

Fourth Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Man.
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	Ind.
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
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
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, Hon.	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	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
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
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, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated, everybody, and welcome back.

Point of Order

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I rise on a point of order.

I want to take a moment on behalf of all members to acknowledge and offer our sincere condolences to the family of 17-year-old Jaime Adao Jr. His tragic death has shocked many in our city. We can only imagine the grief his parents are feeling—must be unbearable. We are learning more about this terrible tragedy, but I request all members show their solidarity for Jaime's family in their time of grief and need.

We'd like to ask that we observe a minute of silence for Jaime.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House for a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

Please rise.

A moment of silence was observed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I have a short statement for the House.

In this House on Wednesday, December 5th, 2018, when the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) moved his first reading motion for Bill 212, he indicated that his seconder was the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). However, when I put the same motion back to the House, I incorrectly stated that the seconder was the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran).

For the record, then, on the first reading motion for Bill 212, the seconder was the honourable member for River Heights.

My apologies if this caused any confusion, and thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 10—The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Health System Governance and Accountability)

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I move, seconded by the Minister for Education and Training, that Bill 10, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Health System Governance and Accountability), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, Manitobans know that the evidence signals strongly that Manitoba's health-care system for years has been overly complex. It has been too expensive and it has gotten worse results than Manitobans expect and deserve.

That is why we will amend The Regional Health Authorities Act and a number of other acts in order to support the successful implementation of changes to our health-care system identified within Manitoba's health-system transformation. This transformation will modernize Manitoba's health-care system. It will put the patient at the centre of the experience instead of structures and bureaucracy. It will rely on leading practices and advances in other jurisdictions, and it will improve the delivery of health-care for all Manitobans, better health care sooner for all Manitobans.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Second Report

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- January 19, 2018 (3rd Session – 41st Legislature)
- January 16, 2019 (4th Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018

Committee Membership

Committee membership for the January 19, 2018 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Hon. Mrs. COX
- Hon. Mr. FIELDING
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Mr. LAGASSÉ
- Ms. MARCELINO (Logan)
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Mr. NESBITT (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mrs. SMITH (Point Douglas)

Committee membership for the January 16, 2019 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Hon. Mrs. COX
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Mr. JOHNSTON (St. James)
- Mr. LAMONT
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Mr. REYES
- Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON
- Mr. SWAN
- Mr. WIEBE

Your Committee elected Mr. MICKLEFIELD as the Vice-Chairperson at the January 16, 2019 meeting.

Official Speaking on Record at the January 19, 2018 meeting:

- Daphne Penrose, Children's Advocate

Official speaking on the record at the January 16, 2019 meeting:

- Daphne Penrose, Advocate for Children and Youth

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- Annual Report of the Children's Advocate for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017

Report Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following report but did not pass it:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018

Mrs. Guillemard: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs
Third Report**

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings:

Your Committee met on January 17, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration:

- Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee dated May 23, 2019

Committee Membership:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Hon. Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. CURRY
- Hon. Mr. FIELDING
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mr. NESBITT
- Ms. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. REYES
- Mr. WIEBE
- Mr. YAKIMOSKI

Your Committee elected Mr. NESBITT as the Vice-Chairperson

Public Presentation at the January 17, 2019 meeting:

By leave, your Committee heard one presentation on the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee from:

Susan Dawes, Provincial Judges Association of Manitoba

Motions:

Your Committee agreed to the following motions at the January 17, 2019 meeting:

- THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs:
 - accept the recommendations in Schedule A; and
 - recommend the same to the Legislative Assembly.

SCHEDULE A**Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee accepted by the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs**

1. That the annual salaries for puisne judges are:
 - (i) April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018 is \$259,000;
 - (ii) April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 – a cumulative adjustment equal to the annual percentage change in the average weekly earnings for Manitoba on April 1, 2018;
 - (iii) April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 – cumulative adjustment equal to the annual percentage change in the average weekly earnings for Manitoba on April 1, 2019.

The percentage change in the average weekly earnings shall be calculated based on the

percentage change over the preceding calendar year.

This recommendation should apply to all who were judges as of April 1, 2017, including those who retired or otherwise leave the Bench prior to implementation.

2. That the salary differentials for the Chief Judge and the Associate Chief Judges remain in place as of April 1, 2017. This will mean a salary of \$279,720 for the Chief Judge and \$271,950 for the Associate Chief Judges.

This recommendation shall apply to all judges who were either a Chief Judge or an Associate Chief Judge as of April 1, 2017, including those who retire or otherwise leave the Bench prior to implementation.

3. Simple interest shall be paid, from April 1, 2017 to the date of retroactive payment of salary increase(s) including the differentials for the administrative judges and related per diems for senior judges, in accordance with the relevant prejudgment and post-judgment interest rates as set out in the The Court of Queen's Bench Act.
4. Prejudgment interest shall be payable from April 1, 2017 to the date the salary and per diem recommendations are implemented (whether by vote of the Legislature or by virtue of s.11.1(29) of the Act), and post-judgment interest should be payable from that date to the date that judges are paid the retroactive adjustments.
5. That the Chief Judge be allowed to approve down payments in respect of any expenses relating to educational conferences to be held in the next fiscal year, in accordance with Court policy.
6. That there be a provision of a drug card to all Active Judges as part of the Prescription Drug Plan as soon as practicable after implementation of this recommendation.
7. The Province shall pay 75% of the Association's reasonable legal costs to a maximum aggregate of \$45,000.
8. The Province shall pay 100% of the Association's disbursements including the costs of experts to a maximum of \$22,500.
9. That, unless otherwise stated, all changes shall be effective on the date of approval by the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

10. In these recommendations, "date of approval" means

- a. the date that the vote of concurrence referred to in subsection 11.1(28) of *The Provincial Court Act* takes place with respect to these recommendations; or
- b. if the recommendations must be implemented because of subsection 11.1(29) of *The Provincial Court Act*, the first day after the end of the 21-day period referred to in that subsection.

Report Considered and Concluded:

Your Committee has completed consideration of the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee dated May 23, 2018.

Mrs. Guillemard: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs
Fourth Report**

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- November 28, 2018 (4th Session – 41st Legislature)
- January 28, 2019 (4th Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- Elections Manitoba's Proposal to Modify the Voting Process

Committee Membership

Committee membership for the November 28, 2018 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Hon. Mr. CULLEN
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Mr. HELWER
- Ms. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. LINDSEY
- Mr. MICHALESKI
- Mr. NESBITT (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. WOWCHUK

Committee membership for the January 28, 2019 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Hon. Mr. CULLEN
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Ms. LAMOUREUX
- Mr. MARTIN
- Hon. Mrs. MAYER
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. SMITH
- Mr. YAKIMOSKI

Your Committee elected Mr. MICKLEFIELD as the Vice-Chairperson at the January 28, 2019 meeting.

Officials speaking on the record at the November 28, 2018 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Officials speaking on the record at the January 28, 2019 meeting:

- Ms. Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer

Motions:

Your Committee agreed to the following motion at the January 28, 2019 meeting:

THAT pursuant to subsection 28.1(5) and subject to subsection 28.1(6) of *The Elections Act*, the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs approve the proposal to modify the voting process included in the Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2017, and recommend that the Chief Electoral Officer direct that the voting process

be modified for upcoming by-elections and the 2020 general election.

Mrs. Guillemard: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: And I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

* (13:40)

Would the honourable First Minister please proceed with his statement.

Ethics in Government Procurement Practices

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and welcome back to the House as well.

Madam Speaker, events unfolding in recent days in Ottawa regarding SNC-Lavalin remind us of the importance of upholding the rule of law and of the importance of preserving the independence of the courts and judicial processes.

They also remind us that it is critically important to protect the integrity of the government procurement process.

The federal government seems to have replaced their moral compass with a political compass, Madam Speaker, and that is eerily reminiscent of the behaviour of a previous government in this province.

Ethics matter, and so I rise today to address an important topic relating to ethics and our procurement process.

In 2014, the previous NDP administration chose to eliminate safeguards that would have protected Manitobans from their government doing business with companies that have been suspended or blocked from bids due to ethical, criminal or performance issues. The previous government did this for no apparent reason and they never told the public they were doing it.

Now, the elimination of those safeguards left Manitobans unprotected from fraud and abuse in the procurement process, the kind of abuse that, in fact, did occur under the previous government and

allegedly has occurred with this federal government as well.

So I want to inform the House that we will be investigating and subsequently implementing a new procurement system to ensure that we prevent waste, fraud and abuse in our procurement processes.

I want to assure all Manitobans that we will continue to take steps to ensure that our government is not only shopping smarter for Manitobans, but is shopping with the ethical compass that Manitobans use in their own decision-making processes.

We will hold companies that do business with Manitoba to the highest ethical standards and we will continue to deliver better value and better government for Manitobans, Madam Speaker, because we never forget who we work for. We work for Manitobans.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Today the Premier's taken the unusual step of delivering a ministerial statement on procurement policies. The Premier's motivations for this are obvious.

Last week it was revealed that his Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) gave an untendered, unapproved multi-million-dollar contract to a party donor. On March the 6th of last year, minister stood at The Forks and said that these contracts were tendered. This turned out not to be true; in fact, they were given directly without competition, and Treasury Board did not review let alone approve these contracts.

Manitobans expect more from the Pallister government. They were promised transparency. The minister said last year these contracts were tendered; turned out not to be true. Manitobans were promised accountability, yet the minister breaks the rules to benefit his friends; seems to be no consequences for his actions.

This same government awarded a multi-million-dollar air transportation contract to a company with significant ties to the PC party. In fact, the chair of its board is former Premier Gary Filmon.

Front-line workers and everyday Manitobans are expected to bear the effects of wage freezes and cuts to our education and health-care systems while friends of the PCs receive millions of dollars from the government.

The Pallister government's approach to procurement is unacceptable, and as much as the Premier is trying to place the blame on his minister of

transportation, they happened within his Cabinet and are therefore his responsibility.

This government needs to take steps to restore public trust in their procurement practices.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I am happy to respond to the First Minister's statement on ethical procurement practices.

It's interesting that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) brings this up, as only six days ago the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) took it upon himself to entirely accept the blame for two contracts worth \$11.2 million that were sole-sourced.

But for ethical procurement practices to be effective, this government requires effective ethics and conflict-of-interest legislation, and there is none. When the Conflict of Interest Commissioner made his recommendations on updating Manitoba's conflict-of-interest laws, which are among the weakest and oldest in Canada, government members tried to bury the report and created a loophole that would allow them to fire the commissioner even as they reappointed him.

We have repeatedly brought up in these Chambers the need for ethical standards for contracts given out by government, and we would like this government to bring forward legislation that limits the abilities of companies to bid on contracts if they have been involved with corporate offences.

Over the last 20 years there have been a huge number of accounting and other scandals, as well as a massive increase in both legal tax avoidance and illegal tax evasion. This corporate malfeasance has always been enabled and signed-off on by lawyers and auditors. For example, KPMG was directly implicated in a scheme to help wealthy Canadians avoid taxes by hiding income and assets in offshore tax havens.

We have a situation where the big four accounting companies—KPMG, Ernst & Young, Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers—are, on the one hand, telling individuals and corporations how to avoid taxes and, on the other, telling governments how to cut services because they don't have enough money. There is no way to square this circle.

For a Premier who refuses to update Manitoba's worst conflict-of-interest laws in Canada and whose government has continually undermined the Conflict

of Interest Commissioner's work on improving this file, this is more proof that this Premier likes talk, but no action.

