

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. 56B - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 23, 2017

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 35—The Agricultural Producers' Organization
Funding Amendment Act**

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), that Bill 35, The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act, be read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Eichler: This bill requires designated persons or companies that purchase agriculture products from producers to withhold a percentage of the purchase and remit the amount to a certified organization, presently Keystone Agricultural Producers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 225—The Manitoba Public Insurance
Corporation Amendment Act**

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from Burrows, that The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: This bill will help all catastrophically injured people in Manitoba who fall under the MPI legislation. This will bring it in line with section 138 of the legislation, which essentially says in our no-fault system anybody who's injured under MPI legislation should be able to reach their full potential as human beings. There are some artificial caps that affect the ability to achieve this goal and particularly for young people and the catastrophically injured. I hope the House will support this bill.

Thank you.

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

Madam Speaker: Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage. The 90-minute notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Indigenous Music Awards

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I rise today to recognize and celebrate the winners of this year's Indigenous Music Awards, which were held at the 2017 Manito Ahbee Festival this past weekend.

Indigenous music in Canada has reached new heights in the past year, with artists in all genres, both contemporary and traditional, breaking new ground. The accomplishments of indigenous musicians and songwriters have been recognized for their power, their artistry and their ability to inspire and entertain new generations of indigenous and non-indigenous music fans alike.

Locally, the Manito Ahbee Festival organizers have worked tirelessly to ensure that opportunities are available for our community to participate in and learn about the rich offerings of indigenous music and art. I commend and congratulate them on a stellar awards show.

Awards were given to artists from across the globe in blues, country, folk, rap, pop, hip hop, instrumental, rock and indigenous-language categories. Awards were also given to honour those who support and service indigenous music, including video, audio production and radio programming. Finally, powwow music was also honoured, with awards going to the best hand drum, powwow contemporary, powwow traditional and peyote albums.

Special mention has to be made, of course, of our own homegrown Manitoba indigenous artists and media, who took home three awards. Singer-songwriter Jade Turner, a double nominee in this year, brought home the award for Best Country

Album for her latest release, North Country. Classically trained singer Rhonda Head won in the Best Inuit, Indigenous Language, or Francophone Album category for her album, Kisahkihitan. CBC's Radio One's Unreserved: Radio Indigenous with Rosanna Deerchild landed the best radio station program promotion indigenous music award.

I encourage all Manitobans to join me in congratulating and celebrating all of these amazing artists and industry workers for their wonderful achievements and for enriching the lives of every music fan here in Manitoba and beyond.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Every year the Manito Ahbee Festival gives Manitobans and visitors an opportunity to live, share and enjoy the richness of indigenous cultures, histories and traditions. This past week/weekend, the festival came to a close with thousands of people celebrating together at the Manito Ahbee powwow along with a concert that my colleague mentioned.

I also just want to note that my own uncle, Vince Fontaine, from Eagle & Hawk and Indian City, also received a lifetime achievement award which I'm obviously very proud.

Manito Ahbee means where the Creator sits. The festival derives its name from a sacred site in Whiteshell Provincial Park where traditional teachings and wisdom have long been shared.

Manito Ahbee is more than just a festival. It's the second largest gathering of its kind in North America, Madam Speaker. Its purpose is to create a gathering to celebrate indigenous culture and heritage that unifies everyone.

I also want to make special mention for the incredible work of the board of directors under the guidance and direction of Lisa Meeches, who do a phenomenal job every year pulling all of the myriad of activities together. I celebrate them and lift them all up for their work that they do.

Miigwech.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Canada is a beautiful mosaic of cultures—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Oh, pardon me; sorry.

Ms. Klassen: Oh, sorry, yes.

I ask for leave to respond to the ministerial statement.

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

Ms. Klassen: Canada is a beautiful mosaic of cultures and it's truly amazing to see that we celebrate it so openly.

Manito Ahbee is an indigenous cultural festival that went from Wednesday of last week to Sunday.

There was a multitude of events that occurred as part of the festival. A sacred fire was started the festival with cultural teachings throughout the weekend. The knowledge of elders was abundant. Many that were there remember the harsh reality of what once was. They remember a Canada where it was forbidden to speak their language, practice their culture, or even to look Indian in public. Many of the elders are survivors of the residential school system where, despite the odds, they held on to their cultures and traditions.

Their history is vital to remember and highlights why events like Manito Ahbee is so important for indigenous peoples. This past weekend we could highlight our amazing musicians, dancers and artists, something our elders may have only dreamed of as children. We were also able to promote and provide a gathering of many indigenous entrepreneurs and business people at a tradeshow. It was a spectacular weekend.

I would like to congratulate the winners of the Indigenous Music Awards and of the jigging and powwow competitions. I would also like to thank the volunteers who run the event and the elders who gave us their knowledge. And thank you for everyone in attendance for making the event the success it was.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Don Penny

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Madam Speaker, I was very pleased to attend the inaugural Assiniboine Community College courage award dinner with my colleague from Brandon East where they honoured Mr. Don Penny.

Don is a great individual to recognize. One of the three founding partners of Meyers Norris Penny & Company, Don was the driving force behind the accounting firm's growth from a small city firm in 1958 to the fifth largest national firm with over

3,500 employees. Don saw that expansion as a way to ensure the firm would survive.

Don is much more than an accountant. As a leader, business person, volunteer and mentor he has advised many successful businesses and entrepreneurs. It seems that just about everyone I know has a Don Penny story about how he has helped, guided and arranged just the right introduction. I have many Don Penny stories and he has had a significant impact on my life.

* (13:40)

Don's second merger was a small firm in Neepawa, Horne Finlayson. That merger brought George Horne and his family to Brandon. In particular, there was a beautiful, young athlete, musician and scholar named Aynsley Horne that attracted my attention. Don always was keen on attracting new clients but was focused on maintaining existing clients. I don't think it hurt customer retention to have the son of one of MNP's larger clients marry the daughter of one of their partners.

Don has taught many of us the benefit of donating, not just money but also time and contacts. I suspect that there is hardly a board, team, arts or culture organization that has not had someone from MNP volunteer as a board—or in every city, town and community in which MNP has an office.

Through his decades in Brandon, Don has been part of numerous community efforts as well as provincial and national boards.

Thank you, Don, for all your guidance and leadership.

Destination Imagination

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Today, I would like to recognize six students from Garden Grove School in Tyndall Park. They are from grades 4, 5 and 6. Their names are Amelia Barrett, Riley Syrnyk, Aidan Soforino, Bianca Imperial, Lores Scilla and Emmanuel Guevarra.

Today, these students are off to Knoxville, Tennessee, for the finals of Destination Imagination, the world's largest celebration of creativity. This competition was created to teach real-life skills needed in today's ever-changing world, like creative and critical thinking, team building, problem solving and risk taking.

Over 8,000 students from more than 15 countries will be competing in a series of innovative

challenges that will test those skills and be asked to showcase their solutions in a series of unique challenges.

Students from Garden Grove worked tirelessly during lunch hour and before and after school to perfect their skills. As a reward for their dedication and commitment, these six students were eventually chosen to compete in Tennessee.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank the staff and teachers of Garden Grove School, as well as Principal Karin Freiling for their commitment to their students.

I ask all members to join me in wishing Amelia, Riley, Aidan, Bianca, Lores and Emmanuel the best of luck in the Destination Imagination competition this week and a safe journey.

I know you'll do Garden Grove School proud and be great ambassadors—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Niverville's Old Tyme Country Fair

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, the smells, sights and sounds of rural Manitoba has to offer in terms of country fairs will soon be upon us. As a rural MLA, I am fortunate to have a number of fairs in my constituency, which also results in too much cotton candy and a few too many spins on the Tilt-a-Whirl as I try to keep up with my kids.

One of the first fairs coming up is Niverville's Olde Tyme Country Fair, June 9th and 10th. The fair has a rich history going back to the 1960s, but in the early '90s, unfortunately, it faded from existence. However, in 1996, a small group of volunteers decided to reinvent the fair, renaming it the Niverville Olde Tyme Country Fair. The name change must have worked, because we are now celebrating our 21st year.

Of course, there will be great music all weekend. The headliners this year include Cold Creek Country from Ontario, The Washboard Union from Vancouver and Manitoba's own Quinton Blair, who in 2015 and 2016 won Manitoba's Country Music Association Roots Artist of the Year award.

Other events include the vintage car show, which in years past has had over 175 vintage cars and motorcycles. As well, extreme motocross will be happening all weekend; not too many things can compare to someone jumping a 250-pound motorcycle 75 feet through the air, doing a back flip.

I would like to take this time to thank general manager Jeff Stott and the fair committee. They're a dedicated group of people who work year-round to bring this fair together. And, of course, the amazing group of volunteers, our hats go off to you. Community festivals as big as these ones aren't possible without a committed group of volunteers, but that's the kind of people we are in rural Manitoba.

So I'd encourage all my colleagues to come out to Niverville on June 9th and 10th and witness first-hand how this community lives up to its slogan: Where You Belong.

Thank you.

Aboriginal Awareness Week

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Aboriginal Awareness Week was first created in 1992 and is observed on the four days following Victoria Day. What started out to increase awareness of the role of—the role Aboriginal people played in Canada has evolved and grown into a celebration of our First Nations, non-status, Metis and Inuit peoples.

Aboriginal Awareness Week is celebrated throughout the country and includes a variety of activities to encourage co-operation and mutual understanding. This week also provides a means of fostering better relationships with our indigenous peoples. Through learning and getting to know each other, we break down walls that divide us and we come together.

Celebrating this week takes many different and unique forms. From honouring leaders of the indigenous community, to engaging in traditional crafts, Canadians have found many ways to engage and learn about our indigenous culture and heritage.

It is not only non-indigenous people who learn from this week. Aboriginal Awareness Week creates an opportunity for our indigenous people to reconnect with their cultural heritage and learn more about their proud histories. Celebrating this week should be taken as a learning opportunity for all Canadians. I know many of our indigenous youth love the chance to learn as much as they can during this week.

Coast to coast to coast, the beauty of our indigenous culture is given a chance to shine this week, and I encourage everyone here today to find an event and take advantage of this amazing celebratory week. The indigenous people of Canada

are always willing to share their cultural knowledge and heritage with anyone interested in learning more. Whether you are being taught by the Haida of the west coast, the Mi'kmaq of the east coast, or the Inuit of our north coast, you are sure to learn something new.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Winnipeg Ballet Satellite Program Recital

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): I rise in the House today to recognize a Royal Winnipeg Ballet School Satellite Program annual recital that took place in Eriksdale School on May 13th.

I appreciated the opportunity to congratulate everyone on their special day. We had a treat with performances, including ballet, tap and jazz, along with guest dancers from the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

I always enjoy visiting schools in my constituency and seeing the promising, talented young people who are growing up in the Interlake. Of course, this school is near and dear to my heart, as I attended Eriksdale School, well, let's just say many years ago.

Now, I have to confess that I don't know much about dance, and you probably don't want to see me dance, but I do know enough to appreciate that everyone there has put up a lot of work in their dance troupe in preparation for the show.

So no matter what they decide to do later in life, whether they want to become a teacher, a doctor, a farmer or even go into politics, you can be sure their hard work and their devotion they show to their program will serve them well later in life.

So, I'd also like to thank Dolly and Nicole and their group for their hard work of putting the recital together and the parents for the countless hours behind the steering wheel and getting everyone where they need to be and, of course, all the participants for being courageous enough to participate in a spectacular event such as this. Thanks to everyone for contributing their time over and above what is expected of them. It's dedication like theirs that make the Interlake not only a great place to visit but a spectacular place to live.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery.

We have seated in the public gallery from École George V School, 24 grade 4 students under the direction of Guy Belot, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

Also in the public gallery, from New Life Fellowship School, 17 high school students under the direction of Roman Kornelson, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

And seated in the public gallery from Harold Hatcher School, 44 grade 3 and 4 students under the direction of Stephanie Rempel and Georgette Narin, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Yakimoski).

* (13:50)

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hydro Rate Increases Affordability Concerns

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Want to take a moment to offer our condolences to the many victims, some very young, their families and friends of the terrible terror attack in England. We stand with them in this time of tragedy and against these senseless violent attacks on innocent victims.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the Premier has politicized the rate-setting process for Manitoba Hydro. He is sowing fear in the public of the possibility of massive rate hikes. His Cabinet passed a last-minute order to alter the mandate of the PUB and his government repealed the law that guaranteed Manitoba had the lowest energy rates in the country.

Madam Speaker, the Premier's agenda is clear.

Will the Premier stop the 'politization' of Hydro and commit to keeping rates affordable for Manitobans?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, the politicization of Hydro by the NDP government is what has led to a lot of the challenges that face Manitoba Hydro today and we have no intentions of repeating the mistakes of the past. Rather, we propose to learn from them and not repeat them.

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

Ms. Marcelino: The Premier confounds many Manitobans. Some days he agrees with the Crown Services Minister who calls—who called Hydro bankrupt.

The Premier said in Estimates last week that Hydro is a ticking time bomb. But the next day the Premier called investments in Keeyask and bipole significant investments in a green economy. He wants to undermine the reputation of Hydro for political reasons while taking credit for the green future Hydro has created.

