government's access target rates—and again, which I'll share what I shared in Estimates—actually informs their plan, their child-care plan, because if you don't know what your access target rate is, how do you develop a plan. Do you want 10 per cent of Manitoba children to have access to child care? Do you want 100 per cent of Manitoba children to have child care? Do you want 50 per cent? Like, how—I'm not sure it's a huge piece that's missing from this government and certainly I have never seen it anywhere, anywhere noted in respect of what this government's access target rate is.

I would suggest to the government to maybe look at some of the work that Ontario's done. They've invested a significant amount of money into child care to ensure that there is a substantial access target rate for families to be able to support their Ontario economy. I think that fundamentally, it's recognized the importance and that the two of these are actually married. You know, families having access to child care is fundamentally married with their participation in the economy. You can't have one without the other. I mean, I suppose you could if you came from a two parent—

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

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** I am happy to speak to Bill 11, the community child care standards act. The changes that this bill will bring will help to eliminate the red tape that is involved when setting up and governing licenced child-care facilities.

This just makes sense. Manitobans asked for common sense approaches and our government is delivering. Our government has committed to clearing up the mess that was left by the NDP government, and this bill is part of that plan. We are on the road to recovery in child care. The current system involves overlapping responsibilities within multiple committees, which can lead to confusion and frustrations on the part of daycares and early learning centres.

Bill 11 will streamline the communication channels and place the responsibility for oversight in training to its proper department, which is the Department of Families. Any initiatives to help early learning centres achieve success, through proper supports, is welcomed by those who know the value of a well-run centre.

As a former chair of the board of a licensed child-care facility, I certainly can attest to some of the concerns that have been raised when it comes to understanding the world of government committees and regulations.

ECEs, or early childhood educators, are so very valued by the centres where they work. Directors of these facilities will appreciate a comprehensive and clear training standard in order to keep their programs staffed with high-quality, trained ECEs. Our government has a great appreciation for these—those entering this rewarding career.

As a stay-at-home mother, I certainly can attest to the child-care standards that I would want for my own children. There are certainly challenges within child-care facilities. There's challenges within the home when you are raising your own children, but there's an ultimate responsibility: that responsibility of raising humans to become upstanding and contributing citizens within our communities, within our province, within our country and, really, within the world. That is quite the responsibility to hold and to be held accountable for.

ECEs and child-care centres are given a wonderful gift of trust by parents to help them and aid their children in this world. It can be quite a mess to navigate when you're dealing with emotions, when

you're dealing with unforeseen circumstances that can arise in your life, and to know that when you drop your children off within these child-care facilities, they are in good hands, capable hands, loving and compassionate care-givers.

Training for our ECEs and those who will work with our young children to help them learn is paramount to ensure that our children are safe, and we need to keep our standards high, because this is the next generation who will one day care for us. We want to make sure that they are instilled with the proper care and concern and respect for others that we would want ourselves when we depend upon them.

Child care can be a thankless job. As any mom, dad, ECE or any caregiver can attest to, whether you are changing diapers, whether you're negotiating with tantrumming toddlers, whether you're trying to teach basic respect and morals within the communities, I know, for myself, raising four children, it was never an easy task—when my first three were all born within three years of each other, and I had to juggle a child who would need a new diaper and another one who was climbing the wall and trying to keep him safe, in addition to all of the chores that would run a household. So my hats are off to the ECE workers and daycares who can manage quite a bit more numbers than that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I actually had come across quite an interesting message on Facebook, at one point, and it equated that when you had your first child, you became a mom. When you had your second child, well, that made you a manager. Well, then No. 3 comes along, well, you become a negotiator. Please, my hands are full. Please, don't climb that wall. I can't come and get you.

Now, anyone who have four or more children, well, they get designated magical unicorn. And I can certainly attest to this along with my colleague from Kewatinook. We certainly understand those magical powers that are actually necessary. I can only imagine what powers our daycare workers must have to manage all of those children four and beyond, but it's certainly beyond the unicorn magical powers that we share.

You know, as much as you can talk about the challenges of parenting, certainly, any mother can know that it's a calling. Whether you are a stay-at-home mom, whether you are an ECE worker in a daycare, whether you do home daycare, there is no amount of money that could ever compensate for

the value that you bring, not only to working parents but to these children whom you are helping to form into adults and giving them an understanding of this really crazy world that we all live in.

\* (15:50)

Some of those benefits, though, that also come along with this particular interesting job, I would have to say is the humour. Anyone who also has multiple children can really relate to the humour that comes from young minds and how they see the world. And one particular interesting conversation I had with my son, he came home one day and he said, hey Mom, do you want to hear a construction joke? I said, sure, bring it on. And he looks at me, straight-faced, and he was maybe eight, nine years old at the time. He says, I'm working on it. And I cannot tell you the amount of laughter that came out. That was one of the best memories that I have because it was after a long day of stress, of trying to organize my thoughts, organize my home, trying to plan for school supplies shopping and it can be a lot to juggle, so to have those moments where your child can come and bring a smile to your face and really make you think, you know, maybe I haven't done such a hard job, or just a—I haven't done such a bad job there raising that one child. And, of course, you know, multiple children, you got multiple challenges there, but you also have multiple opportunities for joy, for humour, for smiles.