We have called for this government to create an ethics commissioner to look into issues just like this, but the government refused. As the saying goes, before the Premier plucks the mote of dust from his neighbour's eye, he should remove the beam from his own.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Collège Jeanne-Sauvé Volleyball Champions

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honour a remarkable group of young women in my Riel constituency. On December 3rd, 2018, the Collège Jeanne-Sauvé volleyball team won the AAAA provincial high school varsity girls volleyball championship.

This was their second consecutive title for the Collège Jeanne-Sauvé Olympiens girls' team. For a number of players, this was their fourth consecutive year winning a volleyball title, after winning two junior varsity championships.

The Olympiens posted a 31-10 regular season record. The Olympiens had a number of returning players from the 2017 championship team and many people thought the team would have an easy path to winning another title.

Head coach Ben Albrecht noted that despite a number of veteran players on the squad, the 2018 season presented many challenges, which made this year's win feel even more exceptional. The tournament MVP, Katreena Bentley, said this season has been pretty up and down and we've been tenacious through it all.

On the road to the finals, the Olympiens beat the 12th, fourth and No. 1 ranked teams in Manitoba. The championship final featured Collège Jeanne-Sauvé versus Lord Selkirk Royals. The Royals won the first set, but the Olympiens fought back in the second set and steadily dominated the match. They defeated the Royals in four sets to win the provincial title. And this marked the first time in the Collège Jeanne-Sauvé's history that a varsity team had won back-to-back championships.

The Collège Jeanne-Sauvé varsity girls volleyball team exemplified the qualities of all great athletes. These young women have worked

hard throughout the season and overcame all the challenges that they encountered.

I'm very proud to have Collège Jeanne-Sauvé in my constituency and very proud to represent this amazing group of young women.

I'd ask all my colleagues to help me congratulate the Collège Jeanne-Sauvé volleyball team on winning their championship. Congratulations.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Sustainable Development.

Ms. Squires: Madam Speaker, I'd ask for leave to have the names of the Collège Jeanne-Sauvé volleyball team, as well as the coach and assistant coach, be entered into Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to include those names in Hansard? [*Agreed*]

Collège Jeanne-Sauvé Volleyball Team: Liberty Alford, Julia Arnold, Alyssa Bailey, Brenna Bedosky, Katreena Bentley, Maya Braun, Jenna Campbell, Kalyna DeMaré, Claire Desjardins, Agnessa Greenhalgh, Keely Hughes, Katie Kowalchuk, Abby Martens, Alexie Siwak, Erika Vermette; Coaches: Ben Albrecht; Janique Ditter

Women's Health Clinic

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): On the eve of international woman's day, I'm honoured to acknowledge the Women's Health Clinic, its staff and volunteers for the critical work and advocacy they do for Manitoba women, girls, two-spirit, gender queer, trans and non-binary peoples.

As a non-profit community health clinic, the Women's Health Clinic has been providing essential health-care and reproductive services since 1981, informed by a feminist analysis and practice, providing said services in an equitable, inclusive and non-judgemental space.

A fundamental component of the Women's Health Clinic's mission is empowering Manitobans, through education and prevention programming, to make informed decisions over our bodies.

The Birth Control and Pregnancy Counselling Program is one of many education programs offered, providing access to abortion, including Mifegymiso. Free contraceptives are also offered at the clinic.

* (13:50)

The Women's Health Clinic operates the Birth Centre, providing midwifery services to expectant

mothers. I've had the honour of touring the Birth Centre and meeting with midwives many times. I'm always in awe of the welcoming space for labouring mothers, coupled with the loving support of midwives—certainly, a critical service deserving government's full and comprehensive support.

In honour of international woman's day, the woman's health clinic is hosting a woman, wine and cheese event Friday, March 8th, at the Manitoba Museum. I encourage all my colleagues to attend or, alternatively, make a donation to ensure the continued delivery of critical health-care services.

Miigwech to all of the woman's health 'clare'—health clinic's dedicated feminist service providers led by the executive director Nadine Sookermany. Know that your work does not go unnoticed, and on this day I lift each and every one of you up.

Miigwech.

Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to include the names of our guests in Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to include those names in Hansard? [*Agreed*]

Alison Bockstael, Erin Bockstael, Rachel Carlson, Jen Davis, Christine Ens, Nina Ferrigno, Karen Ghidoni, Sheryl Hagenstein, Amanda Houssin, Tanis Kircher, Larissa Kanhai, Ellen Kruger, Maura Leahy, Lisa Naylor, Myrna Phillips, Nadine Sookermany, Ella Taylor, Linda Taylor, Terese Taylor, Jody Thomson, Tanya Zubert.

Lymphedema Association of Manitoba

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): In 2014, I introduced a private member's bill declaring March 6th Lymphedema Awareness Day in Manitoba.

I was inspired to proclaim Bill 209, the lymphedema awareness act, by my constituent Kim Avanthay, who at that time was the president of the Lymphedema Association of Manitoba, better known as LAM. Kim related to me her own personal story about her son Austin and their family's struggles with this condition.

Even with the tremendous efforts of people like Kim and the Lymphedema Association, Manitoba over the years, there still remains a number of people who remain unaware of the condition. The disease can present itself through various forms at any age and requires daily medical treatments.

Susan Stratford, the president of LAM, has brought pins for all of us to wear not only today,

March 6th, but throughout the year to bring awareness to lymphedema. The butterfly is the international symbol for lymphedema and blue is the associated colour. Paired with the shape of the province and designed in several shades of blue, the butterfly is the focus of the Lymphedema Association of Manitoba pin.

LAM is hosting Our Big Chat breakfast event in honour of Lymphedema Awareness Day on Saturday, March 9th, 2019, at the Qualico Family Centre. Special guest Terry MacLeod from the CBC will be on hand to share his own personal story of living with a chronic illness and performing a couple of live interviews with individuals affected by lymphedema. The breakfast will take place from 9 a.m. to noon, and I encourage all of you to show your support by attending.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the Lymphedema Association of Manitoba board of directors for their dedication towards the awareness and treatment of lymphedema: Susan Stratford, president; Linda Menzies, vice-president; Claire Ann Deighton, treasurer; Ace Zhao, secretary; and board members Rupal Purohit, David Van Hellemond, Cherida Olson and Isabell Thorvardson.

I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

State of Health Care in Manitoba

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Wait times are on the rise, there is an epidemic of staff shortages across hospitals, ICU beds have been closed and nurses are being mandated to work more and more overtime. This is just a snapshot of the chaos that has been caused by this government's health-care overhaul and how it continues to compromise patient care.

This last month, in fact, wait times at various hospitals were described as unbelievable. It was reported that at one point the emergency room at HSC had over 100 people waiting, with many more being diverted elsewhere or simply walking out in frustration. The pressures on our ERs mount as this government continues to cut health care.

We recently learned that staff vacancies have risen to 40 per cent at Concordia Hospital with more to come. Similarly, at Seven Oaks, staff vacancy is at 34 per cent, with between four and five vacant nursing shifts every day in the ER. Since 2017, four ICU beds have been closed, two at Concordia and two at Seven Oaks, with the government planning to close six more.

Given these staff shortages it's clear that we need more nurses. Unbelievably, this government instead eliminated 75 nursing seats at-per year at Red River College. On top of that, a full ICU training class of nurses was not recruited by the WRHA this past year, which sets us back not just for today, but for generations to come.

Despite the impact of these cuts and a clear and growing outcry from the community, this government has refused to roll back the cuts. Every day the members from Rossmere, Radisson, River East and Transcona hear directly from their constituents who are telling them that a 24-7 access to medical care is essential for their community. But with the impending closure of Concordia and Seven Oaks, coupled with recently announced closure of the St. Boniface Family Medical Centre—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —medical care is becoming less accessible in Manitoba, not more.

As we prepare to hear this government's budget tomorrow, we see a government that's out of touch, focused on the wrong priorities—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

K-to-12 Education Review

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): It is a tremendous honour to rise in the House today as the first time as a brand new father. I want to thank my friends, family, colleagues and everyone in the community for their support, their thoughts and their prayers. Of course, I'm proud to say we have a healthy baby and healthy mom at home, although Mom might be a bit sleep deprived.

Welcome to the world, Lincoln Smith.

I think we all can agree that the future of our children and future of our province is incredibly important to all of us, so that's why I'm very proud that our government has announced a new commission to undertake a once-in-a-generation review of the K-to-12 education system.

This long overdue K-to-12 education review will be comprehensive, independent and touching all aspects of the education system, as well as feedback on where and how we can improve it. When the last comprehensive review of the K-12 system was conducted, diverse needs of students looked drastically different than they do today. Over the

past—over the previous administration's 17 years in office, Manitoba students fell behind on other provinces in reading, math, science and, unfortunately, these trends have gotten worse. But now, Madam Speaker, we believe that this trend needs to change to ensure that Manitoba's students are well-prepared to transition to a post-secondary education, training and entering the workforce.

The K-to-12 system has remained relatively unchanged for decades; it's time to consider whether the existing system and educational approaches are still relevant and sustainable, while ensuring that students are prepared for jobs of the future that may not even exist today.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

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

Seated in the public gallery we have with us members from the Lymphedema Association of Manitoba: Susan Zwarich, Edith Mulhall, Linda Menzies, Dave Van Hellemond, Susan Stratford, Sherry Normandeau and Jenny Whitlaw, who are the guests of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

Also seated in the public gallery from Red River College Language Training Centre we have 14 English language students under the direction of Marie Rogge, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino).

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us Selena Castel from the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, who is the guest of the honourable member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health-Care Service Reform Request to Stop ER Closures

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Premier's cuts have made our health-care system worse than it's ever been. That's what nurses are telling us. Every day we hear about a new—another cut to the health-care system in Manitoba and the chaos that this Premier's rushed plans to close emergency rooms are

causing in Winnipeg and right across the province of Manitoba.

We know the reason why: the Premier cares more about money than he does about the health care delivered to the people of Manitoba. He cut a quarter of a billion dollars from our health-care system in the past year after saying he wouldn't. He cut a quarter of a billion dollars, Madam Speaker.

What's the result? Well, nurses are working more overtime than ever. We know that patients are waiting in overflow ERs. We know that surgeries—cardiac surgeries—are being cancelled here in Winnipeg. The chaos that the Premier is causing in the health-care system is because he's putting money ahead of people.

Will he back off this plan and cancel his plan to close emergency rooms in Winnipeg?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I welcome everyone back, Madam Speaker.

*(14:00)

If I could, I would like to begin by wishing the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) the best with his decision to change course in his life. I know that he's had a period of service of well over 15 years here at the Legislative Assembly, and I know that those kinds of decisions are not easy ones to make and I know that he made the decision first and foremost with his family and their best interest in his heart. So I want to wish him the best in this course of action that he's chosen.

On the course of action chosen by the NDP leader, he has chosen to put pessimism ahead of practical results and improvements, and his previous administration chose to put fear ahead of courage and didn't implement the decisions they should have to improve the system.

The Canadian institute of health information, a good source of unbiased information, Madam Speaker, says we are the only province in Canada that is shortening wait times for people, and I know Manitobans appreciate that very much.

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

Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals Request to Retain ER Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Now, I don't know where the Premier's been spending his time lately, but perhaps he missed

the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority under his government raising the alarm at the dramatic increase in wait times here in the city of Winnipeg these past few months, Madam Speaker.