Will the Premier retract his claim that Hydro is a time bomb and get back to the work of building Hydro for all Manitobans?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, I think the confusion lies, perhaps, with the member more than on this side of the House because, although investments made in Manitoba Hydro thoughtlessly and without foresight or planning, were done by the previous administration, they remain—and are—significant investments in green energy production. This does not mean that they produce profits, certainly not in the next few decades, and so the two things are not mutually exclusive.

The member needs to gather her thoughts and understand that Manitoba Hydro faces major capital demands as a result of these projects and that these things should be considered, and the rate-setting mechanism is something for the Public Utilities Board to consider, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Hydro used to be one of the lowest utility rates in North America.

Madam Speaker, the Premier needs to be clear with Manitobans. We know on this side of the House where we stand. We know that investments in Hydro build our future and keep life affordable for the long term. They are investments which build this province, but the Premier's actions suggest a different path. He demands massive job layoffs at Hydro and welcomes massive rate increases. The path the Premier has chosen is one where we hive off sections of Hydro, just like with Efficiency Manitoba, because the Premier's misguided vision.

Will the Premier stop undermining our most precious Crown corporation and stop his plan to create Efficiency Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, here's a quote: Manitoba will take immediate action to create a new demand-side management agency, establish energy savings targets, work to lower utility bills by taking the existing Power Smart program to the next level. That's a quote from the previous NDP government. What the member is now criticizing was the centrepiece of the previous administration's green plan.

Madam Speaker, they had all the information. They knew that they could enact the program which would reduce hydro rates for Manitobans, but they decided not to, and we're going to.

Efficiency Manitoba Act Request to Withdraw

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Tonight, Bill 19, The Efficiency Manitoba Act, will be debated at committee. Again, I know the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) has concerns regarding the bill, and we do as well.

To begin with, the government has made no attempt to consult with the staff at Power Smart regarding what front-line workers know and think is best.

Will this government stop this bill and actually consult with front-line workers?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): We value consultation, Madam Speaker. We demonstrated it by doing real consultation, and the position the member chooses to raise the concept of consultation in is the position in respect of having an efficiency organization to assist Manitobans in keeping their hydro rates low. This was a position taken by the previous administration without consultation or discussion.

We have been doing research. We assume the previous administration did some, though that was covered up and not made public. But this was the centrepiece of their green plan.

The position we're advocating for is one which is—has been recommended by a number of prominent NDP members in the past. I expect the support of my members opposite today, though I'm never sure of the position of that caucus currently, Madam Speaker. I expect there are diverse views.

But that being said, it is something we're going to adopt because we do want to keep hydro rates low for Manitobans, as low as is possible given the inherited massive misadventure of the roll-the-dice previous government who gambled the future of Manitoba Hydro to Americanize it. We'll deal with the consequences that they failed to deal with.

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

Mr. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, this government pretends to make a commitment to Manitoba Hydro and then it orders over 900 job cuts and locks up rural offices across the province, hitting small communities real hard. Instead, they want to put in place more bureaucracy with Efficiency Manitoba.

Why is this Pallister government undermining the work that Hydro is doing?

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, Madam Speaker, sharp contradiction and change in position, and if the members have a new position they should put it on record.

But their position just two years ago—year and a half ago, in fact, articulated by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), then the leader—was this: Manitoba will take immediate action to create a new demand-side management agency, establish energy savings targets and work to lower utility bills.

Their energy 'miniger'—Cabinet minister at the time, Dave Chomiak, repeated that promise. He said, we have a terrific energy demand-side management program. We've always said we're putting in place a separate demand-side agency.

So, Madam Speaker, prominent members—present and past—of the NDP have said this was their position, in fact, the cornerstone, the keystone position of their entire green plan. If they're departing from it, let them let the public know.

We're adopting a system of demand-side management which will work better. That's what the expert report commissioned by the previous government told them, but they covered it up, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Marcelino: The opposition to Efficiency Manitoba is clear. It is bipartisan and it comes from the front lines.

It is clear this minister did not consult front-line workers. He did not even consult his own caucus. The minister needs to admit this bill is not properly thought out.

* (14:00)

Will he withdraw it and go back to the drawing board?

Mr. Pallister: Well, the challenge for Manitobans in respect of facing the possibility of higher hydro rates has never been greater, Madam Speaker, because of the incredible mismanagement of the previous administration. The fact of the matter is this position was the same by both parties until recently and now, I guess, the NDP has departed from their previously held cornerstone of their green plan to a new non-green plan of some kind, and I'd like them to articulate what that position actually is.

The fact remains that this was the first bullet of the energy management green plan proposal the previous government said it was going to adopt and then it failed to adopt it; didn't listen to Philippe Dunsky, the expert witness, didn't listen to the PUB, didn't listen to Dave Chomiak, Tim Sale, Len Evans, Ed Schreyer. A lot of people they don't listen to, Madam Speaker. Sometimes I wonder if they're even listening to one another.

I'd like to know what the position they have now as a party is on this demand-side management agency because they used to say it was a great idea, and Madam Speaker, we think it is.

Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): I'd be curious to know the member for Assiniboia's (Mr. Fletcher) views on the matter of Efficiency Manitoba.

This government is set on removing the only piece of legislation in Canada that compels some form of accountability for public-private partnerships, arguing that it discourages their use.

Can the Premier tell the House: If legislation to make sure that P3s have accountability gets in the way of doing the actual P3s, doesn't that say something about the P3s this government is considering?

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

Now, what the member leaves out of his premise is the fact that Manitoba was the only jurisdiction in

Canada with a legislative approach. Now, let us understand this was not a legislative approach to enable the contemplation of P3s where appropriate. No, rather than that, it was meant to blockade the approaches of P3 because their friends in labour didn't like the approach.

We won't take an ideological approach. We'll take an approach that gets results for Manitoba.

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

Mr. Kinew: It's too bad to hear the Finance Minister characterize accountability in those terms.

You know, across Canada information about P3s is routinely withheld from the public because of commercial confidentiality or Cabinet confidence.

Now, along with the dismantling of The Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act, this government is also reviewing the freedom of information act.

Will this government commit to adapting the FIPPA law so that the public can have access to information regarding public-private partnerships?

Mr. Friesen: This member, of course, does not indicate that the federal government stands in favour of P3s. He does not indicate the vast majority of provinces stand in favour of P3 approaches. He does not acknowledge the hundreds of projects currently completed or under way that are producing real value. He does even not acknowledge the fact that a senior NDP strategist wrote a paper to talk about the underused advantages of P3s.

Madam Speaker, seemingly everyone gets the advantage of contemplating P3s where appropriate, except for the NDP.

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

Mr. Kinew: One of the most important issues surrounding public-private partnerships is the issue of risk transfer and how it's calculated over the lifetime of a project.

Now, risk transfer is like the secret sauce of these P3 deals. It's the key reason proponents say these details—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —these deals taste so good. But trouble is, no one knows the actual ingredients of these

secret recipes because they're always held confidential.

If this government truly values transparency and openness, will they commit to making information about P3 risk transfer accessible to the public so Manitobans can decide for themselves if these deals make sense? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Take a look at the record, Madam Speaker, of the previous administration and think about it in the context of transfer of risk. The NDP politicized decisions around Hydro investment, took them away from Manitobans, circumscribed the requirements under the Public Utilities Board, Clean Environment Commission. They didn't transfer the risk to anybody except Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans absorb all the risk, a hundred per cent of the risk, and now they talk about transparency. They're the ones who covered up untendered contracts. They're the ones who gave sole-source contracts to friends of their party and refused to disclose those contracts, refused. The Auditor General of the Province of Manitoba—former Auditor General Carol Bellringer reported on this, said it was an—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —epidemic.

This is now the argument of the member for Fort Rouge, that he knows how to do infrastructure projects when the previous administration didn't know how to do it for 17 years. According to the member for Fort Rouge, the only people that are wrong are everybody else, Madam Speaker.

We want to get 3P projects going because we believe there's a potential to rebuild our infrastructure, for so many years ignored by the previous administration. They were good at putting up signs. They just weren't good at building roads and bridges, Madam Speaker.

Minimum Wage Increase Indexed to Rate of Inflation

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): After freezing the minimum wage for a year, while giving themselves a 20 per cent salary increase, this government has increased the minimum wage—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —by three nickels

This government's announcement was immediately criticized by minimum wage workers and poverty advocates for legislating poverty, including Josh Brandon, and I quote: If Bill 33 had been in place since 1998, minimum wage today would be \$7.40; minimum wage workers would earn \$7,000.00 less per year.

Honestly, Madam Speaker, how can this government justify three nickels?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I do appreciate the question from the member. I don't certainly agree with all the premise she included in her question.

Clearly, when we consulted with Manitobans they were looking for consistency; they were looking for predictability and I think that's what this bill provides Manitobans. It certainly provides that predictability going forward. Certainly the business community has said they liked the predictability. And I would think the Manitoban workers that now have security—security over their purchasing power—I think that's something Manitoba employees would like as well.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The Premier and all his Cabinet took 20 per cent increase while at the very same time freezing the minimum wage for a year, taking about \$400.00 out of the pockets of working Manitobans. He then went on to argue that increasing the minimum wage does not reduce poverty—like, seriously—in this House.

I am proud our NDP government's total increase to the minimum wage was more than double the rate of inflation, recognizing that by lifting up Manitoba workers, we're lifting up all of us alongside—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —our economy

Will the minister admit that his increase will fail to repair the damage his freeze caused in the last year?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, I think the member is misleading Manitobans. Certainly, those premises are untrue.

In fact, what happened under the NDP back in 2014 when the provincial sales tax was increased, what did we see Manitobans—in terms of foodbank usage? A 2.4 per cent increase in foodbank uses; those are the kinds of taxes the NDP implemented that had negative impacts on low-income Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: As I've noted time and time again in this House, poverty and social exclusion disproportionately impacts on women. Minimum wage earners are predominately single mothers. Raising the minimum wage is a concrete tool that is proven to provide real and concrete support for women and their children. For women and mothers in Point Douglas life below the poverty line is a harsh reality. This government's callous freeze and measly three-nickels increase is making life harder and less affordable, impacting the Point Douglas community.

Will the minister increase his minimum wage, lifting working Manitoba women up out of poverty?

*(14:10)

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Here's a quote, Madam Speaker: A sales tax is a regressive tax which impacts low-income citizens more. That was a resolution in 2015 that was passed at the NDP annual general meeting. It was supported by former member Theresa Oswald.

I think many members of the NDP understand the damage they did to low-income families when they raised the PST. They understand it. They don't want to take ownership of it, but they understand it nonetheless. Hit low-income people, low-income women, low-income families particularly hard.

The way to undo some of that damage is to raise the basic personal exemption and index it to taxation, to invest in social housing, to invest in additional child care, to raise the median market rent for people who need rental assistance to 75 per cent of market value.

Madam Speaker, these are all things we've done that they failed to get done. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

SafetyAid Crime and Falls Prevention Funding Status of Program

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Can the Minister of Justice tell the House why she's cancelled all of her department's funding for the SafetyAid crime and falls prevention for older Manitobans program?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Always pleased to get up on an issue to do with justice in Manitoba and protecting Manitobans in the way of safety and health.

And certainly we know that we were left a mess to clean up by the previous NDP government. It's going to take some very difficult decisions that are going to have to be made. But we are working with all Manitobans and consulting with all Manitobans with respect to those issues, and we will continue to do so, unlike members opposite that left us in the mess that we're in today.

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

Mr. Swan: The SafetyAid program delivered by Age and Opportunity has provided over 7,800 home audits and has installed deadbolts, peepholes and other safety equipment free of charge to low-income seniors across Manitoba.

More than 44,000 Manitoba seniors have attended a SafetyAid presentation 'whits' gives information about safety equipment, preventing falls and also about fraud prevention. Program helps seniors to continue to age in place successfully, maintain their independence and feel secure and comfortable in their homes and apartments.

Will this minister reverse this short-sighted and mean-spirited cut?

Mrs. Stefanson: Certainly one could argue that it was short-sighted and mean-spirited of the members opposite to raise the PST when they did, after they promised not to, and leaving low-income Manitobans in a very difficult situation—

An Honourable Member: And seniors.

Mrs. Stefanson: —and seniors in Manitoba in a very difficult situation.

So we will work with all Manitobans to ensure their health and safety, unlike members opposite that left us in the mess that we're in today.

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

Mr. Swan: Manitobans are entitled to feel safe in their communities and most of all in their homes. The police and the communities tell us that residential break-ins are way up in this minister's first year, and it appears her only response is to cut funding to a modest and effective program helping our seniors to feel safe in their homes, in their houses and their apartments.

If the Minister of Justice doesn't care, I hope the Minister responsible for Seniors does: Will he commit to making sure the SafetyAid program continues to provide crime prevention and falls prevention services to low-income seniors in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, this coming from a member, the member for Minto, who was the previous Justice Minister, under his watch, where there were—when Manitoba had more homicides per capita than any other province, where Manitoba's violent crime rate was second worst among the provinces and where Manitoba's incarceration rate increased by more than any other province. That was under his watch.

We, again, Madam Speaker, are working with Manitobans to ensure the health and safety of all Manitobans, including our seniors.

Manitoba Communities Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): The Manitoba Liberals echo respect and we send our condolences to those families affected in Manchester.

Being prepared for any type of emergency is vital. We need to ensure our first responders are equipped to deal with emergency situations.