And I must say that when I was working as chair of the board on a licensed child-care board, I have to commend all of the workers, whether you're ECE I, IIs or IIIs, we had such a good group of caring individuals who not only did their jobs well but they loved each and every one of those children that came through the door through the years, and a testament to that love is when those children would return, even after they had outgrown this particular program, to come and hang out with their fellow caregivers, the ones who taught them about life, who taught them about how to find your voice in this world and how to give back to others.

We seldom recognize just the impact that not only our educators within the school system but also our child caregivers, and, again, whether you're a stay-at-home mom, whether you work in a facility, whether you run your own daycare at home, what you're doing for this world and for these children, it really is invaluable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is a common-sense approach, and it speaks to our commitment as a

government to encouraging these caring workers to continue to raise our children, to raise them in the right way, to guide them through the challenges of life and to be supported by our government. This bill will lay the groundwork for proper organization of government which will lead to better efficiencies and communication, and I think we all can attest to the benefits of that. Manitoba's children will benefit from a better plan that encourages child-care facilities to expand and grow, whether home based or centre based. Our government recognizes the need for more spaces in child care, and we are responding effectively with this step and this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I appreciate the member's words.

Madam Speaker—sorry, Deputy Speaker, our children are the future. Ensuring that they receive the best possible care from our most qualified individuals is a necessity, not just for our children, but for the future of our country and our people. For our children to receive the best possible care and ensuring the people who educate them are properly vetted and verified, this is an extremely important task that should never be taken lightly. The creation of this new committee must lead to a commitment of ensuring high-quality care for our children.

While prospecting members need merit and qualification to be appointed to this new committee, I hope the committee remains representative of Manitoba and that the members appointed reflect our Manitoba mosaic. Their role is to maintain the quality and high level of care that Manitobans expect from child-care facilities and to guarantee that training requirements of staff are met. In reviewing the qualifications and issuances of certificates, the members of this committee must also become responsible for establishing that same level of care in our early education system. Early childhood educators are vital to the growth and future of many Manitoban children. We know that early childhood education plays an important part in fostering brain development, and that many who take part in early education programs do better in schools than those that don't.

The creation of this new committee is, without a doubt, a monumental task for those new 'ampoitees'. Our hope—our office's hope is that the standards are made better and kept high and not loosened.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Question—is ever—is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Has it been agreed that the question before the House is Bill 11, the community—the second reading of community—Bill 11, The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 10—The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act**

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I move, seconded by the honourable member—or the honourable Minister of Sustainable Development (Mrs. Cox), that Bill 10, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act, be now read for a second time.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved by the Minister of Education and Training, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development, that Bill 10, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act, be read for the second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Mr. Wishart:** I'm pleased to bring forth the—to the Legislative Assembly for second reading, Bill 10, Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act. This bill will amend The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Act to ensure better alignment with other post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

The amendments will provide the institute with clear authority over parking on its own campus and will clarify the role of the Minister of Education and Training, improving requests for post-secondary programs of study at MITT.

The amendment to the institute's parking authority will allow for the management of a campus parking infrastructure, including setting standards and enforcing parking bylaws, which is in keeping with the authority of existing colleges in Manitoba.

Additionally, this bill will require the institute to seek ministerial approval when creating, amending and ceasing to offer post-secondary programs of study, a change that mirrors the requirement for Manitoba's universities and colleges.

This approval function serves to facilitate the minister's mandate to develop Manitoba's

post-secondary system in a co-ordinated and integrated manner. It also provides a means of ensuring that appropriate quality-assurance mechanisms are in place, that credit-transfer arrangements have been considered and that the programs are financially sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, the changes envisioned in this bill will improve the ability of the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology to manage their campus and better facilitate the development of their programs within the broader post-secondary system in Manitoba, thereby providing more options to Manitoba students.

Thank you.

\* (16:00)

**Questions**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member of the following sequence: first question by the opposition—the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions may be asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties, subsequent questions asked by each independent member, remaining questions asked by the opposition members, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** What is the minister's view of providing provincial funding for the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology's capital expansion plan?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** Though it's a little outside the context of this particular bill, I will share with the member that we are in the process of doing a review of all colleges, which is actually mandated to occur every five years. And, as part of that, we will be looking at future plans for colleges across the province. And, of course, in association with that, we will be looking at what type of infrastructure will be required to meet the needs of Manitoba students now and into the future.

**Mr. Kinew:** What is the timeline for making a decision about MITT's proposed capital expansion as part of that review?

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

The review is mandated to occur in the coming year—coming fiscal year. So, certainly, decisions would not be made before the review is completed.

**Mr. Kinew:** Can the minister explain why it's important for MITT to be able to make bylaws about parking on their property?

**Mr. Wishart:** Of course, one has to have the authority to make rules and to charge, and that is required. The original act did not cover this particular area. So it's been doubtful that they had the authority to charge for parking on their property, though no one has challenged it. We, certainly, don't want that to continue into the future. We want to fix this problem that has existed, actually, since the MITT original bill was put in place.

**Mr. Kinew:** And has the department reviewed other fees that the institution charges just to make sure that, if we're contemplating amending the act now, that we'd be covering off any other sort of areas where the college may need legal authority to be able to charge certain fees and other charges?

**Mr. Wishart:** Annually, we look at the fees that they charge for their programs that they offer. And any additional or ancillary fees are always brought in on an annual basis, so it is a regular review. This is the only one that we are aware of that requires amendments to be put in place in this particular act.