We know that his plan to close the emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks will only deepen the crisis. We've heard it from front-line workers themselves: the nurses, the doctors, the aides. They have told us about the damage that this Premier's cuts are causing. Massive nursing vacancies at the emergency room at Seven Oaks caused the nurses there to speak out. The nurses who work in the ER at Seven Oaks sent us a letter saying they no longer believe it's safe for the sickest patients to be sent to that emergency room.

Can you imagine nurses saying it's no longer safe to send the sickest patients to that emergency room, Madam Speaker? This is the result of this Premier's rushed plan for cuts.

Will the Premier back off this misguided decision to close emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, an additional \$300 million this year alone, Madam Speaker, over the NDP record investment in health care in their last budget is certainly not characterized accurately as a cut.

What is a cut is the wait times, Madam Speaker. Wait times are lower in Manitoba and have decreased more than in any other jurisdiction in Canada. That is the result the member didn't want to see, but that that is the result that Manitobans wanted to see. They would have liked those results sooner, but the NDP didn't have the courage to implement the recommendations of experts.

We're implementing them and, Madam Speaker, I thank the people who work in our health-care system for understanding that change is difficult, but they want to work in a system that works for Manitobans and they're working in a system that's going to work better for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the St. Boniface Hospital is in chaos right now because of the Premier's plan to cut services and to close emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg. We know that they have been cancelling cardiac surgeries at

St. Boniface Hospital and that many, many nurses are being mandated to work overtime.

Now, what was the Premier's response to all these cancellations and mandatory overtime shifts? Well, he decided to order another clinic to close in St. Boniface.

Hundreds of patients at the Family Medical Centre will no longer be able to see their family doctor because this patient—this Premier cares more about money than he does about the patients at that clinic. That's this Premier's priority: to save money. It's not to improve the quality of care. That's how he was able to cut a quarter of a billion dollars this past year: by cutting services like the Family Medical Centre.

Will the Premier stop these cuts? Will he reopen the Family Medical Centre and not close the emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks?

Mr. Pallister: I have a small amount of sympathy for the member's plight, Madam Speaker. As an opposition leader he wants to criticize, but he has to depart from the facts to do it; and that is his difficulty, but it is not the difficulty of Manitobans.

No other health region in the country saw a bigger decline in wait times than Manitoba. Every single emergency department in the WRHA has seen improvements in their wait times. Wait times haven't been this low for eight years.

And the member has a difficult job, Madam Speaker, but I don't really care. What I care about is that Manitobans get better care and sooner.

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

Mr. Kinew: So, Madam Speaker, I've brought forward the carefully documented and considered complaints of nurses and patients of the chaos that is being ushered into health care in Manitoba, and what is this Premier's response? Quote: I don't really care, end quote.

It is certainly a dereliction of duty—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —on the part of this Premier to be so dismissive—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —of the complaints of the nurses at Seven Oaks, of the nurses at St. Boniface, of the

patients who have just had their primary care at the Family Medical Centre cancelled.

However, I would like to assure the people of Manitoba that there is one leader who's willing to stand up for health care and there is one party willing to stand up for health care, and that is the NDP, Madam Speaker.

With that in mind, will the Premier abandon—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —his plans to close Seven Oaks and Concordia emergency rooms today?

Mr. Pallister: Well, what a rascally opposition leader, to misuse my statements, Madam Speaker. I said I didn't care about his plight as opposition leader and, of course, he misrepresented it and put it but of context. That's all he has because he doesn't have the facts.

Under the NDP ambulance fees were over \$500. We cut them in half because we care about Manitobans. Under the previous administration we had bottom-of-the-barrel wait times. We were waiting 348 days for hips. That was eighth out of 10.

We're making significant investments and significant improvements for Manitobans, Madam Speaker. We care about services. Better care sooner to Manitobans is what we're after. What the member is after is support sooner with misquotes and misrepresentation the facts.

It's sad, Madam Speaker, but I have to observe that the member's not in possession of the facts, and if he were he would be complimenting our Health Minister and his predecessor and this government for their tremendous efforts in improving health care for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: Now, I don't know which health-care system in which country the Premier has been observing lately, Madam Speaker, but he's certainly not been at St. Boniface Hospital or at the Health Sciences Centre or here in Manitoba listening to Manitobans who say health care is getting worse under his watch.

We know what this Premier's priorities are. He finds time—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —to cut \$240 million from our health-care system, and then he carves out a little bit of extra time at the end of the day to give \$20 million to the last Conservative premier of Manitoba, Madam Speaker. That shows the priorities of this Premier. There's no money for health care under this Premier, but there is money for corporations—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —headed up by former Conservative premiers.

We say those are the wrong priorities, Madam Speaker. We say leadership in Manitoba should strengthen health care, should focus on preventing illness, should stand up for people right here in the province of Manitoba.

With that in mind, will the Premier cancel his plan to close emergency rooms at Seven Oaks and Concordia?

Mr. Pallister: That little preamble was an insult to everybody who works at Exchange Income Corporation in the province. It's an insult to a company that won a tendered contract, Madam Speaker, a competition against other bidders.

If the member is suggesting that we should exclude from bidding in this province every company that has any connection with anyone who's ever run for office or held office is—that's what he is suggesting—he should put it on the record. Otherwise, he shouldn't try to impugn the integrity of people who are honest people who are working hard in this province, who participated in a bidding process and won the bid.

Unlike Tiger Dams, okay; unlike handing contracts to donors without even trying to shop around, which the previous government did; unlike the practices which they enabled to happen by removing requirements for ethical conduct, we are strengthening the integrity of the purchasing process in this province.

And I will not stand here and watch a man be insulted for participating in the private sector by a man who doesn't know anything about it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (14:10)

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Kinew: So five questions about the very serious concerns of nurses and doctors and patients about health care here in Manitoba, and how many times did the Premier stand up to defend nurses? Zero. How many times did he stand up to defend doctors? Zero. How many times did he stand up to defend patients? Zero, Madam Speaker.

However, quick to rush to the defence of a former Conservative premier who his government just awarded a \$20-million contract—a \$20-million contract—at the same time that they're cutting a quarter of a billion dollars from the health-care system that Manitobans rely on.

Madam Speaker, we're calling on the government to do a few simple things: to cancel their plans to close the emergency rooms at Seven Oaks and Concordia; to return nursing staffing levels to normal; and to focus on preventing illness and improving the well-being of Manitoba.

Will the Premier accept that plan, or will he continue to only stand up for the insiders of his own political party?

Mr. Pallister: Well, we here, Madam Speaker, have all seen the member throw his own former leader under the bus, who was loyal to him and supported him in his nomination.

We've seen him throw many people in his life under the bus. Now he wants to attack a company for winning a tender. That's the last vestige of a rascal.

The fact of the matter is MR wait times are down from 24 hours in June of '17 to 16 hours. That's a 30 per cent reduction. That's how you show you care about Manitobans: you don't just talk about it, you do something about it, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Thirty-three nurses have recently completed the critical care training and they're working in the WRHA right now to improve wait times, and we thank and support them for their work, as we thank all nurses. We've recruited 78 new doctors this year. That is the second largest increase in doctors in the last decade in this province.

Madam Speaker, these are real improvements. The member likes to talk about caring. We like to demonstrate it with results.

Methamphetamine Addiction Safe Injection Site Request

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): The meth crisis is getting worse. Chief Danny Smyth from the Winnipeg police last fall said our city is in a crisis.

Evidence of meth and meth use is all around us in every single corner of our city, including all of their constituencies. Emergency departments used to have 15 visits related to meth; now it's well over 200. Needle use has tripled in Winnipeg, in Manitoba. Overdoses have doubled and crime has increased dramatically. And what has this government done? Nothing. We're asking them to take real steps that can save lives.

And will this Premier today listen to the experts, listen to the families, listen to Manitobans and open a safe consumption site here in Manitoba?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I welcome the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) to her new role, and I know that we will have many conversations and a good exchange back and forth as this spring session goes forward.

The member says that the government has not taken action, but that's not true. I wish to correct the record. That member knows that our government has now opened five Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine clinics. We have reports now from professionals who are delivering the health care and the people receiving the service that are saying to us there was nothing like this before. They are getting to the services they need, in some cases going directly through the door and into treatment programs.

Under the NDP it did not exist; it exists now. It is only one of the ways in which our government is taking action to address methamphetamines and illicit drugs.

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

Mrs. Smith: As the meth crisis gained speed, we warned this government that an outbreak of blood-borne illnesses was coming. We pleaded with them to open a safe consumption site. Unfortunately, they have a tendency not to listen. The results have been simply terrifying: a tenfold increase in hepatitis B and a tripling of syphilis. Ten babies were born with syphilis in just the last six months.

If we could just save one innocent child through early intervention, then this government has an obligation to act.

So again, you know, instead of them continuing to do nothing, we are asking them to take a first step to address the crisis and to support a safe consumption site here in Manitoba.

Mr. Friesen: The member is as mistaken now as she was in her first question.

This government is acting to address the rise of illicit drugs in our communities. Another way in which we're doing that is by adding six new mental health beds at HSC and also expanding treatment capacity at the women's health centre in Winnipeg; 12 additional beds at Addictions Foundation of Manitoba in Winnipeg; in addition to that, collaborating, the first jurisdiction in Canada to be collaborating—federal, municipal, provincial—in an illicit drugs task force. This is a—an environment in which professionals and leaders are sitting down and collaborating and learning.

We continue to take action. That member continues to spread misinformation.

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

Mrs. Smith: Again, we're asking about prevention.

This government is doing nothing to protect Manitobans against STD—STIs. They're not opening safe consumption sites. They claim to be opening new beds, but we don't know where these beds are because Manitobans are telling us that they have nowhere to go to access when they want to get off of meth.

The children's—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —advocate even says that this government doesn't have a plan. Even the WRHA says there's a lack of provincial leadership.

Well, we're asking this government, today, to take a leadership stand and open a safe consumption site to Manitoba.

Mr. Friesen: The member should know that repeating it does not make it any more accurate.

Madam Speaker, I want to let her know that Manitoba, in consultation with experts in other jurisdictions, became the first province in Canada to actually license olanzapine to be used by EMS

professionals to avoid the escalation into psychosis by meth addicts experiencing these episodes. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: These are all ways in which the government is taking action.

But I did find one point of agreement with myself and the member. She indicated a lack of a plan and that is exactly what the VIRGO report said about Manitoba under the NDP for 16 years: no planning.

Now, Madam Speaker, there will be a plan, a plan to get better health care sooner for all Manitobans.

Vehicle Safety Inspections Potential Cost Increase

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, since this government came into power it's been getting harder and harder for the average family to get ahead in Manitoba.

Manitoba Hydro has been ordered by the Premier (Mr. Pallister) to seek massive rate increases and MPI rates are now on the rise as well.

Now, this Premier—under this Premier, the cost to safety a vehicle is going up from a flat rate of \$55, potentially all the way up to \$200. Madam Speaker, a vehicle safety is about keeping dangerous vehicles off the road so that they—so it should be affordable to—for all Manitobans.

Will the Minister for Crown Services put affordability and public safety before the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) bottom line and reverse this decision?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Well, Madam Speaker, one of the things that our government values more than anything else, and that is safety. We want to ensure that the vehicles that are going to be sold on the secondary market are safe. That means that, increasingly, vehicles need far more inspection than they had to before and we stand by our decision to ensure that all secondary vehicles that go on the market, that they're safe.