Forest fire season is upon us, and there are numerous vulnerable communities across Manitoba.

Will the minister tell us what actions his government has undertaken to ensure people are protected and can be assured of safety measures within their communities?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): We certainly agree that safety of all our members of our communities across Manitoba in emergency situations are, in fact, kept safe, and that's what our department continues to do. We are working to be prepared for this year's forest fire season with our water bombers and we will be ready to go, if needed.

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

Ms. Klassen: Since this government has been elected, we have lived through Fort McMurray's devastating fire. I am very worried as to what I've seen in response time on several fronts by this new government. I have seen little or no improvements as to equipment or other resources in northern communities set in the boreal forests.

What is this government doing to build capacity and what investments have been made in equipment this past year?

Mr. Pedersen: I thank the member for that question because it gives me the opportunity to express our thanks to the department staff that have been working throughout northern Manitoba.

Over the long holiday weekend there was a number of washouts on both PRs 280 and 391 and the department staff was working overtime, making sure that they got these roads back. It was culverts washed out, roads washed out, and they were doing their best and working with the communities to make sure that the access is maintained at these communities.

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

Ms. Klassen: I'm also very worried about the lack of communications between local governments, especially for the Dene nations, the Cree nations and the First Nations.

This government is not doing its job of taking care of all of its Manitobans. When I am in certain communities, I have no cell nor Internet services. All leaders of communities need open lines of communications in case I cannot be reached. We are all Manitobans, after all.

Have there been clear directions and paths of a—of communications established in order to ensure emergencies are responded to to ensure that tragedies are avoided?

Thank you.

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

She asked the question what is this government doing to build capacity, and we are proud to tell Manitobans that after taking government and learning about the state of affairs with our public safety emergency communications network we are

investing in a new network for Manitoba. We are putting forward this project.

The former government was warned for eight and nine years earlier, saying this system is failing, the system that our police, our fire, our ambulance, all depend on. They ignored every warning; they kicked the can down the road. That will not be the approach.

That is why, even at this time, we are pleased to be finalizing a request for proposals to replace Manitobans' existing obsolete public safety network. We need this program. We're making the investment.

Keystone Agriculture Producers Remittance and Annual Membership

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, agriculture is an economic engine for Manitoba that provides thousands of jobs. Producers are busy enough, and the last thing they need is more red tape.

This morning, our government introduced Bill 35, The Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Amendment Act that reduces red tape for producers and the Keystone Agricultural Producers.

Would the Minister of Agriculture please update the House on how this bill will improve the lives of farmers in Manitoba and cut back on red tape?

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

Of course we've been consulting with Manitoba farm families. We're pleased that Keystone ag producers could be with us today to celebrate this introduction of this bill.

This bill designates producers or companies that buy or purchase farm products to remit a percentage of those purchases, remit the amount to the certified organization, and the certified organization treats the amount as payment towards the producers' annual membership in that organization. And, best of all, it's refundable at the request of the producer, if they so choose.

* (14:20)

Seniors' School Tax Rebate Impact on Seniors

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I convinced the previous government to give a Seniors' School Tax Rebate up to \$2,300. The PC Party also promised during the election to do the same if they

are in power. Now the PC has clawed back school tax rebate to \$470, with other clawback conditions.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) give back this tax rebate to the seniors?

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

Let us be clear, Madam Speaker, what the facts are—that the NDP, sitting on year-after-year inability to actually match revenues expenditure, outspending their planned budget every single year and desperate after a failed leadership coup, they decided to promise the world and the stars to seniors and promised to quadruple—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —a payment that they had no plans to actually implement.

We are proud to have been able to renew the Seniors' School Tax Rebate at its current \$470 value and make sure that it is income tested to produce real results for real Manitobans in need.

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

Mr. Saran: Then why did the—did PC promise during the election if they were not to keep the promise?

Seniors are part of our local economy. They need the higher tax rebate to have money to stay in their homes, stay in active willing-wellness programming and to spend in their local economy. A healthy, active senior community reduces health-care system uses and allows more seniors to take part in social and charitable events, participating at community clubs and being available as role models to youth. By cutting this rebate, the Premier's creating stress for seniors, and we all know stress causes health issues.

Why does the Premier insist on taking money out of the pockets of Manitoba seniors, reducing their ability to have healthy aging?

Mr. Friesen: The member asks a question about taking money out of the pockets of Manitoba seniors. And coming from that member, it's quite a question, understanding that the former NDP government first widened the 'restail' sales tax, taking in an additional \$180 million a year.

But it wasn't good enough for them; the next year, they raised the PST to 8 per cent, taking

in \$270 million additional in revenue, taking that money out of the pockets of hard-working Manitobans and taking the money out of the pockets of the very seniors he pretends to want to support.

Where was their concern for affordability then?

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

Second-Suite Housing Municipal Zoning By-Laws

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Seniors can develop secondary suites to earn some extra money to stay longer in their homes, or they can stay with their grand—their children in granny suites

Does the minister of family service still provide a forgivable loan of up to \$35,000 maximum? I also started a discussion with the mayor of the city of Winnipeg, during my time, to aid the zoning bylaw. Does he put any effort to ask the City of Winnipeg to prepare suitable zoning bylaws to help to create the friendly, applicable bylaws?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Well, I thank the member for this question about affordability because this government has been clear that affordability matters. That's why we're the government who indexed the tax brackets, raised the basic personal exemption, removed 2,200 Manitobans from the tax rolls in doing that and will remove many, many more as we move along.

Madam Speaker, let's be clear; that government's approach was to widen the retail sales tax, was to apply tax to whole areas for seniors like their home insurance policies, like their haircuts, like their personal services. These are the kinds of measures that the NDP brought. They failed when it came to affordability. We plan to keep our promises.

Community Places Program Availability of Application Forms

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I rise today to ask a question about a very successful government program that survived for decades. Multiple governments of different stripes have kept it intact, and, indeed, on the minister's own website, the tag line is, helping build communities since 1986.

I'm wondering when the minister plans to issue the application forms for this fiscal year for the highly successful Community Places Program?

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

There has been many successes in the past years, and our government is doing a great job, in my opinion, of reviewing past programs that go out to our communities, our municipalities and ensuring that there's value for money and ensuring that there is returns on investment, and we will continue reviewing these programs and ensuring that they are well implemented in the coming future.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: I thank the minister for the part of that answer. The other part that's missing, though, is my actual question: when are the application forms going to be available for this current year?

This government froze funding for Community Places last year. That was a lost opportunity; we can't go back in time and fix that problem. What the government could have done, what the minister should have done is made sure that the applications for this year—which they were proud to say the money was available for the program in this year's budget—they should have had the applications available before the call of the by-election.

When are the application forms for Community Places going to be available?

Ms. Clarke: Absolutely, correctly spoken. We can't go back—they cannot go back and fix the past; now it's on us and we are going to correct the past.

Our program review uncovered opportunities to simplify our community programs, cut red tape and place stronger focus on outcomes, and we'll work with our community 'orgazations' to make sure that these long-due over changes are established.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, Madam Speaker, I don't know why it's reasonable for the minister to think that spending over a year reviewing a highly successful program is acceptable. That's just not good enough. What it sounds like to me is going on: the government wanted to take credit for putting funding on the books for a program that it actually has no intention of funding. If they actually got the applications out by mid-June, you would have to wait for people to apply, then you'd have to approve,

and by then the construction season for these capital projects is gone.

Will the minister commit today that all the money in her budget for Community Places is going to be given out in grants to hard-working Manitobans? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Clarke: As I indicated, our department, our government and our communities will continue working together to streamline the processes and ensure that funding is available when we are completed through the process and can move on.

Combatting Dangerous Driving Road Safety Improvements

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Madam Speaker, every year Manitobans are hurt or fatally injured due to dangerous driving on our roads and highways. This week is National Road Safety Week, an important reminder that one life lost to dangerous driving is one life too many.

Our Progressive Conservative government is implementing strong measures to reduce dangerous driving in our province.

Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Justice inform the House of the steps that have been taken to make Manitoba's roads safer?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the member for that very excellent question.

In fact, last year, I was pleased to join my colleague, the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler), and MPI to issue a call to action to all Manitobans to end dangerous driving. Our government is also concerned about drug-impaired driving, especially once cannabis is legalized by the federal government. That's why we introduced The Cannabis Harm Prevention Act. We are joined by MADD Canada, the RCMP and many other stakeholders in being confident that Bill 25 will help improve road safety for all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, there is plenty of work left to do to make sure our roads are safe, but we are committed to taking on that challenge and we're committed to working with all Manitobans towards more road 'safey'—safety in our province.

Changes to Labour Laws Union and Management Consultations

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, we have sat through hours of committees dealing with labour legislation and it's clear that this government is not consulting—or should I say not listening—to Manitobans and to what labour has to say about reforming our labour laws.

* (14:30)

Does the minister agree that if you want to change labour laws that you need to build a consensus between unions and management?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, not only do we agree, Madam Speaker, but we're taking the step to do so. We have reached out; we have involved thousands of front-line workers in our consultation process for the first time in Manitoba history, and where previous governments did things without consultation, we're doing them with consultation.

Not only that, but we're looking forward to protecting the workplace. We're looking forward to improving the job security of our union workers, looking forward to improving the systems, Madam Speaker, so they're fairer to our children, and making services sustainable; looking forward to working with union groups to make union dues lower, not higher, and looking forward to lowering taxes for workers. So, that the old practice of pretending—what the NDP did was pretend that they put a loonie in one pocket but actually take it out of the other. We're not going to do that. We're looking to upgrade Manitoba as a place for working families.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Taxi Industry Regulation

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of

taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by many, 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.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer

jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans,

many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Many, many Manitobans signed it.

Thank you.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

* (14:40)

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

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

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

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

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

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues

such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Marcelino: This petition was signed by many, many Manitobans.

GRIEVANCES

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

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I rise today on a grievance on a very important day in terms of human rights in Canada.

In fact, this is an infamous date in Canadian history. One hundred and three years ago, the Komagata Maru landed in Vancouver with hundreds of citizens on board. The vast majority were Sikhs. Virtually all of the passengers were British subjects who were legally entitled to move to Canada. Despite this fact, the Conservative government of Canada, with the direct action of the local Conservative MP, acted to prevent them from entering and immigrating to Canada.

The reason they were denied entry was clear. This was part of a racist immigration policy that continued in Canada well into the 1960s. It was part of a series of racist policies that discriminated against South Asians to the point that it was not until 1948 that South Asians could actually vote in a provincial election in BC.

As I stand here today as a member of the Legislature, proud to represent my constituents, proud of my own background as a Sikh, I am reminded that the struggle for human rights and fair treatment continues today. I know, from my personal experience, about discrimination. As a provincial employee, I had to go through human rights processes because of this discrimination in my own workplace. Even as an MLA, I know that, like many of my constituents, I am still subjected to racism. Yes, racism and discrimination exists in Manitoba and Canada.

We often like to think that this is a part of our history, part of our past, but all too often we are reminded that the legacy of discrimination continues to this day. That's why I am rising today on my grievance on this May 23rd, the anniversary date of Komagata Maru landing in—landing. I am compelled to speak out against another discrimination actor—discriminatory act, one once again targets my community and my constituents, and that is the government legislation, Bill 30.

For some, this legislation about jurisdiction in terms of taxis and this government's agenda to bring in Uber. But in many ways, this legislation echoes the approach of this government, this Conservative government, in a way that is similar to what happened 103 years ago; 103 years ago, Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus, who were all British subjects, were denied their legal right to enter Canada. Today, Bill 30 denies the very basic legal rights of those that have invested half of their life savings into the taxi industry.

What does Bill 30 do? It takes away the licences of the taxi industry, sets up transitional licences but significantly denies the right of licence holders to any form of compensation. In fact, the bill says that even if the taxi industry was to file legal action today, with Bill 30 this Legislature will retroactively take away their right to due process.

Mr.—Madam Speaker, I believe it is no accident that the vast majority of taxi licensees and the drivers are from Sikhs and other minority groups. I do not for a moment believe that this government would have done this to other Manitobans. They would not have taken away the legal right of farmers in the same way that they have with the taxi drivers and owners.

Let's not forget that there is clear legal precedent for compensation for those that have lost their licences, whether it be in terms of fisheries in this province or agriculture and anywhere—elsewhere. Even today the federal government is saying it will provide compensation to dairy farmers affected by the European free trade agreement.

Bill 30 is about confiscation instead of compensation. It violates not only property rights, but the right to due process. That is why I want to put on the record today that I will fight against this discriminatory bill.

It is important to note that with the Komagata Maru nearly 100 years passed before the federal and

provincial governments apologized for this discriminatory part of our history. We do not have to wait 100 years. We can recognize this fundamental injustice and injustice targeting minorities, targeting the Sikh community in particular.

I am speaking today, not just out of a sense of grievance, but out of a fundamental sense of injustice. As members of this Legislative Assembly, I ask particularly the government members who have supported this bill to look at history and look at the reality of what this bill does. I cannot believe that in 2017 anyone can support such a fundamental discriminatory violation of people's legal rights.

In the spirit of the Komagata Maru, I say to every member of the Legislature today, let us learn from the history. Let us recognize that it is wrong to deny people their legal rights. Let us recognize that it's wrong to discriminate against minorities.