**Mr. Kinew:** And can the minister tell the House what—how much revenue MITT makes from these parking charges?

**Mr. Wishart:** As the MITT institute is run by a board of directors and it is their responsibility to look at revenue sources and track them that way, I'm not aware of a specific number. But I am told that what they charge is in line with what other institutions are charging.

**Mr. Kinew:** With respect to the creation of new courses at the college, can the minister tell the House whether or not MITT has brought forward any—or has actually started any new programs without consulting the department beforehand?

**Mr. Wishart:** They have never brought one through to approval without bringing it to the department. They do, occasionally, do work on development of courses and then consult with us as to whether or not we feel that those are important. They have to establish that there is need.

They are a rather unique institution crossing over between the high school system and the

post-secondary system so, occasionally, they are looking at courses that are not offered by any other post-secondary institution in Manitoba. We certainly would not be in a position—or they would not be in a position to be charging for anything that hasn't been through the Department of Education.

**Mr. Kinew:** And can the minister please share with the House his vision for what new courses under this amended act he would like to see the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology start to develop?

**Mr. Wishart:** It would be, I think, inappropriate for me to second-guess when we're in the middle of a review process, but I will share with the member that because of their unique nature, they often offer courses that are unique to them and, in particular, to a lot of new immigrants—English as a second language courses that are specific to them but some of them are often copied by other institutions.

We try to get the post-secondary institutions to work together to make sure that we don't have too much competition for the marketplace, if you want to put it that bluntly, in terms of the number of students. But we also want to make sure that we offer the courses that are required across the province and meet the needs of any particular group—

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

Any other questions?

### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The debate is open for speakers.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** I'm glad to stand up today and put a couple of words on the record about the MITT, which is a great institution here in our province. I'm proud to have a few connections to the institution. I think, you know, first and foremost because I have a few friends who work there on, you know, the Scurfield campus and do excellent work to bring great educational program to lots of Manitoba students, but also some, you know, newcomers, as the minister alluded to. So there's certainly a lot of good peeps over there, you know, people who are on the administration side, people who are in the classrooms and also people who are doing some of the student support work.

And it is also, you know, a little point of pride to have a few connections to people who are instrumental in the development of MITT. It was formerly the Winnipeg Technical College, I believe,

and a good friend of mine and a former member of this Chamber, Lloyd Axworthy, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, actually played quite an instrumental role in the original establishment of the Winnipeg Technical College. And then, of course, my esteemed colleague from Fort Garry-Riverview did play a role, along with some of his other former colleagues, in shepherding the transition from the college to the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, and, of course, I do acknowledge the current minister in the role that he plays in shepherding the institution today.

So it is, I think, a real success story, MITT, in that it shows a new direction for how post-secondary and secondary education can be tailored to suit the needs of students today. So there are, you know, hundreds of young people there who are finishing their grade 12 education and at the same time getting valuable skills that they will need on the job whether that be, you know, printing or, you know, heavy-duty mechanics or, you know, maybe something like Skidoo and quad maintenance-type work. And it's all towards making sure that people have job-ready skills while also getting the necessary academic background that they need to be successful in our province.

\* (16:10)

Of course, you know, the NDP team recognizes the importance of an education which is tailored towards jobs and, you know, job creation being driven in part in our province by having a workforce of skilled and talented people who are ready to fill those positions. And so, inasmuch as MITT is an important educational institution, it is also an important driver of our economy and an important driver of jobs here in the province.

So those are some general comments.

Speaking to the substance of the bill itself, you know, I did, you know, have a chance to speak to the minister about the need to give the legal authority to charge the parking fees on the campus there. Last time I visited, I was able to park relatively painlessly and, apparently, I wouldn't have had to pay because the college lacked the legal authority to charge parking fees, so, amending the act to give them the authority to do so and help, you know, create some additional revenue for the institution—revenue that they're currently tapping into but that may need some legal backing in order to stay on the books—is something that makes sense to me. And, of course, ensuring that there is good collaboration between the

institution and the Department of Education as they develop new programs is also a worthy objective, so I think it makes sense to see the amendments that are proposed under this act move forward.

The one note that I would just put on the record is that when we are talking about new program development, particularly the ones that MITT tends to specialize in them, some of these are very fast moving. I would note that there's a lot of information technology courses at MITT, there's a lot of computer courses, and some of them are certified by various industry organizations and we know that these might change from year to year, there may need to be a, you know, a revision of certain standards in order to keep those programs in line with the state of the art.

So I would just encourage the minister in his work with the department to ensure that there is a necessary flexibility with MITT so that they can, you know, change and adapt programs and have that sort of flexibility while, of course, maybe not necessarily needing to go to the department for every small adjustment of their programs.

And, I think, with that in mind, just that one note about having flexibility, I think that we are prepared to support passing this bill past second reading.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is there any other further—oh. The honourable member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen).

Oh, sorry.

The honourable member for Swan River.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I'm very happy today to put some words in the record here for Bill 10.

I thank my colleague honourable Minister of Education for bringing forth this Bill 10, Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act.