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

Post-Secondary Education Tuition Increases

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, when the government lifted the tuition cap the

Premier made it clear that he doesn't care about keeping education affordable either.

Today we learned that university enrolment has flatlined, and it's no surprise since students were hit with the largest tuition increase in the country. The Premier's decision to cut post-secondary—the post-secondary education tax credit took up to \$2,500 per year out of the pockets of Manitoba students and families.

The Premier's decision to cut funding means less students are able to pay for school and the schools are forced to cut programs like nursing at Red River College.

* (14:20)

Madam Speaker, is the Minister for Education going to carry on with the Premier's plan to balance the budget on the backs of Manitoba students?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): The member's alarmist ways continue. It was only a few months ago he stood in this very House—and in fact in that very place—and he said that international students, nobody would be coming to Manitoba anymore. And yet, we were pleased to announce a record number of international students who want to come to Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

So he goes along on his alarmist ways. Of course, he said that we'd never be able to fulfill our commitment when it came to scholarships and bursaries. It was too aggressive. We could never meet it.

Well, he was right. We didn't meet it; we exceeded it, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable member for Concordia on a final supplementary.

Mr. Wiebe: We're talking about the impact that students are facing here in this province, and the cuts that this government has instituted on post-secondary education has resulted in a 10.25 per cent tuition increase for students at the University College of the North this year. This means that students will have to pay an extra \$76 per credit hour, an extra \$38 per credit hour on practicums, making it harder for northern students to join the workforce. This increase follows on top of two 5 per cent increases on tuitions and practicums the previous two years under this government.

So, Madam Speaker, when northern Manitoba is facing over 1,000 job losses, why is this government making it harder for northern students to get an education that will help them get a job?

Mr. Goertzen: Our province—our students have the lowest average tuition of any province west of Manitoba, Madam Speaker. In all of western Canada we have the lowest tuition on average.

In fact, it's legislated that it needs to remain that way, Madam Speaker, so you can go to Saskatchewan—we wouldn't want you to; you could go to Alberta—we wouldn't want you to; you could go to BC—we wouldn't want you to, but the good news is you don't have to because we have the lowest average tuition of any of those provinces.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Health-Care Services Provincial Spending

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Manitobans are having trouble believing this government's statements on health care. I table the government's own numbers, which show that actual provincial spending on health has either been frozen or cut for the last three years even though federal funding is up every year.

This government has refused to sign an agreement for \$400 million in desperately needed funding for mental health care and home care, but budget commitments mean nothing to this government. The PCs routinely make spending promises they have no intention of keeping, only to claw back hundreds of millions of dollars; this year, \$247 million from Health alone.

All the stats the Premier has been quoting today are out of date. Madam Speaker, 75 per cent of cardiac surgeries had to be cancelled due to a nursing shortage, ER wait times are exploding and Manitobans cannot get access to mental health care or primary care because of the cuts by this government.

Can the Premier please explain the gap between what he and his MLAs have been telling people and what their own numbers show?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I'll explain to the member that when the partnership on health care was first developed between federal—the federal government, following the introduction of the

Canada Health Act and provincial governments the partnership was based on 50-50 funding being provided.

And the responsibility that Ottawa undertook, Madam Speaker, was lessened over the years, to the point where Paul Martin—the member might remember him—as the Prime Minister committed to a level of 25 per cent funding.

The present administration in Ottawa didn't run on a promise to reduce that percentage, they just are. And they'll take over \$2 billion out of this province in health-care funding reductions over the coming decade without a single word of objection from the member.

Manitobans want a government that will stand up for them. We'll do that while the members opposite fail to do that.

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

St. Boniface Medical Centre Request to Retain Facility

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Province's latest unexplainable move was closing the family care clinic in St. Boniface. It is a bilingual clinic across the street from the St. Boniface Hospital that helps keep people out of emergency.

I received an email from a woman whose husband and two children rely on that clinic for primary care, and it is more than just a clinic. It is the preeminent family medicine residency in Manitoba. This is where people learn to be family physicians. They treated 17,000 people last year working in teams that include doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners.

There is a shortage of primary-care physicians and huge waiting lists to get one, and this government is closing a clinic that is working well with no explanation. Once again this government's motto appears to be: If it ain't broke, break it.

Instead of proceeding with this mistake, will this government commit to keeping the St. Boniface medical centre open?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I do appreciate a constituency question from the member opposite, Madam Speaker, in respect of doctors, though he has it wrong.

As I mentioned earlier in response to the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), we have recruited 78 new doctors this past year and that is the second largest increase in the last decade and a significant achievement, and I congratulate the people in the Health Department and our minister for their dedication to the task of making sure that we address the challenges we inherited in health care.

But more than that, Madam Speaker, I mentioned earlier the partnership that the federal Liberals committed to at 25 per cent—and I should mention that that percentage is now below 18 per cent. While the federal government—this present federal government—seems to want to billboard their involvement in health care, promote their involvement in health care and do photo ops about their involvement in health care, they just don't send the money to the provinces to support health care, and this member stands quietly by and applauds them and he's wrong to do that.

We'll stand up for Manitobans while he remains silent.

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

Health-Care Service Reform Shared Health Services

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Once again, Madam Speaker, the Premier's numbers are out of date.

The very table that I tabled—the chart that I tabled, shows that the federal 'percentage' of funding has been growing steadily. It is not 18 per cent. It's gone up every year for the last three years. So I'd like to correct the First Minister on that.

But, Madam Speaker, this government has always shown that it's incapable of coming up with any ideas of its own, which is why they have to spend \$16 million paying others to do their thinking for them.

Shared services is a—very similar to what the Premier's good friend Doug Ford is proposing, which in Ontario is raising alarm bells.

I table a CTV news story because no one is learning the lessons of failed reforms in Nova Scotia and Alberta. One expert said Nova Scotia's results were dismal, another warned that changes could do real harm and another said Alberta had scathing reviews after its changes; and none of these reforms ever resulted in health-care improvements.

This government promised to cut at the top, not the front lines.

Madam Speaker, how does closing clinics, ERs and hospitals while creating a new, unaccountable mega-bureaucracy fit that promise?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, disrespecting the rule of law, breaking trust, compromising values, vicious divisions within caucus and Cabinet, resignations of Cabinet members—we thought we'd seen it all under the NDP government, but we're seeing it now, in Ottawa, replicated.

There is a precedent with the NDP, that's true, but the dysfunction of the federal government is what this member is trying to avoid and divert attention away from, and that's too bad, Madam Speaker, because, quite frankly, we need a federal government that will partner with the provinces on health care in a sustainable way.

We do not need a federal government that will make up numbers and then pretend it's involved in health care while its participation declines. This we do not need in Canada.

Our population is ageing. People need support and help. I appreciate the NDP's change in their position recently to support us in working to get the federal government to restore sustainable levels of funding for health care. I would welcome that support from the member opposite, though I think it is unlikely to be received.

Service Fee to Foster Parents Rate Reduction Concerns

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Many youth aging out of care have complex needs that require ongoing support.

The minister has cut the service fee for foster parents from \$60 to \$20 a day, a 67 per cent reduction. These foster parents need to be home to help their children who have complex needs.

Though the rate has dropped, the need for care has not. We would not force our own children out of our homes or neglect to provide them support just because they have turned 18. This government's decision to cut the service fee is irresponsible and heartless. They are setting up our youth for failure.

Will the minister commit to reversing this short-sighted cut today?

* (14:30)

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): I want to welcome my new critic to her new responsibilities and I very much look forward to working with her as we face these challenges together within our child-welfare system in Manitoba.

And, certainly, we know we are taking the steps, along with our partners. I've met recently with our Indigenous Leadership Council. We've made commitments to work together towards providing solutions to some of these very significant issues that we're faced with within our child-welfare system.

I look forward to working with them, with all stakeholders and—including my critic, towards positive solutions for all Manitoba children and families.

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

B & L Foster Care Agency Release of Review

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Children in care deserve to feel safe and protected in the home they have been placed in, and families need to be assured the same. That is why it is concerning to see that there are no written records of the expectations of the review requested by the minister on the safety and well-being of 409 children in care at B & L.

The minister herself has stated that there are no written records—a failure to hold herself and all parties involved open and accountable.

Will the minister publicly release the review of B & L so that Manitoba families and children in care get the answers they deserve?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): With respect to B & L, we took action immediately on—upon hearing, Madam Speaker, of some allegations. We wanted to ensure, first and foremost, the safety of each and every one of those children.

We—I directed the department, I put the deputy minister in charge of that process and he continues to work along those lines. We were assured that all the children that were in care, under the care of B & L, were safe and that was first and foremost what we wanted to ensure.

So the deputy minister is responsible for this review. He will continue to provide the results of those reviews—of that review moving forward. And I want to thank him and the department and all those

involved in this process who have ensured the safety of those children in Manitoba.

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

No New Placements Request

Mrs. Smith: The minister says she would stop new placements while she conducts her so-called review of this agency. The minister's lack of openness and accountability of this review is a cause for concern. Families need answers and the public needs to know this minister's not trying to sweep this issue under the rug. The lives of our children are at stake.

Has the minister stopped new placements at B & L or have new kids be-placed in their care?

Mrs. Stefanson: As I mentioned, there was a moratorium placed on B & L until the review has taken place, and we wanted to ensure first and foremost the safety of those children and we were assured of that. Each and every child was visited both in the home and outside the home to ensure their safety.

And so, again, I want to thank the deputy minister and all of those social workers who were involved to ensure the safety of those children. The safety of children in Manitoba is first and foremost. It's paramount. We will continue to ensure the safety of all children in Manitoba.

Federal Carbon Tax PST Exemption

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Yesterday our government once again put Manitobans first and announced that we will not charge PST on the federal Liberal-imposed carbon tax.

Can the Minister of Finance please tell the House how our government will not tax a tax and how we're going to save money for all Manitobans?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Our government knows that Manitobans are taxed to the max. We know and we disagree with the federal Liberal carbon tax that is being imposed by the members' party, as well as taxing a tax on-GST on top of it.

We're also very much opposed to the tax-and-spend policies of the NDP government. Our government is very much supportive and we want to make sure that more people have money on the kitchen table. And that's why we're trying to have a

more competitive tax environment, and that's why we will not support a tax on a tax, Madam Speaker.

Mining and Mineral Development Exploration and Permit Wait Times

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of spending the last couple of months travelling around Manitoba and Winnipeg, but also—especially northern Manitoba, and I was very concerned about what I heard there, especially in communities like Flin Flon and Thompson that are facing major job losses in mining.

We here in the south benefit every day from northern resources like hydro, lumber and minerals and northern Manitoba has enormous potential for development, but this potential is being squandered by this government as it was by the NDP before it.

We travelled to Thompson and people there are optimistic but frustrated, because while Manitoba—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —still has untold and untapped mineral riches, the provincial government appears to have written off the North. It will take 10 years to develop the first-next new mine, but prospectors need to find it first, and this government has not only cancelled exploration assistance, prospectors can't even get permits.

Can the Premier (Mr. Pallister) explain why his government is choking off growth in the North by cancelling exploration assistance and failing to even release permits to prospectors?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I'm certainly glad the member asked that question, because I just got back last night from the world's largest mining convention in Toronto where Manitoba had a very good presence there, represented from countries all across the world, mining companies, explorers. Our Manitoba reception on Sunday night was full to the max of companies that want to invest in Manitoba.