This is the 150th anniversary of Canada. I believe, as I have said, that all too often we have had a racist history, but I believe we are the masters of our own destiny. We can build a better future, but only if we recognize injustice and discrimination.

What this government is doing on Uber, what it is doing with Bill 30, is a relic of history. Let us move forward in this province and in this country. Let's reject this kind of discriminatory action by this government. Let's bring fairness to all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, I say to this government: do the right thing, withdraw Bill 30.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Pursuant to rule 33(7), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Martin). The title of the resolution is the Previous Provincial Government's Hydro Mismanagement.

Madam Speaker: It's been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for

Morris. The title of the resolution is Previous Provincial Government's Hydro Mismanagement.

* (14:50)

Mr. Micklefield: This afternoon I would like to call the following bills in the following order: Bill 5, the City of Winnipeg charter amendment and real property amendment act, Conforming to Construction Standards Through Agreements, for concurrence and third reading; I'd like to call Bill 14, The Emergency Medical Response and Stretcher Transportation Amendment Act, for debates on concurrence and third reading; I would like to call Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act, for concurrence and third reading; and I would like to call Bill 30, The Local Vehicles for Hire Act, for second reading.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider the following bills this afternoon: 5, 14, 7 and 30.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 5—The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment, Planning Amendment and Real Property Amendment Act (Conforming to Construction Standards Through Agreements)

Madam Speaker: So, as agreed, we will move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 5, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment, Planning Amendment and Real Property Amendment Act (Conforming to Construction Standards Through Agreements).

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Wishart), that Bill 5, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment, Planning Amendment and Real Property Amendment Act (Conforming to Construction Standards Through Agreements), reported from this Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Clarke: I'm pleased to speak in favour of Bill 5 today at third reading.

Our government was elected on a commitment to make Manitoba Canada's most improved province. As we strive towards that goal, we're making sure

that provincial rules and regulations are smart, practical and foster an enabling environment for our businesses and communities to grow. And that's exactly what this bill will accomplish.

We also committed to a new approach of working in partnership with our municipalities. Today, municipalities across the province know that they have a strong voice in our government. Our approach to working together in partnership was evident in the way that we worked with municipalities to develop a new basket-funding model, which was something that our municipalities have asked for. Bill 5 is another example of our commitment to work in partnerships.

These are regulatory changes that Winnipeg has requested that we undertake. They asked, we listened and we're delivering in collaboration with Manitoba Justice and the Office of the Registrar General. My department has worked hard to develop this important piece of legislation.

Bill 5 allows Manitoba municipalities to register conforming construction agreements at the Land Titles. A conforming 'constructing' agreement is another voluntarily tool in a municipality's planning and development approval toolbox. To meet building code or zoning bylaw requirements, developers will sometimes enter into agreement with an adjacent landowner that places building controls or restrictions on the adjacent property or to allow for continued access over the adjacent property.

This legislation would provide for the municipality to become a party to these agreements and enable the municipality to register the agreements against the titles of the affected property. This would ensure that the agreements run with the land and that the building code or zoning requirements are met into the future, even if one of the properties is sold.

Conforming construction agreements are also known as spatial separation agreements. They are recognized in the National Building Code and are commonly used in other Canadian jurisdictions, including Ontario and Alberta.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, this legislation is another example of government's commitment to work together in partnership with our municipal partners and to deliver on their needs and priorities.

In recent years, the City of Winnipeg has been requesting that the Province provide legislation to allow them to register conforming construction agreements. As the City of Winnipeg and other

municipalities in Manitoba continue to grow and expand, they will need a full suite of planning tools to allow them to efficiently respond to and to accommodate development proposals.

The ability for municipalities to enter into conforming 'constructure' agreements can facilitate and expedite complex development proposal involving multiple buildings, multiple parcels of land, downtown developments, large-scale retail and commercial developments.

This legislation provides Winnipeg and all other Manitoba municipalities with another tool to facilitate and 'expediate' construction and development proposals. The city of Winnipeg is growing and our government will continue to be a strong partner to support that growth. That means working together with our municipal partners to make sure that there is sensible enabling regulatory environment that supports growth and economic development.

We have listened and we will continue listening to municipalities so that the Province of Manitoba is enabling their growth development and long-term success.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm pretty pleased to speak to Bill 5 at third reading, and I think I may be the only speaker on this bill from our side. However, after I make a few comments I may have more people on my side wanting to make some—a few comments on this bill. And who knows, we may be here the whole afternoon discussing this bill. But we'll have to take it, like, one step at a time here.

The minister in her address to—on third reading to this bill talked about her goal of making Manitoba an improved province. She talked about a new approach to working with municipalities and, you know, what we were looking—as they've been in power now for a year and we're looking at their so-called new approach, and so far, near as I can figure out, we've had a funding decrease to the municipalities.

So I don't know how that's working out. We're looking at around a \$30-million decrease. Now, she calls it a basket-funding model and says that the municipalities are happy with that, but at the end of the day they may be happier with the method of allocation of the funds. But how can they be happier—happy with the total amount of the funds when they're cut by \$30 million? That's quite a big drop.

And I was also very—well, maybe I wasn't so surprised, but the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), in his question today, pointed out that Community Places grants no applications are available yet for this year. So I think we're seriously looking at, you know, six months delay at this point, and when, we'd like to know. I know we are going to be into the minister's Estimates at some point either, you know, soon or maybe in the fall. I'm not sure just when we're going to get there but it's not that far away. It's on the, you know, next in line when we finish the incumbent that's in there now. And we'll want to know from her, and perhaps she can get the information available for us as to why this Community Places grant program has turned into such a mess under her leadership or lack thereof.

Because the fact of the matter is, I remember Community Places as a program way back in the days when I was the ministerial assistant in the Schreyer government; there was Community Places then. And then Sterling Lyon came in and he didn't get rid of Community Places; I don't think recall that. It's still here after all these years, and this is a very valuable program for our community groups in Elmwood and other—almost every constituency in the province as applications made by church groups and community organizations and recreation facilities for some assistance in developing the playground lots, or the kitchen facilities, any number of projects.

* (15:00)

And, Madam Speaker, you know this; even in your own constituency you probably have a number of valuable programs that have been supported by Community Places. And so to have a program that is, you know, not even taking applications after the first year in government, I mean—means we're going to have to start asking some more questions in Estimates as to what in the world is going on in that department.

And she wants to study the program and reassess it and I—that's fine. You can do that with programs—doesn't mean you have to shut the programs down while you're doing it. You—surely you can do two things at the same time. You can, you know, do a reassessment of your program, but not just close the program down that's there—that's operating right now.

So this most improved province—like, if that's her definition of an improved province, boy, that's not what the public is going to be happy with.

And this new approach to working with municipalities—I wonder how long that is going to last.

So, certainly, there's storm clouds ahead for this minister, and I say that, you know, she's new to the job and she has time to change her approach a bit—certainly going to get a lot of activity around Bill 30. She's hearing right now about, you know, people being upset because there was no consultations on that bill, and the taxi industry is very upset about how this government is proceeding with that bill with no consultation with them developing this bill, and then basically confiscating their property.

At a time when we have the federal government dealing with the European trade deal essentially taking care of the entire dairy industry—you know, Quebec dairy farmers are considered valuable and they're being compensated over 10 years under that agreement, and here you have a whole industry that's being just confiscated. There's no talk of compensating anybody.

So I want to deal with the issue of the building codes because, you know, that is an extremely important point to this bill. And the building codes and the zoning bylaws require that buildings be set back from the property line so that they're separated from surrounding buildings by certain distances. The codes in the bylaws also require the people in the buildings have immediate access to sidewalks and streets. And I think not only is—are a lot of these regulations, you know, common sense, but a lot of them have to do with insurance regulations and fire code regulations from the past.

My former insurance partner was a long-time city councillor in Winnipeg, and certainly I got a pretty good view of how the City of Winnipeg operates and why there are so many rules. And, you know, the—a lot of the people complain, the public complains, the industries complain about rules, but, you know, there's a reason for this.

You know, we get down to the red tape philosophy of this government—oh, we just eliminate all the rules, eliminate all the red tape. Life—*[interjection]*—yes, life is going to be good. Yes, at the end of the day, you eliminate the programs completely, and then, hey, you've got no red tape problem. You know Community Places is gone; hey, less red tape.

And so there is certainly reason why each and every one of these rules, you know, was put in place

by municipalities not only here in Manitoba but other jurisdictions as well.

And I will buy the argument that, at a certain point, regulations do get outdated and have to be updated and that's just common sense. I mean, we don't have horses and buggies walking up and down the street anymore.

Although I will say this: since I've been in the Legislature, I have seen some horses and buggies walking up and down the street here when they—the member for River East (Mrs. Cox) will know that her predecessor in 1986 had hitched up a couple of horses and she could even give me an update on where those horses are right now, because I think one of them is still alive, and she was towing wagons up and down Broadway here complaining about something that the government was doing at that time. Now, that was an MLA with some imagination, and I remember those days, and I think it was probably legal for her to hitch those horses up here at the front of the building.

But, you know, that was the—you know, if you go back 100 years, that's what you see in those old pictures of Winnipeg in those days. There was not cars—at least not very many of them. There was a lot of horses and buggies and that, and those required a different set of regulations, because you know that fires in certain municipalities throughout North America, were—you know, burned down whole sections in cities in those days because you didn't have the building standards that you have right now and the requirements that you have right now. And that had to be brought in over time because building materials improved, and we don't—we have more concrete now rather than wooden buildings. We've had better fire-suppression systems than we had before. There were no sprinkler systems in the old days.

And so the insurance companies had a lot to do with this. I know a little bit about that too, because I've been in that business for 40 years now. The fact is that the insurance companies do make those requirements that there's separations between buildings, so that if a fire starts in one building, it doesn't, you know, automatically jump over to the next building.

So we in the NDP have no problem with these building regulations. We don't run around saying, oh, it's—these are all red tape. No, we say these are regulations that make sense; there's reasons for them. People have died in fires before because you didn't

have good enough regulations. And now we have them, and we say that these are acceptable. And yes, they do add to the cost and they add to the inconveniences, but they do save lives. They're there for a purpose.

We don't take the Conservative approach in saying, oh, well, let's get rid of them. You know, we have a goal in mind here. We've got to eliminate, you know, so many regulations to keep the boss happy. You know, the boss is up all night long poring through his regulation books and is going to say, oh, you know, I've got to change that minister. I'm going to replace that minister because, you know, her regulation quotient is a little too high here. He—she's got too many regulations relative to the—to another minister, right? And that starts this race to the bottom of, well, we're going to get rid of this regulation.

Everything goes fine until you have an issue where you have food poisonings or—bacteria problems in the food system—we've had, in the food-inspection system, nationally—been an issue. Well, these problems also occur at the provincial level.

So once again, I have no problem with revisiting regulations once in a while, but to make it kind of a be-all and an end-all and to make a big virtue out of this as if you're doing something different is something—is a real stretch. And I say that in knowing that the current Premier (Mr. Pallister) did this same song and dance when he became an MLA here back in 1995 and was in the Cabinet for a brief time and—sorry, 1993—and got into Cabinet in '95. His whole *raison d'être* was red tape; he was going to reduce red tape.

And, you know, we've never been able to find any—not even one regulation that he ever got rid of while he was a minister. But you know, old habits die hard, and he's obviously, you know, decided that's got to be part of his whole *raison d'être* now—is dealing with regulations. And so he's got this task force running around, second-guessing what they consider regulations, and they're probably going to get rid of a few that are going to come back to bite them at the end of the day too.

Now, this bill, Madam Speaker—this bill allows these requirements to be met through an agreement between the property owners and the building permit issuer that places restrictions and controls on the property. For example, the agreement might be that an underdeveloped portion of one of the properties must remain that way. Or that the agreement might be that the occupants of a building may gain the

required access by passing through the neighbouring property. Once registered, these agreements run with the land and bind future property owners. Registrations cannot be discharged without the consent of the building permit issuer. Amendments to The City of Winnipeg Charter, The Planning Act and The Real Property Act formally provide for these agreements and their registration.

* (15:10)

And, as I've indicated before, you know, at second reading and other times—occasions, about this bill—that we want to ensure that Manitoba's municipalities are strong and prepared for the future so they can help us grow their local economies and create good jobs. And that was the whole focus of our government for the last 17 years.

You know I hate to go back too far about the, you know, the bad old days, but you know, in the Filmon government, they did have their challenges to deal with in terms of the economy of the day and biggest deficit in history—up to that time—\$800 million, with Clayton Manness. But the reality was that the real estate market in Winnipeg, essentially the floor fell right out of it around '95 and '97. I mean, you couldn't give properties away at that time, and there was no construction here whatsoever. Matter of fact, we didn't see a building crane in Winnipeg for like 10 years and all of a sudden Gary Doer government came in in 1999 and everything changed.

Probably not overnight, but it ramped up to the point where we did a unbelievable construction agenda over the last 10 years. Taking care—15 years, taking care—I mean, dealing with the lower interest rates of the day has certainly been a big help, but what government in history has ever built, you know, a new arena, a new football stadium, a new airport, I mean on—[interjection]—and human rights museum. On and on and on and on, and just in the last year that this government has been in office, what do we see? Just a retraction. We see very few new commitments to new construction, pretty much nothing. If anything, we've seen a retraction, a retrenchment, a pulling back—putting projects on hold, that kind of activity.