MITT serves an important role in delivering secondary programming to Manitoba in the field of technology and vocational trade. Coming from past experience in teaching in the vocational area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is very, very important. A trades program to the province, you know, as previously talked about, it adds a lot of economic input and it kind of moulds the jobs that we need. It plays a big role in shaping the future of our great province that we have, and many students, from time to time, they decide—this is where they decide what they wanted and/or whether it's in high school, getting that opportunity in the vocational area and



then entering a post-secondary opportunity, it's just something that they feel where they belong, what their niche is in wanting to pursue something of their dreams and their aspirations.

Bill 10 will ensure that the same financial accountability, quality assurance, and system co-ordination mechanisms are in place for MITT. This is very important. It aligns it with the existing universities and colleges and addresses gaps that have arisen as the institute continues to develop. There's four other post-secondary institutions in Manitoba that have this authority, and these are all situated here in Winnipeg: the Assiniboine Community College, however, in Brandon; Red River College; Université de Saint-Boniface; and University of Manitoba. So it's very important that MITT comes on tune with these.

Amendments will provide the board of governors with the authority to making parking bylaws and require the institute to seek ministerial approval to create, amend, or cease to provide post-secondary programs of study.

This bill, of course, enables Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology to make bylaws about parking on the institute property. It also—minister's given the authority to approve institute's proposed changes to post-secondary program, funded by the Province as well as proposed changes to services or facilities used predominantly by post-secondary students.

Regulations may be made that exclude certain changes from requiring ministerial approval. And I see my colleagues across the floor are very excited by this bill being put forth, because I can see that he just cannot restrain his excitement and his enthusiasm by it, as we can see. He's just very, very excited about it, and I really commend him for support within. Okay.

And, currently, MITT doesn't have an explicit legislative authority to control parking on its campus. Four other—of course, I mentioned the four other institutes within the province, post-secondary institutions, that have this. In September of 2015, it began charging students—or charging students from parking on the campus at the rate of \$25 per month. MITT currently controls parking on the property through a contract with Impark, rather, and legal counsel has advised that it would be prudent to amend the act to add explicit powers over the regulations of parking.

There's a fair bit of program and study approvals, made offers for both secondary and post-secondary programming. Currently, its secondary programs don't require ministerial approval, as mentioned before. And we can see, as I had said, that this is a very important amendment to put forth in order to have that synchrony within the province and a consistency. All other public and secondary institutions are required to seek ministerial approval, and the ministerial approval of post-secondary programs also supports the system's co-ordination, financial sustainability and quality-assurance process for post-secondary programs.

A comparable program-approved process would support the reputation of it within the broader public post-secondary systems within Manitoba. Bill 10 is designed to work in conjunction with regulations that'll be developed in consultation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some—one of the things, good government makes difficult decisions necessary to ensure the protection of sustainable, quality service for their citizens. Okay, during a decade of debt, decay and decline, the NDP never made a difficult decision. Fiscal responsibility did not exist in their vocabulary, not at all.

Our government has begun the hard work required, okay, to repair the damage, correct the course and move toward balance in a sustainable way.

The NDP made politically motivated quick fixes that showed absolutely no sustainability that resulted in spending growth and massive debt that we have been sequestered to fix here.

We're focused on fixing the finances—  
[interjection]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** And I see, you know, just really excitement. I—you know, on things like that, and that's good. We can convey the message in various ways, because I've never seen the people across the way get so excited about a bill. And it's really kind of gratifying that they're feeling that way.

Okay, so we're focused on fixing the finances, repairing our services and rebuilding the economy and our government is on the way to being the most improved province.

Thank you.

\* (16:20)

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology is an amazing educational—education program that trains many Manitobans in vocational and technical skills. As Manitoba's newest public college, there are many steps needed by both the school and here in the Legislature to ensure that it succeeds and could provide the best possible service to Manitoba students.

Post-secondary education is incredibly important to the future of our province. The program offered by MITT and other colleges play a huge role in developing the future of our province. Education is the key to success for many Manitobans today. In fact, a post-secondary education is quickly becoming the norm of living in this society, which speaks well. In supporting this goal, educational institutes like MITT work diligently to guarantee that Manitobans are prepared for the future. To meet this goal, they must be able to act quickly and address the ever-changing demands of Manitoba's workforce.

Addressing the needs of MITT is an important task in ensuring they have the powers to meet their growing needs granted by Legislature are important. Bill 10 is one small step in assuring the quality of education guaranteed by the school.

Thank you.

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

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 10, The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act.

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

I declare this motion carried.

#### **Bill 12—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, next bill will be the honourable member for—the honourable Minister for Education and Training.

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Ms. Squires), that Bill 12, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, be now read for the second time and referred to a committee of this House.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Moved by the Minister of Education and Training, seconded by the Sports, Culture and Heritage, that Bill 12, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act be read for the second time—for the second reading—is now read for the second time and referred to the—to a committee of this House.

**Mr. Wishart:** I'm pleased to stand before the House today to speak to Bill 12, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act. Purpose of the bill is to make important and long-overdue housekeeping amendments to the legislation, which provides for teachers' pensions in Manitoba.

The Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund Board, TRAF board, as it's mostly known, has requested these changes for several years, and the previous administration had failed to act on this request. This bill will update The Teachers' Pensions Act to ensure 'constituency' with—consistency, sorry, with changes made a number of years ago in The Pension Benefits Act. The change is requested, also, by Canada Revenue Agency to ensure compliance with the federal Income Tax Act and housekeeping amendments as requested by the Office of the Auditor General.