Perhaps the member can get on side. There is untold riches in-north that will be discovered, are being discovered these days, and will be—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: –tapped into it in the coming years–
[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: Unlike the previous government, who did everything they could to discourage natural resource harvest, we encourage.

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

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, the minister had to travel to Toronto because the conference here in Manitoba was cancelled.

The Premier evasion–the Premier's–sorry, the minister's evasion–[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: –of this question is sadly predictable, Madam Speaker.

The Business Council of Manitoba has singled out this government's failings–[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: –on the mining file. In their most recent budget recommendation they said, and I quote, last year we recommended the government improve its internal operations with respect to mining and mineral resource development. For several years exploration and development in Manitoba has languished. Manitoba's share of national expenditures for prospecting and exploration continues to decrease. Unfortunately, we must repeat that recommendation this year.

Is the bottleneck that the Premier is personally signing off on these permits? Why is this taking so long?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, we'll make sure the member gets an invitation to next year's central Canada mining convention, which last year had a record attendance in the middle of November at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg. I'm sorry he missed it.

Madam Speaker, the Flin Flon-Snow Lake greenstone belt–[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pedersen: –is the home of the largest 'paleoprotozyac' region in the world, which means it has the most copper, gold and zinc reserves anywhere in the world, and we're working with companies to develop those.

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

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, the Northern Prospector recently made it clear–[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: –that Manitoba, and I quote, does have world-class nickel and copper-zinc deposits and comparatively more abundant gold deposits and more potential for gold than Saskatchewan.

But, quote, Manitoba's junior exploration is under \$6 million which will not even be a tenth of Saskatchewan, end quote. Companies have picked up and gone elsewhere. The main problem has been the lack of or–of timely permitting approvals for exploration, which is entirely the provincial government's responsibility.

They go on to say, at current levels of exploration in Manitoba it would take 250 years to have a discovery rate that could sustain the industry. This was sent in a letter to this government which–and they received no response.

Nelson House has a partnership and has been unable to get a permit.

Why has this government abandoned mining in Manitoba and abandoned northern Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I don't know about the discovery rate, Madam Speaker, but the fact is the member needs to discover the problems with the federal Liberal government's approach to resource development in this country. They're not a secret to anyone who's trying to create jobs in western Canada. The federal Liberal government would go to bat for a Quebec company that perjures itself and libels and involves itself in bribery, but they won't go to bat for getting a pipeline built in western Canada or across to the east.

The fact of the matter is, this member actually supports the Leap Manifesto of the NDP which says leave it in the ground. He actually supports a higher tax on heating homes. He actually supports a higher tax on travelling to the North, commuting to work, a higher tax on tourism.

* (14:40)

Madam Speaker, he supports a high federal carbon tax on the people of northern Manitoba and he is against development in the North, and he has the federal government to make sure he has his back-up with their non-support for resource development in the North.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to mining, the PC government gets the mines built and the NDP and the Liberals give Manitobans the shaft.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: Madam Speaker: Are there any petitions?

Medical Laboratory Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order please. Order.

Mr. Gerrard: I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provision of laboratory services to medical clinics and physicians' offices has been historically and continues to be a private sector service.

It is vitally important that there be competition in laboratory services to allow medical clinics to seek solutions from more than one provider to control costs and to improve service for health professionals and patients.

Under the present provincial government, Dynacare, an Ontario-based subsidiary of a—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard:—US company, has acquired Unicity labs resulting in a monopoly situation for the provision of laboratory services in medical clinics and physicians' offices.

The creation of this monopoly has resulted in the closure of many laboratories by Dynacare in and around the city of Winnipeg.

Since the acquisition of Unicity labs, daycare has engaged in anti-competitive activities where it has changed the collection schedules of patients' specimens and charged some medical offices for collection services.

These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served, having to travel significant distances in some cases, waiting considerable periods of time and sometimes being denied or having to leave without obtaining lab services.

This situation is particularly critical for patients requiring fasting blood draws as they may experience complications that could be life-threatening based on their individual health situations.

Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all STATs patients, patients with suspicious internal infections, be directed to its King Edward location. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the patients who are required to travel to that lab, rather than simply completing the test in their doctor's office.

This new directive by Dynacare presents a direct risk to patients' health in the interest of higher profits. This has further resulted in patients opting to visit emergency rooms rather than travelling twice, which increases cost to the health-care system.

Medical clinics and physicians' offices service thousands of patients in their communities and have structured their offices to provide a one-stop service, acting as a health-care front line that takes off some of the load from emergency rooms.

The creation of this monopoly has been problematic to many medical clinics and physicians, hampering their ability to provide high quality and complete service to their patients due to closures of so many laboratories.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to request Dynacare to open the closed laboratories or allow Diagnostic Services of Manitoba to freely open labs in clinics which formerly housed labs that have been shut down by Dynacare.

To urge the provincial government to ensure high-quality lab services for patients and a level playing field and competition in the provision of laboratory services to medical offices.

To urge the provincial government to address this matter immediately in the interests of better patient-focused care and improved support for health professionals.

Signed by Lindsay Secord, Edward Patterson, Alana Shewchuk and many others.

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

Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Madam Speaker: The House will now consider the opposition day motion for the honourable member for Point Douglas.

I now recognize the honourable member for Point Douglas.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns, that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemns the Prime Minister and the federal government of—for politically interfering in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin, and condemn the poor and inappropriate treatment of the former Attorney General of Canada and the vile threats made against her, and the—call for the creation of a public inquiry to provide Canadians the answers that they deserve.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Point Douglas, seconded by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the Prime Minister and the federal government—*[interjection]*

Order please. I will repeat that.

That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the Prime Minister and the federal government for politically interfering in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin, and condemn the poor and inappropriate treatment of the former Attorney General of Canada and the veiled threats made against her, and call for the creation of a public inquiry to provide Canadians the answers they deserve.

Mrs. Smith: This afternoon we're debating the integrity of the Prime Minister and his government regarding the most important issue of SNC-Lavalin's criminal prosecution.

Our country is currently facing a crisis that strikes at every heart of Canadian democracy and the rule of law. Not only is the integrity of the justice system being questioned but the lack of leadership and transparency which is causing Canadians to question the leadership of the Prime Minister and his commitment to the rule of law. Canadians deserve a government that is on their side, that is listening to them and that is going to protect the rule of law.

But, not giving favours to big corporation—big corporate interests. Everyone needs to know the truth about the handling of the SNC-Lavalin case. So, today, we are calling on our provincial government to condemn the handling of that. Canadians need to be assured that there is one standard of justice and not many; and that nobody is above the law, and that there isn't a double standard, if you're a big corporation or a friend of the Prime Minister's.

I just want to, you know, say how disappointed we are to hear about how the Prime Minister and his government has treated the first, indigenous, former Attorney General. She received unwanted, sustained and co-ordinated pressure by the Prime Minister, the Clerk of the Privy Council, the Finance Minister and their staff, even after she asked them to stop. She looked the Prime Minister in the eye and asked him directly, are you interfering with my decision? Because I ask you not to. Not a good move.

It's disrespectful to hear the ongoing denial and questioning of the former Attorney General's testimony by federal Liberal MPs that are saying that what she's saying is not—simply not true and that they are standing beside the Prime Minister.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

A true leader, such as our former Attorney General, stood up and she offered full transparency. Not off-the-record comments to distract from the truth, but came forward with integrity, with courage, and told her truth, no matter what it cost her.

And, ultimately, it's heartbreaking that this scandal, you know, has cost Canadians their first indigenous female Justice minister. A person that was respected right across Canada and certainly inspired many indigenous people, certainly young, indigenous girls, to see that as a possibility. Canadians voted in this Prime Minister that campaigned on his platform of change, feminism and reconciliation. Yet his current actions don't reflect those very things. There's no change when we have a Prime Minister that continues to practice helping wealthy friends.

There's no feminism when we have a Prime Minister that does not allow his female colleagues to make their own courageous and ethical decisions. Instead, trying to meddle and put pressure on her to change her decision, and penalizing them for doing so. Putting her into a different portfolio and, ultimately, that went against her integrity and she stepped down.

* (14:50)

There is no reconciliation when we have a Prime Minister whose actions lead to 'viled' threats and sustained pressures on an indigenous woman that ultimately was pushed to resign from her position.

You know, Canadians deserve so much better than this. Canadians deserve to know that there is an equal playing field for all Canadians, that just because you are a corporate entity and you have money that you are not above the law.

We deserve a Prime Minister who will answer truthfully under oath. When Canadians have questions, he'll answer them and not continually try to deflect from what is happening. He should be dealing with this and wholeheartedly telling the truth and telling Canadians exactly what happened and taking responsibility. Only then will we ensure full accountability for this devastating breach of public trust and, first and foremost, the ultimate—or the independence and integrity of the justice system. It must be respected, along with the integrity of the former Attorney General and a public inquiry must be called.

We need full disclosure. We need to know what happened and we need Canadians to know that nobody is above the rule of law.

We ask that the entire House today come together unanimously to condemn the Prime Minister and his federal government for their political interference in criminal prosecutions, the mistreatment of the former Attorney General and call for the creation of a public inquiry to give both Manitobans here and Canadians the answers they deserve. And I'm sure many of my colleagues have also received calls into their office asking for us to stand up and ask for full disclosure and full accountability in this place that we call Canada and help them see that nobody is above the law, that everyone lives by the law and, regardless of how much money you have, that you cannot evade.

The Prime Minister and his government has allegedly orchestrated a sustained and politically motivated campaign to get the former Attorney General to stop the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin, therefore not respecting her decision as the Attorney General of Canada and even going as far as moving her out of Cabinet into a different Cabinet position which, ultimately, she resigned from.

Credible and compelling arguments continue to surface over the Prime Minister and his government's political interference in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. We've been, you know, watching, for the last couple of weeks, closely what's been unravelling.

Wilson-Raybould explained in tremendous detail how: Various officials urged me to take the partisan political considerations into account, which was clearly improper for me to do. End quote.

Her testimony explained how the Prime Minister attempted to get her to overrule prosecutors in a way that would be unlawful, requesting that the decision by the director of the public prosecution be overturned and requested that a deferred prosecution agreement be offered to settle the case with monetary penalties instead.

When asked if it was—if he was politically interfering with the decision of her, the Prime Minister responded, and I quote: No, no, no—you just need to find a solution. End quote.

We have heard the Prime Minister's former chief of staff, Gerald Butts, say some interference in the criminal prosecution is needed in order to find a solution. And then we heard that Munroe-Morrow's staff called the Attorney General's staff for SNC to inform them of what terms SNC-Lavalin executives were willing to accept.

The Prime Minister and his government has made many, many, many cases to try and justify their political interference because of their political—or because of the potential for lost—for jobs lost as a result of the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. They say they're trying to consider the middle class.

Well, this is simply not the case, and I ask my colleagues today to join us and support us in calling this federal government to task in full disclosure and calling for a public inquiry.

Miigwech.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this opposition day motion. While I have the opportunity, because I'm not sure how many more I'll have, I want to acknowledge my friend from Minto, who is seeking a federal nomination. We probably had bets at one point that I would be more likely to seek one at a different time of this career than he would. But I want to wish him well and say, I know we've had a number of different

disputes in this House, some of which were legendary, some of which not so legendary, but I think we've always maintained a level of respect for each other, and I know, as he goes through this process, and he would be quick to say that I'm sure the outcome isn't assured because that's the nature of politics, but, regardless, I want to take this opportunity to wish him well as he goes about this particular time of his life.