And, of course, that is not the way the minister talks about—I think she said—in dealing with this bill, she was talking about most improved province. Well, I have no idea how she's going to become the most improved province when she's shutting the whole thing down. There's—how can you improve things

when you've shuttered the province? When you've—you know, padlock the buildings, the—what we've got is moving vans rather than building cranes in this province and that's what we see, you know, going forward. Inching forward, we see that this is where this government is taking us.

So I mean—I think it's been a little too early yet for the people to have made their minds up yet about this minister and this government, but it's—certainly the writing is, you know, sort of appearing on the wall. Certainly closing down the three ERs is certainly not a good first step to restore that—to inspire that confidence, and how that's going to make her the most—Manitoba the most improved province, by shutting down three of the six ERs is, you know, is beyond me.

Now, the City of Winnipeg's OurWinnipeg vision sets a guideline for the growth and the physical, social, environmental and economic development of the city in accordance with the City of Winnipeg Charter. This includes principles of sustainability, social consciousness, thoughtful development, partnership and collaboration, healthy living and local improvement. The intent of thoughtful development includes taking maximum advantage of existing infrastructure through increased densities and compact—well and I do have some issues with this increased density concept and I don't want to bore the audience here too much with it, but I can tell you that I'm all in favour of the—of increasing the densities, if I see some increased densities on Wellington Crescent.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

What's happening with the City of Winnipeg is that we have areas of Winnipeg in Elmwood, like on Riverton Avenue—this is one example where developers have come in, they see a little additional lot attached to a house that's been a playground for a family's children over the years, and they go to the person and they offer to buy the empty lot. And what they do is then go for variances, because the lots aren't wide enough to put houses on them and they scrunch and sandwich in these little houses that are like on—like are 17 feet wide. They're just totally skinny and very tall structures, and this is what they argue is increasing the density. That's what they want to do.

Well, a lot of the neighbours don't like that, and I do agree with them, and I say, look, I'm all in favour of density, but I want to see—and this is when Sam Katz was the mayor—I want to—I'm all in favour of

density when I start seeing those big lots over there on Wellington Crescent being chopped up and put houses on 17-foot lots. So it's—obviously there's not a lot of consistency when it comes to the poorer areas of the city.

Yes, increase the density, chop up the lots, shoehorn these little houses in there, but they're not doing that out in the richer areas.

So, but having said that, I mean I know that the city planners are big on having increased densities and they want to—of course, they feel that that will commit to inner city revitalization, heritage conservation. Certainly, we see a lot of that in my area in my constituency with the infill housing really doing—they're doing a marvellous job in there. Year by year, I see more and more infill housing being put in there and brand new structures, new families moving in, and it is really an improvement—an improvement to the area.

Now, I realize I may have strayed a little long here in my third reading speech, but I did get quite excited here after hearing about some of these Community Places issues and stuff like that, and so I don't know whether there's more speakers on our side here, but I know we—we want to pass the bill and we want to move on to Bill 7, so I don't want to cut into my colleagues' times that much. But I think that we've covered a good part of this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now, we've gone from Madam Speaker to Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's how long I've been up here, and with that I would suggest we pass this bill and move on to the next bill, which I think is Bill 14.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): The Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg have always been proud partners with a strong relationship. Winnipeg represents over half of Manitoba's population, and throughout the years this co-operation has worked hard to establish the best for both the city and the wider province.

Building and maintaining relationships are the hallmarks of success. This bill simplifies existing agreements between property owners, allowing the people of Winnipeg greater certainty and clarity in their property-planning endeavours.

Currently such agreements are informal and not coded into law within our province. This created a lack of certainty when setting up such agreements, as neither party was sure about the safety and the security of the agreement.

Through this bill, property owners and developers reduce their concerns regarding access bylaws pertaining to the access of sidewalks and streets. This improves their ability to plan property development while allowing certainty that changes in ownership does not have the capacity to negate the previously informal arrangements.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the agreements between the City and the Province have been a long-standing relationship, ensuring that the property owners within the city of Winnipeg are provided formal assurance in law that their agreements will be upheld, reduces the stress and worry of property planning and development.

As a creation of this bill was requested by the City of Winnipeg, we, the Manitoba Liberals, see no reason why the positive relationship between our Province and Winnipeg should not be maintained.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): I rise in the House today to speak on Bill 5. I do want to echo some of the sympathies that were mentioned earlier here today from my colleagues about the unfortunate terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom over this long weekend. It is unfortunate that happened and, again, I echo my sympathies, and my true sympathies go out to the families of the victims of that attack.

* (15:20)

I do like to thank all the members of the House here, as well, for supporting me—my private member's resolution this morning. I think it was something very important to recognize the Indo community, and I was very pleased to see the number of people in support of this in the gallery. I think it was over 50, if I counted correctly.

You know, this bill, I mean, it's very important, and, you know, it's introducing smart regulations that were asked for by the City of Winnipeg, and I think that, unlike what some members opposite have talked about as red tape, and they somehow seem to think that red tape—all red tape is necessary, we think that just smart regulations are necessary, and I think that's the distinguishing factor between both sides of the Chamber here.

In my riding of Southdale, I mean, my riding is made up of a few neighbourhoods: Southdale proper, Sage Creek, Island Lakes, Royalwood and a brand-new development, Bonavista. And, you know, I see

the construction going up in Bonavista, and of course, the housing development there has increased significantly over the past month or so. And I know that, just looking at the way the construction is done there, and buying a new home can sometimes be intimidating, and so, of course, good regulations, although Bill 5 may not particularly apply to the development itself, but it's with the understanding that good, smart regulation's important. You know, you go by and you see that the construction crew is working in the backyard or they might have a bulldozer going through that knocked over surveyor pegs and put it back up, and it looks like, you know, there's kind of an arbitrary border or property line that's developed. I think things like Bill 5 look to rectify some of those nuances that we may not readily think of as legislators.

I know that Sage Creek, of course, as well, is another community in Southdale that is growing rather rapidly. In 2011, I believe there was eleven or twelve hundred homes in that—in the neighbourhood, and, of course, today, now, here we are some five, six years later, we're looking at a substantial increase to that. So, again, anything that we can do to help improve and make construction of new homes or property development more simple and easier for developers, for landlords and for tenants, I think, is always a step in the right direction to defend and protect the housing industry in general.

I know that the housing industry has been very important to Manitoba and it's—continues to be, I believe, a source of long-term wealth for a lot of people not only in Winnipeg but across the province, so making sure that we protect and we make sure that we have good and strong regulations, smart regulations, that protect the industry would be always a welcome, welcome change here for us.

I do like to take the time, as well, to thank my constituents for entrusting me with their—to represent them in the Legislature. It's been over a year now that we've been in government here, and most of us—I'd say about 60-somewhat per cent of the members in this Chamber are brand-new to the Chamber, so we've celebrated our one-year anniversary about a month and a bit ago, and it's very important to remember the reasons why we were sent here. And, again, many of the members that were in the gallery today from the Indo community were my constituents, and it's one of the reminders of why we're here today and how we got here was asking people for their support but, more importantly, representing them properly and fully representing

their interests in the Legislature to the best of our ability.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do thank you for the opportunity to put some words and support on the record for Bill 5, and I do thank members opposite for indicating their support for this important piece of legislation.

Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the concurrence and third reading of Bill 5, the City of Winnipeg charter amendment, planning amendment and real estate property amendment act.

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

I declarer the motion carried.

DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 14—The Emergency Medical Response and Stretcher Transportation Amendment Act

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just very briefly, I think that there is an important issue related to this bill. The government wants to standardize the free structure for emergency measures around the province, but they are doing nothing about standardizing the quality of service around the province. And there is drastically variable capacities and ability to deliver a quick service depending on where you are, and I think that that's something that the government needs to pay a lot more attention to.

When the government, moving on this—we should have seen some inclusion here, some major effort to do much better in terms of service, in rural Manitoba in particular, which has fallen behind the city of Winnipeg.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Emergency Medical Response and Stretcher Transportation Amendment Act.

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

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 7—The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, we'll go on to concurrence and third reading of Bill 7.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I move, seconded by the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke), that Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, seconded by the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations, that Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended), report for the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development and be concurred in and be now read for the third time and passed.

Mr. Cullen: Appreciate the opportunity to bring Bill 7 to debate in third reading. Clearly, we had committee; we did have some discussion at committee about Bill 7. Certainly, the New West Partnership Agreement, we think, will bring tremendous potential to Manitobans in terms of trade opportunities, and, clearly, Manitoba is a trading province and we rely on trade. And we rely on this trade to create economic development opportunities for Manitobans, and we believe this particular legislation will set that framework so that we can have further discussions with our neighbours to the west.

Clearly, this is something that we articulated throughout the province prior to the election last year. We made a commitment coming into government that we would endeavour to pass and get involved in the New West Partnership Agreement as soon as possible. And, certainly, we had very positive discussions with Saskatchewan, Alberta and

British Columbia, and they were certainly—were willing participants of us coming onto the agreement. So we are excited about the potential for this.

Clearly, we do have significant trade with our neighbours to the west, and we think this particular mechanism will allow trade to grow. And I think we should indicate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the key components to this will hopefully be harmonizing some of the differences in regulation that we find from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Clearly, the business community has indicated that this is some of the red tape, some of the difficulty in terms of doing business from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. So we certainly believe this framework will enhance opportunities for Manitobans, and we're excited about that particular opportunity.

You know, once we have now formed a group, if you will, with our neighbours to the west, we have a significant presence now in Canada. We certainly recognize that with over 40 per cent of Manitoba's interprovincial exports destined for our partners to the west, removing these barriers is very important. The potential exists, benefits up to \$272 million by 2025, so certainly there's opportunities for economic development here in Manitoba.

* (15:30)

And, quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, economic development opportunities really translates into jobs, and jobs for Manitobans. Clearly, we're trying to get Manitobans back to work. We've seen some positive outcomes in terms of the numbers. I know this year alone, from January 1st to now, Manitobans have created 6,000 new jobs. We think that's a very positive sign.

Additionally, our unemployment rate is down at 5.4 per cent—for a time, was the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. We certainly think that's a step in the right direction, but I will say we do have a lot more work to do, and we are certainly committed to do that work. This really—this partnership is really just one key in enhancing our trade relationships with our neighbours to the west. I will also point out we have taken the most ambitious stance—of any province or territory—in Manitoba, in terms of our agreements with the Canadian—the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement, and we're excited about the possibilities that will present themselves with that framework coming into place as well in the very near future.

So all these things combined will certainly provide opportunities for Manitobans and Manitoba businesses. And really that's the government role, to make sure we are creating the foundation for economic development opportunities for Manitobans.

Now I should say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that clearly we—on this government side—we know where we stand in terms of economic opportunities and certainly what free trade and free-trade agreements mean to Manitobans. We're not exactly sure where members opposite stand. I know in previous debate there has been some difference of opinion of members of the same party. And I know pretty certainly the member for Fort Garry-Riverview indicated they put their emphasis into making sure that we reduce trade barriers. And I think it was just not very much later—in fact, the same day—the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) indicated that this free-trade agreement is one of the steps that they're taking to rebuild a worse province for Manitobans.

So there certainly is a difference of opinion there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know, the member for Flin Flon went on to say that the NDP stands against these kinds of free-trade agreements. So clearly, the NDP have articulated two very different positions in terms of free trade, in terms of the new west trade partnership agreement, so we're obviously interested to see where they land on this one in terms of where they want to vote on this one.

Clearly we believe there's tremendous opportunity for Manitobans. We've indicated to Manitobans we would do this. Manitobans have supported us in this endeavour, and I would say we've had some very, very positive comments from the business community already in terms of opportunities that are now presenting themselves to—for them to increase business. And, when they talk about increasing business, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that means new job opportunities for Manitobans. And that's what we are committed to doing, is making—allowing more Manitobans to get back to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're excited about this particular legislation; our neighbours to the west are excited about it, and I think all Canadians look at these trade agreements as positive. I hope members opposite will also find the value in the New West Partnership Agreement.

Thank you very much.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): We're pleased to get up and speak to third reading on The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act. I know that this has been a big priority for the government long before they were even in government. I distinctly remember in 2011 during the 2011 campaign, this was one of their five priorities, so I guess it's a credit to the minister there that he's been able to nail one of their five priorities from 2011.

It was interesting, though, in 2011 that their five priorities didn't include anything about education, and it didn't include anything about health care, and it didn't include anything about job creation or investment in our communities. In fact, it was so odd to have something so obscure as the New West Partnership Trade Agreement as a priority, when, if you ask Manitobans what that was, I am quite confident that most wouldn't know what it was, yet that's their priority. And that kind of speaks to the kind of government that we have—that they're so utterly out of sync with the needs, and goals, and aspirations of Manitobans.

And so we get a trade agreement like this that comes before us, and the minister says in his opening lines—I just—I wrote this down just so I would remember this particular thing that he said, but he said, well, this will bring trade opportunities, but he doesn't follow that up with any kind of explanation of what trade opportunities. We've asked relentlessly for that minister to tell this House one thing, one improvement, one job that it's going to create, and yet we can't get an answer.