The changes are technical in nature and allow the TRAF board to efficiently and effectively discharge their administrative duties under this act.

Some of the changes include: changing the interest charged to reinstate refunded service; removing the requirement for the Auditor General to approve expensive—of the board, as requested by the Office of the Auditor General; replacing the current contractual indemnity with a statutory 'idemnity' for board members and employees, which will—performing their duties under the TPA in good faith; expressly permit the board to delegate certain of their duties to a committee; increase the membership of the investment committee from three to five members through the appointment of two external members on—based on investment expertise or experience; enable the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council to appoint separate individuals as chair of the board and chair of the investment committee in recognition of the increased complexity and the time commitments of these two roles; expressly permit the board to rectify administrative errors by adjusting pensions, annuities, or other benefits; increase the borrowing authority of the board in order to facilitate effective cash and risk management; permit the current practice of providing annual member

statements within six months of the ending of the teaching year; enable, but not require, the Province to make additional contributions to Account A or Account B—sorry—which represents the Province's portion of the TRAF fund; recognize entitlements under The Teachers' Pensions Act for teachers employed by the Faculty of Education of the University College of the North; and expressly provide the board with the flexibility to set the time frame for members who become employed by the Province and elect to continue as a teacher under the Teachers' Pensions Act; and make minor changes or corrections, make references gender neutral, and repeal provisions that are no longer applicable.

The changes do not have financial implications for the government. Most are being proposed in order to harmonize The Teachers' Pensions Act with The Pension Benefits Act and the federal Income Tax Act, as was previously stated. It is important that this legislation continue to be in compliance with these acts.

With that, Madam Speaker, I conclude my remarks on this bill and recommend its passage to this House.

### Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member of the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions may be by each of the independent members; remaining questions asked by the opposition members; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** Super happy to rise and talk about pensions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Wondering if the minister would be open to any super friendly amendments to this act.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Education and Training—you have a question?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** As a question, I guess that would depend on the nature of the amendment, but certainly I would think that it might be more appropriate going to committee and at the response of committee. Not knowing what he's proposing, I cannot comment.

**Mr. Kinew:** I'm wondering if the minister would be open to providing a designated seat on the board that oversees TRAF to the Retired Teachers Association of Manitoba.

**Mr. Wishart:** That's the amendment you're proposing? Not in order, I don't think so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly we have been consulting on this with the TRAF board and its membership. I would want to do that. Certainly, there have been, in the past, retired teachers that have had positions on that board, so there's nothing to prevent it from occurring right now. Designating one would probably require a rewrite and would probably delay this bill further.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I know that there have been previous teachers on the board, but RTAM wants specifically to provide a list that the board may select from to definitely have a voice of the retired teachers speaking. That is their pot of money.

**Mr. Wishart:** And I certainly understand why RTAM would be interested in having a spot on the board, as they have recently resolved a long-standing disagreement between the board and themselves. There's really no barrier in place for them to put forward some names, and we would certainly be friendly towards looking to that. I'm sure that during the illegal action that was taking place, it would have been impossible to have a member on the board, but that has been resolved.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, I'm wondering if the minister could tell the House whether any of the changes to the act might precipitate moving the pension from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan.

**Mr. Wishart:** No, nothing that we're changing would have any impact on that. Really, they are very much in the nature of housekeeping, in particular, to bring it in compliance with acts that have been changed since this was originated.

Probably the one that is of the most interest is the increased capacity to borrow, should they run into short-term cash flow issues. The current legislation gives them a maximum of \$5 million that they can borrow. Given the nature of this and the size of the benefits being paid out, that would last them for about three weeks. So, it's certainly too short a period.

**Mr. Kinew:** Can the minister commit to this House that during this government's mandate it would not move the teachers' pension from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan?

**Mr. Wishart:** That is certainly outside of the scope of this particular bill.

**Mr. Kinew:** Duly noted, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm wondering if the minister can tell us what his plans are with respect to the disbursement of the accumulated surplus on the teachers' pension.

**Mr. Wishart:** We certainly follow the recommendations of the TRAF board and the actuary that they employ when it comes to disbursements of them. Annually, they bring forth a recommendation on the COLA clause and the amount that comes out of the plan B that would be disbursed on that. There's really no reason for us to deviate from that, and I think it would be, frankly, outside the legislation to do that.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Any other questions?

Is the House ready for the question—  
[interjection]

Oh, debate, okay. The 'bate is to open. Anybody—any open for any speakers?

#### Debate

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** Well, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was a little concerned I may not have the opportunity to put some words on the record with respect to pensions. You may not know this, but it was actually a childhood dream of mine to be an actuary when I was a little kid on the reserve—  
[interjection]—went to sleep with a wooden 'apagus'—abacus underneath my pillow.

I was actually joking, everything except for the abacus part; that part of the story is actually true.

When it comes to teachers' pensions, of course, this is—it's no laughing matter for the people who draw on the pensions fund. This is their livelihoods. It is very important to them. And it really is, you know, the honour of all of us here in the House at stake, you know, living up to the commitment that was made to previous generations of teachers and ensuring that they can enjoy their retirements in good health but also with the financial resources necessary to be able to have a good quality of life.