This clearly is a serious matter; of this—of that, there's no dispute, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, for me, regardless of one—what feels about the evidence that's come out of the ethics committee, or the justice committee, in Ottawa, when Dr. Philpott resigned her position as the chair of the Treasury Board in Ottawa, that solidified, in my mind, how serious this was. I had the opportunity as the former Health minister to interact with Minister Philpott, Dr. Philpott, at the time when she was Health minister, and I want to say while we had many disagreements, and those are well documented in terms of the funding of health care and the federal government's responsibility to be a real partner in that, I have great admiration for Jane Philpott, for her abilities, for her sincerity, and in the many discussions that we had in our respective roles as Health ministers, I only grew in my admiration for her. Members, if they ever have a chance—this is a bit of an aside, Mr. Deputy Speaker—but she wrote an article about the loss of her son, and it's quite moving and quite graceful in its telling, and if they ever have an opportunity, it's worth the read.

So, when Ms. Philpott resigned from Cabinet, it was clearly, in my mind, something that was significant and something that was important. It is worth talking about the separation of the role of the Attorney General and the minister of Justice, and in this, my two colleagues on my side and the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) would have more knowledge than I would, but I would just say a couple of things about that. It was a discussion in 2007. Our party at that time ran on separating the two roles and having a separate Attorney General and a separate minister of Justice, very much because of the nature of the roles being very different where the Attorney General is truly the lawyer for the government, essentially, and the minister of Justice is the more political role within Cabinet, and those two together can, naturally, at times be at odds.

Now, whether or not in Manitoba, in a relatively small province, that would functionally make sense is a different kind of discussion, and whether or not it

would actually prevent what happened in Ottawa is another question because, ultimately, you rely on good people acting in a good way and in a faithful way, not to put pressure on a united or a separate role of Attorney General and minister of Justice.

But, clearly, that discussion has now gone to the forefront again across Canada, and those roles are different, and it is through the Shawcross principle, the responsibility of the Attorney General to provide advice in a way that is non-partisan because they are then responsible for the actions of the justice system, and in this case, a potential criminal charge against a corporation and whether or not it should have an alternative method that was just brought in by the federal government about a year ago, I believe.

And it's important because what separates us as a country from other countries, which we may not have as much respect for, is that principle of the separation of law and from politics, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We don't expect that our political leaders are going to direct prosecutions, because with that kind of power, it can be wielded in a way to take action against political opponents, to drive a particular political agenda.

*(15:00)

And so the separation of that power from political leaders is important. And that when a individual's liberty is at stake or when a corporation's—perhaps their economic viability is at stake, that there should be that separation between the political entity and the prosecution entity. So that is a very, very important principle.

And that doesn't mean that there isn't an interplay at times in Manitoba, and I suspect the member for Minto may have done this. You can bring forward prosecution directions, but that's not about a particular case, that is in general policy. Of course, you can bring forward legislation that applies generally to all of those who might be impacted, though we don't bring forward criminal legislation here.

So you can do things that, of course, can affect individual litigants, but it's not on an individual basis. It's on a whole class of individuals who might in an unforeseen way get into that situation. Here, it seems that there could potentially be something different.

Now, I'm—while I'm not disappointed that this opposition motion has come forward, it's a little curious in the fact that up until now we've seen the

NDP be quite deferential to the Trudeau Liberal government. When it comes to health-care funding they essentially stood back and didn't support Manitobans when Manitobans were calling for a fair share of federal health-care money.

When our government was calling for a delay of the legalization of marijuana because of the concerns and the challenges that would happen that have now borne true, the NDP didn't say anything on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

When the carbon tax came forward, not only did the NDP not really say anything, they said it wasn't big enough; it should be three times or four times or 10 times—or whatever it was—bigger. So they've embraced the Trudeau government's legacy all along the way here, but now they're trying to separate themselves and maybe realize that they shouldn't have gotten so close to the federal Liberals, and now trying to distance themselves and they're using this particular situation to do it.

That doesn't mean that the situation isn't important. It is and it's significant, and it's serious because if in fact there was the kind of pressure that's been alleged in Ottawa after a decision had been made on whether or not to have a different kind of dispensation other than the criminal charge go forward, that is certainly something that Canadians need to know about because it does go to the heart of our freedom. It does go to the heart of what makes us different than many countries who don't have that separation and where you have political leaders who either able to use the judicial system to punish those who they don't support or who don't support them, and what our country is. And that is why the separation is critically, critically important.

I know that there's been several justice committee hearings going on in this matter in Ottawa. I didn't hear the resolution of today. I know there were a number of witnesses that were reappearing today, so I don't know what new light that may or may not have shed on this entire situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But, regardless, I think that Canadians are clearly saying they want to know what happened. They want to know what happened.

And it's difficult in situations like this to sometimes get to the truth. I can even remember the whole issue around the Tiger Dams, the scandal that engulfed the government of the day back then. It was difficult to get to the truth sometimes. How did the contract get led? Did it go to Treasury Board? Why

didn't it appear on the one lone computer in the Legislature which was supposed to list untendered contracts?

All those were difficult questions to get answers to and, in fact, you took months—it took months to get answers to those questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the former government just simply wouldn't come forward with those answers. So in that light, having a public inquiry, if it would provide more information—*[interjection]*

Oh, I see. I see the member—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) saying ask Ron. I'm sure he's talking about Ron Lemieux. Well, Ron Lemieux might have some answers, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in terms of why the former government didn't bring forward those responses. And I'd love to know, and maybe if I get a chance to talk to Mr. Lemieux—I haven't seen him for some time—but I'll ask him.

But it speaks to the difficulty in trying to get answers. How do you find out an answer if a government isn't willing to come forward and to share the information, if they're just going to hunker down and try to hide everything they possibly can, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

So a public inquiry, is it the perfect solution? Others have suggested the Prime Minister should resign. Others have suggested that there are other forms of inquiry.

Ultimately, I think Canadians just want to know what happened, and if a public inquiry is a forum for which those Canadians can get the answers then—they need, Madam Speaker, then we are prepared to support this motion because, ultimately, Canadians deserve to know the truth. They need to have trust in their government; they need to have trust in the rule of law; they need to have trust that there is a separation between the prosecution's role of government, the Attorney General's role and the political arm of government.

So, with those words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to hear from others and we'll acknowledge that our government will support this opposition day motion this afternoon.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, I'm grateful to put a couple of words on the record in respect of our opposition day motion and the particular egregious, disrespectful, misogynistic

treatment of the former Attorney General of Canada and minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould.

I think that I need to begin with the perspective of being an indigenous woman and watching somebody in the community, in the indigenous community, treated so abominably horrible, not only in what we've come to learn in the former Attorney General's statement, which I have here, but also what we see afterwards with the Prime Minister of Canada's disregard and dismissal of the concerns that the former Attorney General of Canada raised to the way the Prime Minister referred to the former Attorney General of Canada in his press conference, actually, in Winnipeg here the day after or the day of, where he consistently referred to the former Attorney General of Canada as Jody, whereas he didn't do that to any of his male colleagues or his male ministers.

And I think that it's particularly disheartening and egregious and, in some respects, you know, enraging that the Prime Minister of Canada's approach and actions and behaviours and narrative towards the former Attorney General of Canada actually opened the door for a litany of abuse—racialized and gender-sexualized abuse that the former Attorney General of Canada took in the media, with trolls, and which can be perfectly illustrated in some of the cartoons that we saw produced across the country, which placed the former Attorney General in a very despicable manner—tied up and bound and being physically assaulted.

And I place blame squarely on the shoulders of the Prime Minister for opening the door to attack an indigenous woman, an accomplished—highly accomplished indigenous woman who, you know, I think it should be put on the record that, you know, when the Prime Minister was a substitute teacher, the former Attorney General was a Crown prosecutor, and yet, here he is, he dismissed her; he had nothing positive to say about her time as the minister of Justice and her time as the Attorney General, and he single-handedly opened the door to have that abuse levelled against the former Attorney General of Canada as an indigenous woman.

And I'll remind everybody in the Chamber and I'll remind Manitobans and Canadians that, actually, the former minister of Justice was one of the three ministers that was responsible for the national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women

and girls. In fact, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and I travelled to Ottawa that December 5th, 2015, to see the announcement and the former Attorney General was there in her capacity as the minister of Justice and spoke about the need to find resolution and recommendation and closure for MMIWG families and, you know, spoke, really, on behalf of the Prime Minister about a commitment to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and a commitment to indigenous women and girls across the country.

* (15:10)

And yet, only a couple of years later, our feminist Prime Minister which, you know—I'll be blunt—I think is a joke. I think it's a joke when the Prime Minister calls himself a feminist and yet he treats an indigenous woman—highly accomplished, capable, articulate, fiercely committed indigenous woman—when he opens the door to that 'vitrolic' hate towards her and dismisses her role, you know, I would suggest, I would highly suggest to the Prime Minister to stop calling himself a feminist.

And, you know, to call yourself a feminist comes from years and years and years and years of struggle from women—women, obviously in North America, in Europe and across the globe—but that comes from our struggles. That comes from women, no matter where they are, or where they're situated or who they are, or what group they belong to, those are real struggles. And for a man or a Prime Minister to take on that, but actually not do the real work in respect of being a feminist is, quite frankly, just hypocritical.

And so my suggestion—and my not-so-gentle suggestion, actually, to the Prime Minister, is to stop calling himself a feminist, because I would be very scared to see if he wasn't a feminist and what his treatment would be of the former Attorney General of Canada.

I just want to say on behalf of myself, and I know that many indigenous women that I've spoken to about what the former Attorney General of Canada did, not only for all Canadians, to bring to light in a very courageous way and at great personal sacrifice, you know, the political interference by a sitting government.

But she also highlighted for Canadians, in her commitment to standing in her truth, the absolute strength of indigenous women and the courage of indigenous women, and the steadfast commitment to

standing in our truth in the midst of power—and in the midst of—let's just be honest—patriarchal power and abuse of power.

So I want to personally thank the former Attorney General of Canada and the former minister of Justice for, again, standing in her truth and highlighting everything—you know, highlighting this inappropriate political interference, on behalf of all Canadians, but also for indigenous women. It is so important for indigenous women and girls to see themselves reflected in positions of power across Canada.

And I don't mean positions in power where you, you know, you lord over, and you do things in an unethical, bullying kind of way. I mean, positions of power where you actually have the ability to make change. That is so important for indigenous women and girls to see. And, if there is ever going to be an example of an indigenous woman standing in truth, certainly I would suggest to you, it was, you know, when we all learned that the former Attorney General of Canada and the minister of Justice resigned from her Cabinet position.

But then also, as we all watched with pride at her justice committee hearing and how she held herself with such dignity, and even though the Liberal members, and some of them women, I'm not sure, acted as if the former Attorney General of Canada was actually on trial for something.

And it was quite disgusting to see some of the Liberal women MPs go at their former colleague, as if all of a sudden she's the No. 1 enemy of the state. And it reminds me of the Kavanaugh hearings in the US, when they had that woman lawyer, and I can't remember her name, who would ask the questions, but was in such an attack mode against this woman who was trying to bring forward information that was pertinent to this Supreme Court nomination.

So, to those women, I would say you did a disservice to all women across Canada. And, again, finally, to the former Attorney General of Canada and the former minister of Justice, miigwech. Miigwech for your strength and your courage.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'm very pleased today to put a few comments on the record about the opposition day motion that calls on the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to condemn the Prime Minister and the federal government for politically interfering in the criminal prosecutions of SNC-Lavalin, as well as to

condemn the poor and inappropriate treatment of the former Attorney General and Justice minister of Canada.