And I certainly remember back in the—previously, when this was put forward either as a private member's resolution or as a opposition bill when we were in government, and I remember asking the member from Tuxedo who had put it forward—or at least was speaking to it, but I think she had put it forward at that time, but I stand to be corrected on that—can she name, articulate one thing—I actually think it was four or five things at that time—but even one thing that this agreement can actually do. She was unable to answer; unable to care—to put into plain language for Manitobans what an agreement actually means to Manitobans and to their families living in their communities.

And, frankly, when we asked, it was like we'd asked some kind of question that was unanswerable as—but, in fact, the reality was—is that there was no answer forthcoming because the member at that time

wasn't able to articulate any consequential thing that came out of this agreement, nor has the minister been able to do that for us in this House. So you have to wonder why—why this would be such a priority. *[interjection]*

Now, I hear the member from Emerson—who has a penchant for continuing to talk during other members' speeches—say to me, well, it means more jobs. Well, if it does mean more jobs, why wasn't that made transparently clear in any of the speeches the minister has made, in any of the briefing material that has been given.

We went in for a briefing into his office to talk about it, and that's good—I appreciate him doing that; that was all good—but he was unable to put any information in front of us that would help us to understand why this was the greatest thing since sliced bread, why this was more of a priority to the government than health care, than education, than child care, than reconciliation, than minimum wage, than investment in infrastructure and flood protection—in all of those things that actually matter to the day-to-day lives of Manitobans. This seems utterly and completely irrelevant, and yet, notwithstanding that, it has been characterized as the most important thing this government has accomplished. And maybe that speaks volumes about the kind of government this actually is that achieves so little for the people of Manitoba day in and day out.

Now, I've said in the House on this particular bill before that, on this side of the House, we're very much about an inclusive Canada from coast to coast to coast—inclusion of all peoples and all places because everybody matters and everyone belongs. And, instead, in this particular bill, what you get is an agreement between four western provinces who aren't exactly getting along that well themselves these days—just as a footnote to this particular conversation—but it's actually the kind of thing that balkanizes this country instead of building Canadian unity.

Now we've said right from the get-go that if the government wanted to put its attention on the agreement on internal trade which we had spent an enormous amount of time working through, that that was understandable, because we trade pretty much 50 per cent with the west of this country and pretty much 50 per cent with the east of this country, and so we are situated geographically in the centre of the country and we traded equally with both ends. That's something that I think Canadians can get their head

around, that they can understand, but they'll have a harder time and Manitobans, in particular, are having a harder time—how it is that entering into a balkanized trade agreement with just a portion of the country actually serves the interests of Manitoba or serves the interests of this great country.

* (15:40)

Now, it's not surprising to me that ultimately the government was able to claim some little, modest credit for what's now, I believe, called the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. I'd get the minister to correct me if I'm wrong about that, but I think that's what they're trying to characterize it—and sadly because of the hyper-partisan tone that this government takes on every issue, there was no indication, no mention, no reflection on the fact that the vast majority of the work on that particular agreement came during our time in government because that's what we were concentrating on, on a Canadian agreement, not on a balkanized trade agreement that serves the interests of the very few, quite likely at the expense of the many. It's the kind of reverse 'utilitarianism' I've referred to many times in this House because that's what the priority of this government is, to focus on the elite minority while leaving the rest of Manitobans really to fend for themselves. That's not the kind of Manitoba that we believe on in this side of the House, it's not the kind of Manitoba that we would ever support and it's why, in fact, we're not interested in supporting Bill 7. We don't think it adds anything to the well-being of Manitoba or helps to build this country. In fact, arguably, it may do the exact opposite.

At a minimum, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one could say that this agreement has been made redundant by the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. What purpose could it possibly have? It doesn't appear to be linked in any particular way to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, although at the time, when faced with a question of redundancy, I think the minister said that, oh no, no, no, this is actually even better for the four western provinces. Although, as usual, when it comes to agreements of this kind, he was able to—unable to articulate why that was so, what evidence there was to make such a contention and, as usual, we're left with a kind of Conservative approach to things that says, we're going to sign this agreement, trust us, it'll be okay. We don't think. In fact, we think quite the opposite on that side.

Well, when we think of workers, we have to ask ourselves, well, what benefit will this agreement

have for workers? The minister, of course, unable to articulate that as well. Was he able to say their salaries will be increased and their benefits secured and their labour contracts respected as a result of an agreement like this? I didn't hear him say that. *[interjection]* Yes, no, so there we are. The—my friend from 'Flint Flon' also says, well, he was there, he was listening at the time, the minister didn't provide any evidence, any information on whether or not workers would be protected under a bill like this, under an agreement like this.

An Honourable Member: Sure wasn't a priority.

Mr. Allum: And my friend from Flin Flon, who quite rightly will follow me on this because he has obviously much to add to this particular debate, has quite rightly pointed out that leads into open question whether wages, benefits or contracts will actually survive an agreement of this type or whether it may be—which is what the usual Conservative plan is, to thing the death by a thousand cuts. The slow, slow decline of agreements and benefits and salaries and a race to the bottom, to the lowest common denominator that does not seek to enhance the well-being of all Manitobans, wherever they might live, but we suspect that it may well improve the well-being of a very small percentage of businesses in this province. *[interjection]* Maybe 1 per cent, that might be a generous estimation if we say 1 per cent. It might be even less than that, but that's part of the problem with this bill is being the failure to provide any kind of information, any kind of data, any kind of evidence to suggest that great things will occur for the people of Manitoba and for this country if Manitoba signs on to it.

We're supposed to take it in faith, and yet even since this time that this bill has been before the House, the minister has still been unable to point to one circumstance, one instance, one thing that happened as a result of this agreement, and so we're left with a great deal of skepticism.

And so we would suggest to the minister that rather than spending time—the House's time—on an agreement that really has no foundation for addressing the colossal need in our communities all across Manitoba, we think it would be more valuable for him to actually spend time putting together a jobs plan for Manitoba.

How simple would that be for him to—and I don't even know if that was in his mandate letter—probably not—probably unlikely at best, because jobs for Manitobans isn't actually being his priority. He wants

to—*[interjection]*—yes, I hear; I knew it would come from the backbenches there, about the 6,000 part-time low-wage no-benefit jobs that's been created since they came into government. Never mind the 14,000 full-time, good-wage, full-benefit jobs that are being lost.

In fact, when you think about it—when you think about it, you've got the 900 jobs at Hydro as a perfect example. Those jobs will never come back now. It's not like there'll be any reinvention of them anytime soon. Once they're gone they're gone. Those are good-paying jobs; they are management jobs, allegedly, although we don't know that for sure, and, in fact, we're uncertain exactly what the status of that particular initiative is. We don't know if workers are—

An Honourable Member: I'll bet you the minister doesn't know either.

Mr. Allum: There's a good chance, as my friend from Flin Flon says, that the minister's out of touch, because if he was asking the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Schuler) for information, there's a good chance he wouldn't have that information, since it's not quite clear to us what the Minister of Crown Services actually does from day to day to day.

But those 900 jobs are a classic example of jobs that are just going to disappear out of Manitoba, disappear out of our workforce. They were high-paying jobs in some respects, but those jobs pay taxes, and that's one of the things that the minister fails to recognize. He might be able to show, in some strange calculation, how laying people off somehow improves some bottom line, but there are multiple other bottom lines that won't be well-served by losing those jobs. Those folks pay taxes. Has the minister calculated how much taxes will be lost as a result of those jobs being lost?

Those jobs go to retail stores and they buy goods and services from our local small businesses, but they won't be anymore if they don't have a job like that.

An Honourable Member: They don't invest in Costa Rican businesses?

Mr. Allum: Well, maybe that's what will be the ultimate goal of this government is doing—enhance the job creation in Costa Rica at the expense of Manitoba. I'm not entirely sure.

But I would say—I would say that this penchant for cutting jobs in this government is only going to leave Manitoba families out in the cold. It's going to

leave Manitoba business out in the cold because they won't have people walking into their doors to buy their goods and services as they normally would and, ultimately, it's going to leave Manitoba out in the cold.

This is a bad, bad place for us to be as a province and a bad place for this country to be when these kind of balkanized trade agreements are created for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the very, very many.

And so what we would prefer, instead, is for the minister, as I said just a few minutes ago, to actually construct a jobs plan that's going to continue to create good, full-time, high-wage, full-benefit jobs for Manitobans. That ought to be the goal of every government. That's the essence of what we're to do here day in and day out to make sure that Manitobans have jobs that are—that help them to support their families; have jobs that help them to pay their mortgages or pay their rent; have jobs to send their kids to child care, to pay their education taxes, and then send them to post-secondary as well, so that those families and those kids have the very same opportunities that most everybody in this House has had growing up.

* (15:50)

And the government instead says, well, no, we're not going to do that. We're not going to spend any time on a jobs plan. We're not going to get out and talk with Manitobans. In fact, we're going to do the opposite of that. We're going to sign very obscure trade agreements with the other western provinces.

I never heard, I have to say, the government of Saskatchewan bragging about this. I never heard the government of Alberta bragging about the New West Partnership. I've never heard the government of BC bragging about the New West Partnership. In fact, I think they've forgotten all about it, so ineffective has it been over its short time. I mean, just go to the website for the New West Partnership. Everybody has that opportunity to do that right now. Go and see how many press releases it's issued since it first came into place in about 2009, 2010, so that it—you could see there quite clearly on their website how many jobs have been created.

Well, you can search day and night and all over the place, you're not going to find it on that website. You're going to find two press releases, one of which is Manitoba's decision to join—nothing, no information, no data, no evidence to suggest that this

is anything other than something designed to distract Manitobans away from the real issues about health care, about education, about child care, about good jobs for Manitobans, about green, clean, renewable energy for generations to come, about reconciliation with our indigenous brothers and sisters. It's a government that is utterly silent on that particular matter.

There are so many other issues that need to be addressed. This has proven to be a colossal distraction. I know when we go to vote today what's going to happen. I know that the minister will rely on his huge majority to push this through, and then we'll never hear from it again.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Allum: I quite agree. I'm going to applaud for that too. I never want to hear about it again because it is absolutely the kind of thing that has—that is not going to be able to produce any benefits that we're aware of. That has been made transparently clear. And that's another thing about this bill. It doesn't say at any point on the way through it, and at some point, some accountability will kick in. It lacks—already lacks transparency, but some additional accountability.

Will the minister come back in a couple of years with a report on all of the good things that this has produced? [*interjection*] I hear the member from Brandon West just agree that that's exactly what the minister is going to do. So let it be said now there's a new alliance in the House between the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) and the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), calling on the member—on the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen) to produce a report every 18 months to tell us exactly what benefits this has served the people of Manitoba. And I suggest at a minimum, it'll be a very short report because I'm quite doubtful and quite skeptical about what its actual benefits will be for Manitobans.

And I hear my friend from St. James talking about the Premier of Alberta. I'm sure that it's an afterthought for her because I can tell you that in Alberta, they have considerably more issues and important issues to address there—rebuilding a year after Fort McMurray and the decline of oil prices—than this particular agreement.

I should say, just in relation to the fact that British Columbia is a part of this deal, that I should put on record that I'm hoping that the recount in—

the additional counts, I guess, is the better way of putting it, in British Columbia over the next couple of days will result in a majority BC NDP government, led, I have to say, by my very good friend, John Horgan. I think if the splits go the right way when the counts happen, I think good things are going to happen for BC and once and for all have a government there that's more interested in the 98 per cent than in the 2 per cent and address the real needs of British Columbians, not the needs of the elite.

And that, ultimately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is what this bill is about, what this government is about. It's what in political science is known as elite accommodation. Scratch your back, you scratch mine; we'll mutually benefit our little group together, but everybody else won't have a place, won't have a role, won't see themselves reflected in an agreement of this kind.

We're going to vote on this in a while and as I said, I'm hopeful that we never see anything again—although I will hold the minister account, as I know the member from Brandon West will, to produce a report on this agreement that actually shows some demonstrable outcomes or even outputs, if it comes to that, associated with this agreement. But I daresay that we won't likely see such a report, because we likely won't know, or be aware of, or have any particular results—result from it—outcomes result from it.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that others want to put some words on the record in relation to this agreement. I know that my friend from Wolseley has a very good sense of trade agreements like this—dispute resolution system, of course—we've learned in any number of trade agreements across the globe have done nothing but put governments at a disadvantage when it comes to dealing with corporations, and that the public interest should be set aside for the private interest.

Frankly, it's come to the point where I'm not even sure, and I'm just saying this as a member in the House, why we have trade agreements that only relate to trade. Why aren't there social benefits, and environmental benefits, and cultural benefits associated with these kind of agreements? The days of just stand-alone trade agreements strike—me anyways, Mr. Deputy Speaker—as being a thing that belongs to a bygone past that didn't properly acknowledge the social, environmental, cultural

context within which people live. So, with that, I will end.

As I've said about this agreement before, I personally don't support this bill. I know that our caucus doesn't support this bill, and we don't support this bill for any number of reasons that I've tried to articulate, that my friend from Flin Flon, my friend from Wolseley, my sister from St. Johns, my brother from Elmwood, will go on to articulate among the many members who want to talk to—about it. I have to say in caucus everybody wanted a chance at this particular agreement. So everybody wanted to hit the homerun right out of the park on this particular agreement. But there's so little time for us to be able to debate in a fulsome way all of these issues that are put before us.