Now, with respect to the amendments that are brought forward under this act, you know, having had a chance to review them somewhat, they do seem to be necessary in order to comply with the existing federal statutes. And on that level, there's not much to find fault with at this point.

However, I would just put a few other points on the record briefly that have been raised to us by the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba. And,

again, this is an important organization because their membership counts among them a large majority of the retired teachers in Manitoba, and so they are important in consulting with retired teachers.

So, as you know, the questions I asked the minister, you know, showed there are a few issues which are top of mind to the retired teachers' association. First and foremost is, you know, the cost of living and how their, you know—the COLA formula doesn't always allow them to keep up with the increases to the cost of living and so that is one thing that's top of mind.

We know that with property taxes going up across the province under this government, that that is also a concern, and that some retired teachers are concerned about whether or not they'll be able to keep up with the property tax payments, given the fact that they're on fixed incomes. So that is just to say the cost of living overall is a large concern for many retired teachers.

Additionally, there is some concern that there will be a move from a defined benefit pension to a defined contribution pension plan at some point in the future, and so I would put that remark on the record for the minister to consider, that again, at least as far as we've heard, the teachers—retired teachers, that is, are opposed to having their pensions changed, having the, you know, manner by which their benefits are calculated, having that retroactively changed.

The other issue that we heard was the issue of the accumulated surplus in the teachers' pension plan. Essentially, you know, this is money that accumulates over the years based on the pensions that is owed to teachers. So retired teachers feel that it is their money, and, you know, I think most reasonable people would agree. And so the question, then, becomes, what is the best way to serve the retired teachers with that money? Should it be distributed to them directly as they are recommending, or should it be reinvested in the long-term, you know—towards the long-term solvency of the plan.

And I can see, you know, arguments on both sides, but I just do want to put on the record here that the retired teachers we spoke to feel that this money should be distributed directly to the teachers to help them keep up with the cost-of-living increases that we see year over year, but definitely seem to be accelerating now that there is a, you know, Progressive Conservative government in place here.

So, having made a few quick points with respect to the importance of that, I would just close by saying, of course, you know, teachers, you know, spending hundreds of hours with our children in each, you know, grade as they move through the schooling system, make a tremendous impact on all of our families. They make a tremendous impact on our communities and make a tremendous impact on so many lives of Manitobans. And as a result, we do owe them not just, you know, a debt of gratitude, but indeed a solemn responsibility to ensure that their retirements are fulfilling and, of course, you know, properly funded.

So, with that, I'd just say miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** The success of many Manitobans is due to the efforts and commitment of Manitoba's teachers. A teacher inspires, educate, guides, supports our children as they travel towards adulthood. It is the hardest job. Both my parents were teachers, and because of this experience, it was something I never wanted to be, because I saw all the hard work that went into it.

My dad retired last year as well, and he stayed home for an entire year. This year, he went back to work teaching because he just couldn't give it up.

People in those roles love those roles. They serve as role models to our youth in troubling times and provide stability in a safe place to many who are vulnerable. Many teachers go beyond what is asked of them, and I was proud to see on the Schedule 1s of the new—or, our taxes is that teachers actually can get a credit for the supplies they personally buy. So, I'm very proud that teachers are being given that recognition and that little tax break.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

Teachers in this province and throughout our country have given so much to our youth. Without them, I doubt many of us, myself included, would be standing here today in the Legislature. After a life of public service, it is only fitting that we give back to those who have given us so much.

Retired teachers are no different than any other retiree. They volunteer their time and give back to their communities. Some even continue to teach as substitute teachers. Assuring teachers that they will be looked after upon retirement is the least we can do. Through clarifying the legislation, we can reduce the confusion that faces Manitoba's teachers that are retired or nearing retirement. This allows our

teachers to know exactly the type of retirement decisions that they need to make to continue living a long, healthy, fruitful life after retiring from their roles.

Recently, I had the amazing opportunity to listen and meet with the retired teachers who are a part of RTAM. They are concerned, as many retirees are, about the future of their pensions. Many have had to make tough lifestyle choices as the value of their pensions decrease. Their pension dollar is only worth 84 cents, and that—they are living now in incremental poverty as inflation rises, while retirees are living longer than the pension plan had anticipated.

\* (16:40)

Two simple asks is that a member from the RTAM association give—provide a list so that that person can be selected to have a seat on the TRAF board. This would assure RTAM that a board member who understands and actually lives the issues of retired teachers can make a difference in their community. Their other ask is that—is for the restricted surplus to go back to the hands that put it in there in the first place. While this issue may not be covered by the bill in question, I wanted to raise that specifically so that we can all put that in our heads for upcoming—any kind of upcoming legislation that will be brought forth in this House.

So I just wanted to remind that we do speak—as opposition, we do speak on behalf of many Manitobans, and I appreciate being given the time to speak.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Madam Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today and to put a few brief comments on Bill 12, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act. It's always a exciting opportunity to talk about teachers in this House. I know that many of us either as MLAs, well, we've all obviously been through school and had teachers, but many of us have either taught in a previous career, a number of us have family members that are teachers, both current and past. I know, in my own case, my mother-in-law, my two aunts are both teachers and so they share a lot with me, their perspectives of the education system since the moment I've got elected and long before. And so they definitely shared their concerns about where Manitoba's education system had gone under the previous administration.