Now, my colleague, the Minister of Education, had spoke very well and he covered the issue of—and the importance of having a justice attorney—or, a Justice minister and Attorney General to be able to work free of political interference. And he had brought up those points very well. So I'm going to restrict my comments to my thoughts on how this is unfolding across the country in regards to establishing an equality and having equal voices in our legislatures and in our House of Commons, and in politics in general. And, of course, that relates back to the inappropriate treatment of the former Attorney General and Justice minister who, of course, was—is a very strong and capable woman.

The other night, I had the good fortune of meeting with some representatives from Equal Voice. Equal Voice, for those of you who don't know, is a—established to ensure that we have equal number of women running for office in the country. And they're working diligently to try to get women to enter the sphere of federal politics, provincial politics and municipal politics. We know that this province is not alone when we have—when we state that women have been disproportionately represented in terms of the numbers of women who've been elected to this Chamber. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am the 60th woman to be elected in the province's history. Now, we have had the right to vote in this province for over a hundred years and the right to hold office since—nearly a hundred years. And in comparison to the 800 men who have occupied seats in this Chamber, in total, we have had 60 women. We could, in fact, fit all the 60 women who have held office—we could likely fit them almost entirely in this room.

And—so that just shows an example of how few women we have actually had run in—not just in the province of Manitoba, but across the country, those numbers are very similar in legislatures and in the House of Commons.

So many people ask: Why is it so challenging for political parties—why is it so challenging for governments to have parity, whether it be in government or in legislatures? And the answer is not an easy one to offer. But I certainly do think that the way women are sometimes mistreated and what we've seen in Ottawa is certainly an example of some of the barriers that women have faced as they have

made the decision to run for office or to seek positions in leadership, only to have their opinions, their viewpoints, their perspectives, their beliefs and their decisions questioned. And while none of us were in the room when those decisions that the former Attorney General had made were being questioned, we certainly cannot help but put a gender lens on it and look and see the mistreatment towards the former Attorney General and see that that is, indeed—that gender does, indeed, come into question.

* (15:20)

And it flies in the face of what we have seen play out in Ottawa, which was rampant identity politics from a Prime Minister who called himself a feminist and who went as far as tabling a feminist budget not too long ago that was not only saccharine and disingenuous, but it was downright insulting for women across the country, and so today we cannot help but observe that those were merely just words. Those were merely just identity politics being played out for personal gain and pursuit of a political agenda.

Since our government was elected we made a commitment that we would ensure that we would ensure equality and fix a broken culture that we saw exhibited in the civil service and in the workplaces around us, and we have taken many steps to address some of those barriers to women aspiring to leadership within our own Legislature and in the civil service.

We did implement no-wrong-door policy for people who have endured bullying and harassment, and I personally believe that when we talk about women that are disproportionately under-represented at the top in leadership, I do not doubt for one second that bullying and harassment in the workplace plays a direct part in the reason why many women do not achieve their full destiny in leadership roles, because it is very hard to put your best foot forward and to try to get noticed for that promotion or try to aspire to a leadership role when you are being harassed and bullied at work.

And so to that end we certainly did implement a wrong door—a no-wrong-door approach and we have acted on recommendations that we received from not only the hard work of the Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat who held round tables with many civil servants, as well as we hired an outside external agents to conduct a review of policies and provide a bunch of recommendations, 25 recommendations, in fact, on how to ensure that our workplace is one in

which all people and—can work free of bullying and harassment and can achieve their destiny. It will be one that is free of sexual harassment. We are trying to turn the clock on a misogynistic—traditionally, what was described as a misogynistic culture in many regards—and ensure that we have a diverse workforce.

We do know that here in this Chamber we have also worked very hard to ensure that everyone is respected and that gender does not come into part of the equation and that women are treated equally in this Chamber. And our government has been committed to those principles and we continue to work towards full equality for all members of this Chamber.

And so as my colleague, the Minister of Education had said, that our government will be supporting this motion. We do believe that we need to send the Prime Minister a message that we do not—we certainly do condemn the political interference in the criminal prosecution as well as condemn the inappropriate treatment of the former Attorney General, a strong woman.

And I do have to take notice of the fact that we had been asking for our opposition NDP in this province for a long time to support us in condemning the federal government on a variety of issues. They failed to do that then. We're pleased to see that they are taking a stand against that now.

And with that, I'm eager to hear from my other colleagues in the Legislature on this very important topic.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): First, I would like to remind the opposition this is the Manitoba Legislature.

We've been away from the House for months. The NDP has one opposition day in this session and they're choosing to use that one day to posture on a federal issue and score political points on something over which this Legislature has no control or authority.

Let's consider what the official opposition could have chosen to confront the Manitoba government about: we have a meth crisis the government has largely ignored; our roads and bridges are rotting; and the Province is breaking promises and cutting funding promises for Winnipeg and municipalities across the province, even as they refuse \$1.9 billion in funding. When Manitobans and elected officials alike try to defend themselves from these cuts by this

government, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his ministers demean their roles as leaders by picking fights, bullying and trolling municipal leaders, indigenous communities, other provincial governments and our federal government, rather than work together towards growth.

There are health crises in many of our rural and northern communities and the Pallister government is shutting down access in Winnipeg and beyond. Nurses are being worked beyond the point of burnout, and surgeries are being cancelled.

We are not debating the Pallister government's continual failure to act on the climate crisis while throwing up obstacles and roadblocks to action. We are not asking about the education review and a provincial government that is starving and dismantling our public services, privatizing air ambulances and selling off public property right, left and centre. We are not debating the ongoing assault on workers' rights by this government.

We are not condemning the PC government leaving almost \$2 billion of federal funding on the table, cutting hundreds of millions of dollars from health care while refusing to sign funding for mental health and home care or turning down money for housing. Fifty-six per cent of Manitobans are \$200 a month away from insolvency, and next year, Manitoba is projected to have the worst growth in 2020 that it has seen in 20 years.

The policies and decisions of this government are choking off growth. We have some of the highest domestic violence and 'incarcen' rates—incarceration rates of any province. The Province has cut \$100 million in funding to CFS agencies and misled Manitobans about the number of children in care. We had a provincial government who, for years, gave no consideration to indigenous peoples when creating policy and legislation. Generations have gone by with no changes. And today we're supposed to shake our fingers in disapproval of the circus that's happening in Ottawa.

This shows just how similar the leaders of the PC and the NDP are, and the fact that they're all working together on this shows that rather than addressing the real issues in Manitoba and using their voices to make real change—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —they'd rather use the limited time we have here to act as judges on a case that none of us have the full story on.

I will say this: There is a genuine crisis in democracy and politics, and people keep electing politicians but are disappointed when things don't get better, and there's a reason for that. It's because for 40 years, political parties of all stripes have been implementing policies that favour the few, and as those few have more and more power, too often, when powerful people do wrong, they get a pass and someone else pays the price. And we're seeing that right now with this PC government because even as the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his minister freeze wages and layoffs and cut off assistance for life-saving drugs, he and his ministers voted to make sure that they would get a 20 per cent pay hike and voted to cut their own taxes.

The idea—the economic and political mess we are all in right now is because companies and banks have grown to be too big to be allowed to fail and too big to jail, and I will say the idea that companies that commit crimes must be spared from legal consequences because of the economic fallout is a triumph of market values over the rule of law. Justice needs to be blind because no one is above the law. But the administration of justice also requires the protection of the innocent. Justice also requires due process.

The issues playing out in Ottawa are important and serious, and they deserve a more serious hearing than a trial in the court of public opinion. MLAs are free to express whatever their opinion is on condemning the Prime Minister or condemning what's happening, but I frankly think it is a waste of time for us to be discussing it here today. People are going to put out a press release, they can say it on Twitter. We deserve better because there are very—far more serious problems facing Manitobans that we should be talking about.

Thank you.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): The reason that we do not see action on issues like climate change, like improving equality for indigenous people, is because you have a permanent government in Ottawa, of which the Liberal Party is a part, that refuses to take action for the people and instead governs for big corporations like SNC-Lavalin.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: That is why—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —this issue is so important, and that's why we are proud to bring this resolution here today, to condemn the Prime Minister and the federal government for politically interfering in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin, for engaging in this campaign against the former Attorney General and, of course, to call on the federal government to commit to a public inquiry, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

So, again, one of the reasons why we decided to bring this issue to the forefront is because so many people that we've been talking to about this scandal lately have been so upset. They've been upset because they were led to believe by the Trudeau government during the last election campaign that this new federal government, or the current federal government in Ottawa, was going to do politics differently.

* (15:30)

However, after the past few weeks where they have seen testimony, very credible and very meticulously detailed testimony, from the former Attorney General.

They have seen the resignation of the former head of Treasury Board, and they have seen the fumbling through the crisis of the Prime Minister's Office, including the PM and his staff, that they have begun to realize that this current government is not all it's cracked up to be, and in fact, is just practising the same old politics.

And I'd ask you to indulge me here for a second to just take a little stroll down memory lane. You know, when I was a child, my family made the decision to leave the reserve when I was about four years old, four, five years old, something like that.

And I love life on a reserve. Like, growing up on Lake of the Woods, it's God's country. It's beautiful. There's lakes. There's trees. You play hockey on the lake, you know. You can go fishing during the summer time. It's an amazing place to be a kid.

However, my parents made the very serious decision to leave the reserve because they did not feel that the quality of education that was available to us here in the city could have been matched if we stayed on a reserve.

Now, why is education underfunded on First Nations in Canada? Well, it's because successive federal governments have made the decision not to fund education on reserve equally.

So when I hear a situation such as the one unfolding right now in this SNC-Lavalin affair, I'm forced to immediately draw a connection between those two things, which is to say this, essentially: you mean to say that the reason why kids like me, when they're growing up, are forced to change the course of their lives because the federal government is making decisions not to fund education on reserve is not because the federal government doesn't have the resources to equally fund education. It's not because federal government is not aware that they need to equally fund education on reserve, and it's not even because this is not on their radar because absolutely it is.

The reason why education underfunding persists on reserve is because the permanent government in Ottawa is more concerned with bending over backwards for big corporations and for the elites of this country, as is evidenced in this affair, than they are concerned with standing up for the average person: the average person who has to work for a living; the average person who, perhaps, does not have access to the corridors of power; and to the average person who is merely just trying to get ahead in life.

So I was talking at a U of M course yesterday. I believe the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) had visited the same course recently, and I think some of this frustration was shared by a lot of the students in class. You know, these are young people who are trying to get their lives started; trying to finish university. Perhaps they're struggling with student loans. They want to get their first job, first real job, first big job after university, as the case may be, get their career started. They want to be able to buy their first home.

And yet, many of them feel that they are being left further and further behind, that life is becoming less and less affordable.

And again, why isn't the federal government taking action in these instances? Is it because the federal government is not aware of the challenges that many millennials and Gen Zers are facing when it comes to being able to build real careers and being able to move out of a situation of precarious work and move into a real strong and rewarding profession?

Is it because the federal government is unaware of the challenges students are facing when it comes to student debt? No. Again, the federal government is aware of all these things. The federal government

is aware that they should act to help Millennials, help people who are part of Generation Zed correcting myself there—of course, not Generation Z in Canada; Generation Zed.