So I will do my best to sum up by just saying I don't believe in narrow trade agreements like this. I don't believe they're relevant anymore. I don't believe in Balkanized trade agreements like this that separate our country one—apart—one from another. I believe in a strong Manitoba, a Manitoba that is fair, equitable and inclusive. And I certainly believe in a province that contributes to the well-being of this country. I believe in a united Canada, one Canada for every Canadian and not simply a Canada for some and not for others.

We're not only on this side of the House province-builders, Mr. Deputy Speaker; we're also nation-builders. Thank you very much.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Well, I'm just thrilled to rise in the House to speak to Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement. It's long—we've been waiting for this coming for a long time, and it's finally here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we're going to get to vote on this and we've been asking the previous government to look at trade agreements. I know they don't like trade agreements. They seem to have an affinity for the new President of the United States who hates trade agreements, so I think they must be thrilled to have somebody in the US that thinks the same way that they do.

* (16:00)

But anyway—you know, I listened some of the former speakers here, and interesting how they demonize the private sector—and that is what we felt in the private sector under the previous NDP government. We were demonized. There was a black cloud floating around over all the private sector, raining on the parade, because there weren't any

happy parades under the NDP—it was all about how they could extract more tax dollars from the private sector, more fees; they loved unions and, you know, we like to work with unions, as well, but now, you know, they don't seem to like us. *[interjection]* And yes, there's parades coming up, there's a pride parade in Brandon. I hope the member will come and join me there. I've been at it several times, and it's always a great, inclusive event that we see in Brandon, lots of people out celebrating.

But, you know, the former government seems to think you can legislate your way into prosperity, and we know that's not the case. We are a trading province in a trading nation. And that is what we do well. And we have to have opportunities to trade, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So it's always interesting to me why the former government never wanted to talk to their neighbours; they never talked about trade; they never talked about water that was coming into Manitoba.

Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know you were the first MLA from Manitoba that actually spoke to the Saskatchewan government about water flowing into Manitoba, because it was ignored by the previous government. And we saw that time and time again. Because what I hear from the opposition is that private sector jobs are irrelevant. They don't care about private sector jobs. And that is where I come from. I know it's where you come from. We know that there's lots of opportunities there. And this gives Manitoba an opportunity. We can't—can no longer be a have-not 'province.' We want to make sure that we can contribute, yes, to Canada, and this is one way to do that. *[interjection]*

So, well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's interesting—hear some of the heckling here, but, you know, the opposition seems to think you can only be party to one trade agreement. And, of course, we know that's not the case. We can be party to several trade agreements. They will all create opportunities for Manitoban—Manitoba. It's a trust thing, and there was an issue of trust not long ago. In fact, I do seem to recall that there was a time where the former government said, well, just trust us, you know, we're not going to raise the sales tax, and, of course, Manitobans did trust them again, to, you know—and then, what did we find out? Well, we found out that maybe they weren't quite telling the whole story there, because they had not only studied raising the PST why—1 point, they had also studied raising it by 2 prior to the election.

So they came in and they broke their word to Manitobans, so there was a trust issue there, and then they took away the right to vote in a referendum. And I listened to the former speaker here, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), he was saying that we were wasting time debating this issue in the House, and, well, this is what you do in a democracy. You have debates. This is democracy at work. If you don't like democracy, well, there's lots of other countries that you can go to, but this is democracy at work. And that is what we saw denied to Manitobans when they were not allowed to vote in a referendum on the PST increase. And, sad to say, I think that was the point, one of many points, that they started to lose trust with the former NDP government. And then, when their caucus started to break up, and we're still not sure how many caucuses there are—is that, you know, is that the plural of caucus, I'm not quite sure—but that's—there's several caucuses over there, and they speak from different sides, and they're all looking at it from a different way. And, you know, that's one thing that you see out in the public there all the time. So Manitobans, they gave us their trust in the last election. We're working to make sure that trust in politicians is restored and that people can see that there is an outcome.

The speaker from Fort Garry-Riverview, the member, seemed to want proof. Well, proof comes all the time. It came immediate with the New West Partnership because we saw tenders on other provincial websites immediately that Manitoba companies were able to bid on, that that wasn't possible prior to this bill being introduced, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, I can't see much more proof than that to job creation as we've seen here; to businesses growing, to businesses feeling enabled, businesses making investments in Manitoba, businesses making investments in their staff, in training and in facilities. That's what we do, as business people, we make those investments. We make investments in people. We train them. We enable them. They create wealth for themselves and for others. And yes, they do pay taxes, but they pay taxes for their own efforts, not being forced to by issues like raising the PST like the previous government did.

So it's sad to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the opposition still hasn't figured out how business works. I know that we try to educate them. They're all smart people, so you figure they should be able to

learn some of that and see how it works, but, you know, we'll keep working away at it.

I know from talking to business people around the province they are moving ahead with their business opportunities. They are thrilled that Manitoba now has the open-for-business sign there because we know the closed-for-business sign has moved to Alberta, and it may be moving to BC as well. We're not quite sure how that's going to work, but right now businesses are thrilled about what's happening in Manitoba. They are investing; they're hiring; they're educating people. They're making sure that everybody around Manitoba is doing well and that we all benefit from the opportunities that are going to be there with the New West Trade Agreement, and those are opportunities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we never saw under the previous government.

But there are opportunities galore; it is for the businesses to find. We can't point them out and find them for all of them, but that's what businesses do well. They do that on their own. They know what's best in their own interests and how to expand their business so they can hire more staff. They can pay better wages, and they can serve their customers, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So lots of opportunity there, and I'm just willing to listen to just about anybody talk about this, and I know we're going to hear from the labour side here soon because the opposition seems to feel the only good job is a union job. We know in Manitoba we've got jobs created from all sectors of the economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, union, non-union. Those are all good jobs and we want to embrace that opportunity and make sure that all of those jobs will benefit Manitoba, and we know they will.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know there's many that want to speak on this issue. I'm thrilled that we're having the vote here today.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Unfortunately, I have to rise again to talk about this bill and really what's wrong with this bill. You know, we've listened to members opposite say we're against trade, and nothing could be further from the truth. What we are for, though, is Manitoba workers, to make sure that they have a future. And what this trade deal does is the same as so many other trade deals, be they international ones or whatever, is they don't guarantee working people much of a future. Whether it was the original NAFTA agreement that was going to be the godsend for Canada, that it was going to

make the country so much better or any number of other trade deals that have come along since then that are just good for business-business, business, business.

What about working people? What about them? Has it been good for working people, any of these trade agreements that they've brought in so far that the right-wing ideology says that we have to have because it's good for business? Has it been good for working people in Canada or in this province? And the answer, if anybody was to take their political blinders off for a minute and put down their glass of blue Kool-Aid, they'd realize that no, it has been bad for working people in this country and in this province. And this trade agreement will be bad for Manitoba workers.

You know, the previous speaker stood up and said Manitoba's open for business; everything this government talks about is for business. Now, one would assume that what's good for business is good for working Manitobans, and one would be so absolutely wrong in that assumption, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. What's good for business isn't necessarily good for working people.

But I'll tell you what: what's good for working people is always good for Manitoba business. And that's what's wrong with this particular bill is it's not good for Manitoba working people; it's only good for a select few for business.

So why isn't it good for working people in this province? Well, we went to a briefing, like our brother from Fort Garry-Riverview said when he was talking about it, and we asked the minister: Well, how many jobs do you think this will create? Well, he didn't know. He didn't have a clue. And you could ask him today and he still wouldn't have a clue—wouldn't have any idea how many jobs it will create, because it won't create jobs. It certainly won't create good-paying jobs.

* (16:10)

They like to stand up and crow about the number of jobs that's been created in this province in the last year, but what they don't crow about is how many of those are good-paying jobs, how many of those are full-time jobs, because they don't want you to know the whole story, they only want you to know their political spin on the story.

So, if this trade agreement was so good for jobs, Saskatchewan would stand up and say, here's how many jobs belonging to the New West Partnership

got created in Saskatchewan, but they've not done that. Has Alberta stood and said here's how many jobs got created? No. Has BC? Well, apparently not.

In fact, if you look at the partnership as it stands today, some of the partners are not very happy with each other anymore. BC's not really talking to Alberta, Saskatchewan's trying to poach jobs from Alberta because apparently it hasn't been working out all that well for any of the jurisdictions. So we want to sign on to a partnership of partners that are presently not happy with each other for the very reasons that we didn't sign on to this partnership when the NDP was in government, because it wasn't good for the people of this province, and it has not been good for the people of any other province.

What it does—in the big scheme of things and the big picture—is, it drives wages down. Now, the members opposite that are businessmen or that are in the pocket of businessmen will say, well, that's good it drives wages down, because it's good for business. Because they don't care about working Manitobans; they want to create more poor people. They don't want to have a strong middle class, a strong working class. They want to try and drive the wages down, drive their profits up for their corporate friends at the detriment of every other hardworking Manitoban.

So we need to be really aware of what these trade agreements, particularly this type of trade agreement, is about. It's not about building up the province of Manitoba. It's not about building up the province of Manitoba for the majority of Manitobans. It's about helping out a few, a few that, you know, are probably already doing pretty well for themselves. It's the people at the bottom that are not doing so well.

So, you know—should the government of Manitoba be responsible to all the people of Manitoba or is it okay to only be responsible to a select few Manitobans? Because that's what this government, they're responsible and answer to—or answer for, I guess—only a very few of Manitobans.

You know, they say we were against business and that's not true. Under the previous NDP government, taxes for business went down, allowing them to create jobs which, you know, it's nice to think that that kind of concept works. Doesn't work all that well, but it certainly works better than what this government's mandate or what this government's plan for creating jobs is.

How do you suppose, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, how do you suppose this New West Partnership will help create jobs in northern Manitoba? Because we've asked this government repeatedly what their plan is to create employment opportunities in the North. Well, I don't see that this is going to create any great employment opportunities in the North and we could certainly ask the minister and he probably wouldn't have an answer, he hasn't yet. So will driving wages down create employment in the mining sector? No, it won't, because workers in the mining sector will be able to migrate to places that pay higher wages.

So, well, Tom's not likely to stop now, so—oh, inside voice—sorry, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

This talks about trade going east and west, right, and what about trade going north? Well, in order for trade to go north, you'd have to have some system to get it there. So, for the last year or so, we've talked about the Port of Churchill and the rail line that's running north. Has this government showed any interest whatsoever in supporting the port? No. Have they showed any interest in supporting a major northern route for trade? No, none whatsoever, silent, no word, no plan.

You know, when we were in government, we made sure that roads like No. 6 Highway, No. 10 Highway, that were vital north-south links—we made sure that they were built up to standard so that trade, materials, people, could flow—well, even tourists, because that's the only thing this government has talked about so far, is—the plan for the future is all tourism. Well, you can't have tourists if you can't get there. So, if they don't invest in things like the railroad to Churchill, you won't get tourists. If they don't invest in roads, you won't have tourists.

You know, we've just come through a weekend where a couple of pretty major roads in the North were washed out. One of them has been debated for quite a amount of time about fixing it up, and we haven't seen this government step up. The Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen) knows full well about the conditions of Highway 280 and hasn't really jumped up. In fact, I've talked to him many number of times talking about trade, talked to him about a vital link in the community of Snow Lake that allows the transportation of goods and services from a mine to a processing facility, allows workers, and, really, for well over a year now, they've been in discussions about trying to shirk their responsibilities for maintaining that road instead of actually stepping

up and maintaining the road in a safe and operable condition. So, while they talk about trade on one hand, they don't live up to actually being able to trade on the other hand.

So, you know, I could go on for probably hours, maybe days, talking about what's wrong with this bill, but I'm sure some of my colleagues would like to share their thoughts on it, so let's just end here by saying I urge the members opposite to rethink their position on this New West Partnership because it's just plain bad news for Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any other speakers?

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Miigwech, Deputy Acting Speaker. So, I'm pleased to put a couple of words on the record in respect of—*[interjection]*

Acting Deputy Speaker—*[interjection]* Deputy Speaker. Did I say acting? I apologize for that.

So I'm pleased to put some words on the record for Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act. And I do just want to acknowledge all of my colleagues that went before me and the phenomenal words that they've already put on the record. I'm not an expert in this. I'll share that with the House. But I do certainly know that Manitoba's geographic location has always been a key advantage in making us a centre for trade, and I know that that's something that our NDP government was committed to, and actually had bona fide strategies and was working towards in a myriad of different fronts. And I'll just note some of them.

I know that our NDP government was always focused on breaking down those trade barriers to the east and to the west and to the North and south and really all across the world, and that's why I think that we would encourage this government to have a strong national—or, you know, this government, that it should pursue and put pressure for a strong national trade agreement.

* (16:20)

I think it's no surprise to members opposite or to this House that we do not support this bill.

I actually do really appreciate what my colleague was talking about earlier in respect of all of the myriad of, you know, urgent and critical issues that are facing Manitoba right now, and how this government has put so much time and energy into

this bill, which I would agree with my colleague, that is probably going to go nowhere. And actually—and I agree with my other colleague from Flin Flon that that will not produce any jobs and actually puts Manitoba workers at risk and at jeopardy. And so it's shocking and almost—and surprising that this government would put something like this—and legislate—you're actually legislating the loss of Manitoba jobs.