You know, I listened to the comments of members opposite, Madam Speaker, and there was a

great deal to appreciate and acknowledge in those speeches, especially when it came to the value of teachers and their requests, and that's really what this legislation is about. This is about meeting the requests of the teachers, the teachers that have said to, not just to this government, this current government, but actually the previous administration, that they had made these requests to The Teachers' Pensions Act, that for a variety of reasons those requests were never acted upon.

I've had some teachers ask me whether or not, perhaps, the previous administration's rebellion had any impact in their inability to take action on such really simple amendments to legislation. I mean, this is not complicated legislation; this is legislation, I think, that all parties in this House will ultimately agree upon and ultimately vote in favour of. And I remember talking to a civil servant when we first took office, and she was expressing to me, you know, the breath of fresh air that came in with our government upon its election, and so we had a conversation about the rebellion and sort of what went on from her perspective as a high-level civil servant.

And what really struck me, Madam Speaker, was her comment that government, during the course of that rebellion, had literally for about 18-month period—had literally just ground to a halt, that no government business was really occurring behind the scenes because you had departments that wouldn't talk to departments, you had ministers that wouldn't talk to ministers. You had all these factions within the NDP, and, apparently, based on comments by their own interim leader on this past weekend, those factions still exist. But, because of those factions, you would have, you know, an NDP Justice minister refuse to talk to the NDP Education minister, and so on and so forth. And, because of that and because of that ineptitude, because of those factions that existed, they were unable during the course of their tenure and of their majority to do simple housekeeping legislation, again, legislation supported and asked for by the teachers, legislation that establishes a teachers' retirement allowance fund and a pension plan for public school teachers in Manitoba.

And I think that's something that we can all get behind and all support. I mean, without good quality teachers, Madam Speaker, we're not going to have the high-quality education system that we need here in Manitoba to bring our students up from the bottom of those results, and those results that, every year, as those national results came in, we saw our students

unfortunately falling further and further behind. And I know it was always interesting that, you know, successive ministers, whether it was Minister Allan or Bjornson or the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), every time these results came back, and we would slide from sixth to seventh to eighth to ninth, and ultimately, to 10th where, when they left office, their message would always be the same. You know, this is awful, and we'll do more, and we're going to put more resources in and we're going to fix this. And then, a few years later, those results would come out again and then we'd find out that, unfortunately, our students had dropped and the NDP had failed them and, unfortunately, they'd have also failed our teachers because they failed to bring in these overdue amendments.

So—I mean, so the TRAF board has requested these changes for several years. They're supported by the Manitoba Teachers' Society; again, an organization that we can obviously get behind, Madam Speaker, is an organization that seeks to represent its membership and their valuable role within the public education system to make sure that our students and that our education system is second to none. And that's where we're going to take this.

So, I mean, the TRAF proposals that we see before us in this legislation in The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, I think there's no member of this House that wouldn't agree that these are most—they're very reasonable amendments, and they will move forward on those requested changes, Madam Speaker. It's always interesting that it—really, it took a new government coming in to take—to have a sit-down and make action on, again, a very simple request by the teachers to take—to bring in a teacher's amendment act.

And, you know, when you talk to people in the community and when I talk to teachers and when we first brought in—when the Minister of Education, my colleague, the member for Portage la Prairie—when he brought in this legislation and I happened to be in the local Co-op store in La Salle and I was talking to a few of my teacher friends who were there after work grabbing some groceries, I'd mentioned to them that the minister had brought in the act and they were surprised at just how long that had taken, given, you know, that the request had been there several years prior under the former administration, and it made them pause for a moment and just reflect that, you know, clearly, their priorities as teachers and as educators weren't being reflected into the former NDP government and it made them wonder where

they stood if even the simplest request and, really, housekeeping request and requests that were supported by teachers as a whole that, again, are quite, you know, minor in scope but will have that lasting impact on teachers and on the stability of their retirement on a go-for basis that for whatever reason.

Well, I think we know the reason, Madam Speaker, but for a variety of reasons and, obviously, the rebellion being the No. 1 reason that the NDP simply weren't able to move forward with this legislation. In fact, I remember being in opposition and I appreciate the role of opposition and the role that they play in ensuring that a strong parliamentary democracy exists here in Manitoba and, in fact, in every jurisdiction. So I've had that opportunity to be on the other side of the Chamber, and I have the good fortune now to be on the government side of the Chamber, and so, I mean, each of them have their role to play.

But I remember, you know, as in the dying days of the previous NDP administration, you know, and there was a flurry of legislative activity on their part as they're bringing, you know, bill after bill and some of the bills, I mean, were just, I mean, it was—they were throwing—at some point it almost appeared that they were throwing, you know, wet tissue paper against the wall just hoping that something would stick and give them resonance with the voters in Manitoba.

Well, I think on April 19th, I think we got a good reflection as to what really stuck in the minds of voters when it came to their impression of the NDP government and its seventeen and a half years of debt, decay and decline and leaving, unfortunately, the incoming government with an unprecedented fiscal—with a fiscal mess, Madam Speaker. And I was just—I was reading some comments earlier going back from 2010, the former MLA for Swan River, a—one Ms. Rosann Wowchuk, and she talked about in 2010 when the aforementioned—when she was part of the NDP government, the Finance minister, he actually decided that, you know, we needed to pause the balanced budget legislation and we need to take away those provisions that penalize Cabinet ministers because of the economic slowdown and uncertainty.

\* (16:50)

And, but you know, give us five years; five years is what they said. They put it in legislation that they

just simply needed a five-year period, that they would mandate a two-year freeze on civil servants, and they would hold the line on spending. And I believe—I'm going from memory, and if members opposite, after I conclude my very short remarks, want to clarify the record, I'd be more than happy, but I believe that they had committed to, you know, they would hold that line on spending to 2.9 per cent.

And I believe, you know, my learned colleague, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) pointed out some comments by a political analyst at the time who said that the NDP's previous ability to bring in a-books in the black was actually more in tune or more their—reflected more a federal sugar daddy than opposed to any—than any skill on their own and that, unfortunately, under their mandate, as the economy started to slow down, as the federal sugar daddy from out east decided to, you know, turn off those taps, soon their financial abilities, or actually, more appropriately, their inabilities came to light, Madam Speaker.

And so it was during that time, Madam Speaker, that the government decided in their wisdom that they would bring in a PST hike. And I think the PST hike wasn't just an attack on taxpayers as a whole, but really, if you think about the impact of the PST not just—I mean the expansion of the PST, but the imposition of the increase of the PST on the education system, because obviously the public education system, the post-secondary system and all components buy a lot of the goods and services. I mean, whether it's, you know, I know my—the Minister of Education recently made a number of announcements. I believe it was 72 facility schools throughout the province that are going to see improvements in terms of, you know, roof repairs to fix leaky roofs, electrical upgrades, boilers.

Those actually, Madam Speaker, you may not recall, maybe a few years past, but actually it was members opposite, the NDP government that actually applied the PST to those aforementioned services because they were actually PST-free. But the NDP, the previous NDP government had decided that, you know what, instead of, you know, holding a line on spending and making those adjustments, we'll just simply raise revenues; we'll just go back to the taxpayer. And so they imposed that, not just, again, not just on individual taxpayers, but on a system, on a public education system that makes use on a large scale those various services in terms of, you know, the electrical services, legal services and plumbing services, not surprisingly.

And then, obviously, when they turned around and raised the PST, after obviously saying that the very idea was ridiculous and total nonsense, again, the public education system, the post-secondary education system—again, great consumers within the economy in terms of buying products and services for its students, whether it's—I know in the case of my own son it's part of an iPad—there's an iPad component within school, and they're provided iPads as, you know, as they—that sort of, that great divide between ourselves and our children continues in terms of technology and that, Madam Speaker.

But I think today what we're saying, and I think what we will say collectively as a Legislature, is that we do support our teaching community. We do support the ability of teachers to make those decisions, and we do support Bill 12, the teachers' amendment act. So with those very short, brief, succinct comments, Madam Speaker, I'd like to return debate to my colleagues on the other legislation in the very robust legislative agenda that we've put forward, again, to return Manitoba back and right the course of that ship.

Thank you.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 12, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

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

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask if you could canvass the House to see if we can call it 5 o'clock.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave 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.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Ministerial Statements</b>		ER Wait Times	
		Gerrard	853
		Goertzen	854
Pharmacy Awareness Month		Dedicated Stroke Unit	
Goertzen	843	Gerrard	854
Wiebe	843	Pallister	854
Lamoureux	844	Child-Care Standards Act	
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination		Yakimoski	855
Squires	844	Fielding	855
Fontaine	845	New Public Services Legislation	
Klassen	845	Lindsey	855
		Goertzen	855
<b>Members' Statements</b>		Rail Line Service Reduction	
Heritage North Museum		Lathlin	856
Bindle	846	Pedersen	856
Health Care for Seniors		Pallister	856
T. Marcelino	846	<b>Petitions</b>	
Women Parliamentarians		Neighbourhoods Alive!	
Mayer	846	Swan	856
Recognizing Liberal Colleagues		Kelvin High School Gymnasium	
Lamoureux	847	Gerrard	857
Remembering Art Paetkau and John Friesen			
Friesen	847		
<b>Oral Questions</b>		<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
Collective Bargaining Agreements		<i>(Continued)</i>	
F. Marcelino	848	<b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS</b>	
Pallister	848	<b>Royal Assent</b>	
Advanced Education Act		Bill 8—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017	858
Kinew	849	<b>Debate on Second Readings</b>	
Wishart	849	Bill 9—The Advocate for Children and Youth Act	
Pallister	850	Gerrard	858
Changes to Elections Act		<b>Second Readings</b>	
Swan	850	Bill 11—The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Staff Qualifications and Training)	
Stefanson	851	Fielding	858
Pallister	851	Questions	
Wage Freezes and Tuition Increase		Fontaine	860
Fontaine	851	Fielding	860
Friesen	852	Guillemard	860
Ride Sharing Legislation		Gerrard	861
Maloway	853	Klassen	862
Clarke	853		

Debate		Bill 12—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act	
Fontaine	863	Wishart	874
Guillemard	868		
Klassen	869	Questions	
Bill 10—The Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology Amendment Act		Kinew	875
Wishart	870	Wishart	875
Questions		Klassen	875
Kinew	870	Debate	
Wishart	870	Kinew	876
Debate		Klassen	877
Kinew	871	Martin	877
Wowchuk	872		
Klassen	874		

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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