So I don't know why the government would do that, except to say that it is in line with many of the pieces of legislation and activities that this government has done, not the least, again—you know, not raising the minimum wage for a full year for Manitobans, and when they did decide that they're going to look at raising the minimum wage, they decided that 15 cents or three nickels would—was sufficient for Manitobans and was sufficient for Manitobans that are working at minimum wage jobs.

And it's interesting that something was put—I had put up something in—on Twitter, and it was interesting that somebody had responded on Twitter saying that 15 cents was actually going to break Manitoba, which is just absolutely ridiculous.

And I think that, you know, we have to be cognizant that we really do and should be moving towards a living wage. And I know that there's a variety of different, you know, research and debates on, you know, what this living wage should be, but clearly we should be moving towards \$15 an hour, not three nickels.

I mean, you know, we're so blessed in this House—you know, we're paid a really good salary to do really important work, and I'm cognizant of that every day how blessed I am. And, of course, we all earn the money that we're paid, but, certainly, we're very, very blessed and in many respects while many of us in this House have grown up in hardship.

And, actually, I grew up in absolute poverty, and so I remember what it was like—*[interjection]* I can't concentrate, sorry. I can't concentrate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind everybody that if there are any conversations, please use the loge, so you respect the member who's speaking at the moment.

The honourable member for St. Johns.

Ms. Fontaine: Anyways, so I mean—so certainly I've—I understand and have lived—and I know I've shared this in this House, but I think that it's

important—you know, living within, you know, really just abject poverty and what that does to an individual.

And I remember, you know, not—literally not having any food in the house and going around as a child, four or five years old, and literally just going to like Safeway or whatever just to steal.

That's the reality of many people still in Manitoba right now as we speak. It's not something, that it was like, you know, how many years ago when I was a child; it is literally something that Manitobans are still struggling with.

And what is the response of this government? To give three nickels and not even 50 cents—like not even 50 cents that we could have given.

So, you know, we look at this bill, Bill 7, and, you know, we're legislating loss of jobs and so making things even more difficult for Manitobans while maintaining what is—even the minister said—a poverty wage.

So it really does speak to a couple of things. It speaks to kind of the divorced—you know, not really being—you know, understanding what people are going through that you would legislate poverty and legislate job loss. But it also speaks to the priorities of this government. Like, what are the priorities? The priorities are for big business and not for workers.

And I have to say that, you know, since I have been elected, I have met so many phenomenal Manitobans that are—that work so hard and, you know, trying to get by and trying to give their children the best that they can give them. And then this is what members opposite, this is what this government gives them is Bill 7, and I'm not sure how that's going to, you know, translate into the lives of Manitobans and what that is going to do for Manitobans. But, certainly, it's something that I can't support, and I think that, you know, whether or not people realize it or recognize it or appreciate it, Manitobans are struggling and for a variety of reasons.

So I just wanted to put that on the record officially to state that, you know, to be in government, and I know I've heard some of the members, a couple of members opposite, talk about what a privilege it is to be in government, and, actually, I remember when I was a special adviser, I remember sitting down with the former minister of indigenous affairs, Eric Robinson. And I remember we were having a meeting in his office upstairs, and I

can't remember what the story was, but he—if you knew Eric, he was always telling stories. And some of these stories would go back, like, years and years. He was actually like—he was like a walking history book, particularly about stuff that went on in here. And anyway, so some story that he was sharing. And it was somebody's partner calling and saying where are you? Where are you? They were in a meeting. It was late at night. And Eric looked over to his staff and he said, like, we're running a province here, like we have to work, we have to work hard. It's an absolute privilege to be in government.

You know, those members that are in government were running a province. We are—the government is responsible for the lives of thousands and thousands and thousands of Manitobans. And what do we do in that very privileged space, in that sacred space? We table or we present Bill 7. We present a bill that's going to—that's actually going to contribute to the loss of Manitobans.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

So, instead of kind of taking this sacred responsibility, we're legislating poverty, we're legislating 'drob' loss, and certainly that's something that we all need to have our comments on in an official way. And I suspect that many Manitobans are going to be talking about some of the—and for several years, you know, the lack of commitment and support to working Manitobans.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I just want to put my words on the record and just say that I certainly don't support this bill.

Miigwech.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): It's always nice to be able to put in my 15 cents worth about this New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

This New West Partnership was a concoction of some sort that pays lip service. It was just lip service to the concept of open trade between the provinces. There were a lot of barriers that existed before, and even with the new west trade partnership agreement, it was not really sold or taken down; the barriers were still up. And there is a problem that I have in supporting this initiative. My problem is that when there's a dominant economy like Saskatchewan that has developed its resources and Alberta that has developed its oil industry and British Columbia that has the ports services and opportunities for more economic advancement, compare our province. We

would be the one who will be badgered and bullied by the stronger economies and it is a perception, more than anything else, that when somebody who has a billion dollars can always dictate the rules and the styles of negotiation and the way that conflicts are resolved, it is the province that has the most resources who could resort to the mechanism of conflict resolution that's proposed in the new west trade partnership.

* (16:30)

As it is, when I said it's only one of those aspects that pay lip service to what we need to do with respect to trade, as it stands, over 50 per cent of our exports go to Ontario and Quebec, while 40 per cent go to our western neighbours, and it is part of what being Canadian is, you look east and you look west, and from my point of view we have to look north too. The way that the agreement on international trade was put in, there were—there was a lot of allowances that were given, especially for indigenous communities and local economic development. The way that we could strengthen our trade relationships is by being a little bit more than just the whipping boy of three western provinces and become their—well, I won't say victim, but they could dictate to us that we should allow their construction companies to get in and bid on projects that are essentially should be locally produced by our labourers.

Now, we have made some strides, well, great strides in innovation and jobs. The strategy we had was that we established Research Manitoba and we also entered into three-year funding agreements with The Eureka Project. That was \$300,000 per year, and we also had Manitoba Technology Accelerator and Innovate Manitoba and Startup Winnipeg, and those were part of what we can do without any limit. Those were produced and initiated by the provincial government of the day, and there is a certain contrast that still works now, especially with the reckless and across-the-board cuts that will put Manitobans out of work and put our economy at risk.

What are those? Those are the cutting of positions at Manitoba Hydro, and there's also the never-ending review of projects that start from the Freedom Road to Community Places.

And the way that this current government, or this government of the day, has behaved, leaves no doubt that they are on a slashing and burning mission. This slash and burn mission is underway, and we don't even see it; we don't even feel it; it's on the sly because government pronouncements do not even

acknowledge that they were doing it in order to save money, and it was a very telling term that was used by somebody in this House earlier this afternoon when profit, profit, profit was mentioned.

It was mentioned in the course of the question period wherein the investments in Hydro, where—labelled as expenses and unreasonable, or they call it under-assessed risks when talking about the green investments in Hydro, meaning Keeyask and Bipole III. Those were the terminologies that were used. They were used as if a Crown corporation has to focus on profit, and that is what is wrong with this government and that is what is wrong with this bill, and I will not support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I just want to put a few words on the record on this bill. We see that there is importance to have better open trade from province to province starting in the west. We believe that this can be an initiative which helps in bringing about greater internal trade within all of Canada.

And I think that that will be beneficial for Manitoba because we have a lot of trade back and forth between other provinces, and we have a lot of people in Manitoba who have tremendous skills and tremendous companies which are ready to do work and help the other provinces as well as our own.

I think this will be good for employment as well as for other areas here in Manitoba and so that's why we're ready to support this measure. Thank you.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): And, yes, I'm proud to stand with my colleagues in the NDP caucus and express our concern and our opposition to this legislation.

If the government had been paying proper attention to the history of trade deals, they would have been able to see that there is a very dangerous trend out there. Quite often these trade deals are not even so much about trade as they are about a transfer of legal rights away from government, away from protecting the public, and putting those rights instead into the hands of foreign investors. And there's no better example of that than the dispute settlement clauses that are now contained in hundreds of bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral trade agreements across the globe.

* (16:40)

NAFTA, as I understand it, was actually the first one to include an investor-state settlement mechanism, and it's been pretty horrible. In over half of the instances, the company that is—has filed the lawsuit against the country has won. Canada is the most sued country, by far, under the NAFTA, and our federal government has had to pay out millions upon millions of dollars in penalties to foreign corporations for doing such radical things as protecting our environment or standing up for workers' rights or for the rights of governments to decide what it is that they wish to do for their citizens.

And just to give members here a quick example of this, the first case that went to a dispute panel under the NAFTA was the case of Ethyl Corporation and their product called MMT. It's a gasoline additive. And the Chrétien Liberals were in a difficult spot, because they had campaigned that they would renegotiate the NAFTA and then they didn't. They passed it pretty much unchanged; they put in some preambles which have no legal standing and have not stood up under the test of these procedures. And members in the Chamber and members in the government should know that these trade agreements are structured in such a way that the dispute settlement mechanism does not, under the NAFTA anyways, and, in other cases, does not go to public hearings. It's decided in a hotel room somewhere by three trade lawyers—one picked by each side and one that is mutually agreed upon by both the defendant and the complainant—and the decisions are binding. And so, under the NAFTA, you have judge, jury and executioner on cases like the Ethyl case and MMT.

And the Liberals had also, previously, before that election where they took power in Ottawa, they had said that MMT was a dangerous carcinogen, which is what the science of the day was indicating. It was particularly harmful for pregnant women and young children, and the Liberal position was that it should be banned from Canada. And, to the Liberals' credit, that's what they did when they took office. They did ban MMT, and then they got sued under NAFTA, which they had also passed into law.

And they didn't even pursue it at the tribunal stage. They capitulated. They gave Ethyl Corporation a \$13-million US settlement. They rescinded the ban on Ethyl Corporation's product called MMT. And, perhaps most damaging of all on a global scale, they gave Ethyl Corporation a letter on Health Canada letterhead which said that, in Canada's opinion, there's no scientific basis for any

health concerns around MMT as a gasoline additive. And, of course, Ethyl Corporation then took that letter around the world to other countries, saying, hey, Canada, First World country, says there's no problem; let our product into your country. And who knows who many hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands of people's health was negatively affected. And this was all made possible because of a trade agreement which gives corporate rights higher precedence over the environment, over people's health.

In fact, this agreement is way more powerful than pretty much any agreement that has been reached at the United Nations. Climate change accords, whether they be Kyoto or in Paris; whether they be the rights of indigenous people; whether they be the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; whether they be the rights of children—none of those are enshrined in law the way that trade agreements are.

And members opposite should have done their homework on this. I remember when they brought this forward, being in favour of the New West Partnership when they were in opposition, and I asked the member at the time who had brought this in, the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), some very basic questions. You know, could she give the House her understanding of what the phrase national treatment means in the language of trade agreements; she had no clue. I asked her if she could explain what most favoured nation means in the language of trade agreements, and, again, no idea what was actually contained in the legislation that she was bringing forward. And here we are today, with the government potentially making exactly the same mistakes, falling into the same pattern that has been demonstrated time and time again to be so damaging to a government's ability to govern, to a people's ability to exercise their self-determination to try and leave a healthier planet, safer workplaces and a more just society than the one that we inherited.

So, no, I will not be voting in favour of this legislation. I am proud that our caucus is standing united in opposition to it. I think there's abundant reasons that I and others have expressed, and if the government wants to do the right thing, they should yank the bill.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I think I may be the last speaker on our side before the vote on this bill.

Regarding Bill 7, I was very interested in the comments that the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) made and I do recall, back in 2008, when I was in the House of Commons and we were debating at that time a whole host of trade deals, everything from the Jordanian-Canada free trade deal to the Colombian-Canada free trade deal. There was just no end to these things and we used to comment at that time of how the irony there that we had all these foreign-trade deals, and a myriad of them, and we didn't have free trade within our own country. We had all these restrictions on—that Quebec put on Ontario products and labour, and we had restrictions that Ontario put on Quebec, and it was just a maze, and here we were working on all these trade deals with Jordan and Colombia and all sorts of other countries.

So the reality is that, you know, countries do have to trade, but then there are different types of trade deals; and one of the worst elements of some of these trade deals are the investor state clause that the member for Wolseley just talked about, and he talks about the MMT case with Ethyl Corp, and that was subject for debate when I was in the House, and it just go to show that the—when governments sign these deals, they basically give up a lot of their governmental power. So I wonder, what's the point of being politicians and running to be the government and then becoming the government and then finding out, whoops, sorry, I guess we don't have much power after all because we gave it all away in trade deals we signed and we allowed the corporations to sue the government if they don't get their way over, you know, environment issues and so on, and they've ended up getting big settlements. So that's something that we are—on this side of the House are certainly not in favour of seeing and that's been a major, major stumbling block to our acceptance of some of these deals that are out there.

And not only that, but it appears that this potentially—this deal may be somewhat redundant because, as the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) has pointed out, in the last few months, the Canadian free-trade deal among the provinces has been inked, after many, many years, and so we're not sure just how this deal plays with that. And—but that'll be a reconciliation process, I guess, that'll have to be worked out and may not have to be if this deal is actually redundant in the first place.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I know there's a desire in the House to call question on this bill and to have a vote before 5 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I heard a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Recorded Vote

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

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

Order.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended).

* (17:00)

Division

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

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fletcher, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Klassen, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler,

Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

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

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 41, Nays 11.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

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