But again, the federal government is not taking action because, well, for the past few weeks they've been consumed with scandal, but prior to that, they have been governing for this elite big business interest, big money interest in Canada, and not looking after the regular person.

So the leader of the Liberal Party can get up and he can rage all he wants about how we should be talking about other things, but he makes the point exactly.

We cannot focus on other things, because until we shake the federal government loose of bending over backwards for this elite class in our society, we are not going to be able to take action on climate change. We are not going to be able to take real action to fight for people who need to work for a living. We are not going to be able to create the kind of society we want where every single person has equality of opportunity.

So again, the reason why we have not seen real action on climate change from successive federal governments is because they're too busy catering to the whims of this elite class in our country. The reason why we have not seen real action to create jobs for, you know, the younger generation is because they are too concerned with doing these sorts of backroom deals.

And so this is a major issue. It is an important one. And we should all do our part as legislatures—legislators, rather—to condemn those things that we do not agree with.

And I would pause here from, you know, just merely taking shots at the current governing party, to point out that the federal Conservatives are no better. Again, Andrew Scheer, on day one of this scandal, was asked whether or not he would do a deferred prosecution agreement for SNC-Lavalin and, of course, he could not answer that question directly because we all know his answer. Absolutely, Andrew Scheer would behave just as the Liberal Party is acting in this affair.

So, again, I'm reminded of the old slogan: Liberal, Tory, same old story. Again, you may have a Prime Minister Harper; you may have a Prime Minister Trudeau. Many young people are wondering why didn't things change for the better

once we had a change in government. And it is because, regardless of whether it's a Prime Minister wearing the—waving the blue flag, or a Prime Minister waving the red flag, that they are still governing for the narrow sets of interests that are put before them by corporate Canada.

Now, we say that there is another approach. Of course, I'm very fond of our federal leader, Jagmeet Singh, and I think he's done very well to be very measured and to call for a public inquiry rather than to, like, immediately, you know, declare that it's the end of the world, as Andrew Scheer did on day 1. But Jagmeet Singh was very importantly, I think, calling for the facts. And that's why we're proud to reiterate his demand that there be a public inquiry into this affair.

So, again, we do have a limited amount of time here in the Manitoba Legislature, but for those of us who know that the federal government needs to be a real partner in health care, who know that a federal government needs to be a real actor and a real partner with the provinces if we want to move towards universal Pharmacare—better drug coverage in Canada—for those of us who want to see equity and justice, to ensure that every kid in this country can reach their full potential, no matter which postal code they're born into, no matter which area code they're born into—we know that the federal government has to be guided for the people and by the people.

That may be a part of one of the American founding documents, but the ethos, I think, do properly ascribe the motivations of any democratic institution, including our own here.

We have a situation right now where it appears as though considerations other than being for the people and by the people have crept into Canadian democracy. We should all stand united against that, and we should instead condemn those times when a federal government may have put the rule of law to the side and instead stood up for some very narrow corporate interests.

So I would just close my remarks by saying that, again, there are many young people who feel the system is rigged, that things don't change no matter whether there's a red or blue party in power, but we do have a moral responsibility to stand up and lay down a better example, to open up government for people of all walks of life and to ensure that every person in this country feels that they are adequately represented in our democracy. Then, and only then,

will we be able to say that we have 'puly'—truly put this affair behind us and that we're prepared to govern for everybody in Canada.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm very pleased to have the chance to speak about a very important issue this afternoon, a debate, really, about the integrity of the Prime Minister and his government regarding a very, very important issue that really strikes at the respect for the rule of law in this country.

I appreciate the words of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), that the government caucus will be supporting this resolution. We do call them as we see them, and I would point out to the Minister of Sustainable Development that we did all speak with one voice just a few months ago, when I introduced an opposition day motion about the terrible treatment of veterans at the hands of this Liberal government. And we were able to speak as one with some very strong and impassioned speeches from both sides of the House. I think we've reached that point again.

You know, it was nine years ago—and I had to check that this afternoon because it doesn't seem that long—since the Legislature actually played host to the Magna Carta. It was only the second time the Magna Carta—one of the most important documents in the history of Great Britain and the Commonwealth and human rights in the world, was displayed here in the Legislature.

And the Magna Carta, of course, was a very, very important document from 1215 when the King of England, who at that time enjoyed unlimited, untrammelled powers, was actually forced under pressure to acknowledge that nobody is truly above the law, not even a king.

* (15:40)

And that developed over the years to make it clear that no one is above the law. There should be no special treatment before the law and, unfortunately, we return to those very principles with what we're discussing this afternoon.

It is apparently obvious after only four years, that we have a government in Ottawa, a Liberal government in Ottawa that cannot separate the welfare of our country, and indeed, the international reputation of our country, from the welfare of its own political fortunes. And it is necessary that there be a public inquiry to get to the bottom of this, so we

can have confidence in our democratic institutions and, frankly, that we can have confidence as Canadians, that the rest of the world sees us as a country that respects the rule of law.

It is abundantly clear to most Canadians—the great majority of Canadians—that the Prime Minister moved out an Attorney General who refused to do what he wanted in a criminal prosecution. Was that illegal? Well, we don't have enough information to say. And, even though I might be trained as a lawyer, I'm not going to give an opinion of whether or not what was done was illegal. Was it improper? Absolutely. And the evidence which is now before the country makes it abundantly clear.

I was really shocked the day that Jody Wilson-Raybould was shuffled out of her portfolio as minister of Justice, at the letter that she chose to issue that day, and as a lawyer and as a former Attorney General, I read carefully every word that she wrote. And there's one paragraph in particular, and I'm going to quote from this transcript: the minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada is somewhat distinct from other Cabinet roles because the role is a dual one.

The minister of Justice is the legal adviser to Cabinet. In this capacity, the minister is concerned with the administration of justice, including policies in the areas of criminal law, family law, human rights law and indigenous justice.

The role of the Attorney General of Canada carries with it unique responsibilities to uphold the rule of law and the administration of justice and, in such, demands a measure of principled independence. It is a pillar of our democracy that our system of justice be free from even the perception of political interference and uphold the highest levels of public confidence.

As such, it has always been my view that the Attorney General of Canada must be non-partisan, more transparent in the principles that are the basis of decisions and, in this respect, always willing to speak truth to power. This is how I served throughout my tenure in that role.

When I read those words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I didn't know what had happened. But I knew something had happened from the Attorney General, on her way out of office, deciding it was necessary to put that on the record. In the week of February 7th, of course, we learned why she had chosen to do that.

And we know when she resigned on February 12th, 2019, from Cabinet, she told us that she wanted to speak but really was constrained in what she could say, and went to the step of retaining the Honourable Thomas Albert Cromwell, a former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, to give her advice on what she could possibly say.

And so it was last week—I don't know about you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I was actually riveted to the computer in my office to hear what the former Attorney General of Canada had to say about this issue. And her comments were strong. They were decisive. They were clearly well researched.

It is abundantly clear that this is a person who kept careful notes of her time, who took great responsibility in her work and who has put on the record her view which, I believe, is going to be ultimately be unassailed by the efforts of the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's staff and former staff, to discredit her.

She gave an opening statement which ran more than 5,000 words. And she described what she said was consistent and sustained political pressure from the Prime Minister, Cabinet ministers, top officials, urging her to settle the prosecution against SNC-Lavalin by urging the Director of Public Prosecutions to reach a deferred prosecution agreement so that the company could admit wrongdoing and pay compensation without any more costly trial and a trial that could have major implications for that company.

And I'm going to quote what she said in her opening statement: For a period of approximately four months between September and December 2018, I experienced a consistent and sustained effort by many people within the government to seek to politically interfere in the exercise of prosecutorial discretion in my role as the Attorney General of Canada, in an appropriate effort to secure a deferred prosecution agreement with SNC-Lavalin. These events involved 11 people, excluding myself and my political staff, from the Prime Minister's Office, the Privy Council Office and the Office of the Minister of Finance.

She went on to say that she received veiled threats that SNC would move its head office out of Quebec if the prosecution continued which could cost jobs in the province, and she cited several times when the Prime Minister or other officials brought up the then-upcoming Quebec provincial election,

which the provincial Liberals ultimately lost in October to the Coalition Avenir Quebec.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

And she went on to say that on September 17—she has this to say about her meeting with the Prime Minister and the head of the Privy Council Office, and I quote: The Prime Minister asked me to help out to find a solution here for SNC, citing that if there was no DPA there would be many jobs lost and that SNC will move from Montreal. In response, I explained to him the law. I told him that I had done my due diligence and made up my mind on SNC and that I was not going to interfere with the decision of the DPP.

At that point the PM—Prime Minister—jumped in, stressing that there is an election in Quebec and that, quote, I am an MP in Quebec, the member for Papineau. End quote.

My response, and I remember this vividly, was to ask the PM a direct question while looking him in the eye. I asked: Are you politically interfering with my role, my decision as the AG? I would strongly advise against it.

The Prime Minister said, no, no, no; we just need to find a solution, and, in that very same meeting, the clerk of the executive council said that he needed to make the case to have a DPA. The clerk, in her words, said: There is a board meeting on Thursday, September 20, with stockholders. They will likely be moving to London if this happens and there is an election in Quebec soon.

At that time the Attorney General of the country made it very clear to the Prime Minister and the head of the Privy Council that there would be no further discussion about this and the decision was final, yet we hear that over the next three months pressure continued.

She was pressured again by the Clerk of the Privy Council into December. She was pressured by Mr. Butts, who, I understand, gave testimony this afternoon. She was pressured by Finance Minister Bill Morneau and his chief of staff and we are left with the unmistakable conclusion that this Attorney General came under repeated sustained pressure to interfere with a prosecution.

Now, we know the Liberals went on an effort to discredit this fine Cabinet minister, and we know that all of that fell away when, just a few days ago, Minister Jane Philpott resigned her position.

She had this to say: In Canada the constitutional convention of Cabinet solidarity means, among other things, that ministers are expected to defend all Cabinet decisions. A minister must always be prepared to defend other ministers publicly and must speak in support of the government and its policies. Given this convention in the current circumstances, it is untenable for me to continue to serve as a Cabinet minister. Unfortunately, the evidence of efforts by politicians and/or officials to pressure the former Attorney General to interfere in the criminal case involving SNC-Lavalin and the evidence as to the content of these efforts have raised serious concerns for me. Those concerns have been augmented by the views expressed by my constituents and other Canadians.

It is abundantly clear that there has been improper influence by the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's staff and other Cabinet ministers. I believe the Liberal leader was getting to that in his brief statement saying that we needed a public inquiry. Everyone else in this House agrees with it. Let's get it done this afternoon.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): When Premier Justin Trudeau formed a majority government in October, 2015, there was much hope and celebration. Finally, the dark era of the autocratic Conservative government under Stephen Harper had finally ended.

The new Prime Minister promised his government will usher in a new era of hope, sunny ways, transparency, and government accessibility. He even categorically promised that the recently held election will be the last one under the first-past-the-post. And soon afterwards, it being then 2016, it is but fitting and timely that his government will have equal number of men and women in Cabinet, a complete departure from what has been the practice by prime ministers of either political parties in government since the time of Confederation.

*(15:50)

Many Canadians greeted the equal number of women in Cabinet with much hope and jubilation. Finally, the present government will hear voices of more women in Cabinet and the country will be much better off when women's voices are heard on important issues and in eventual decisions made.

Moreover, when a talented, highly accomplished and respected indigenous woman was appointed as the Justice minister and the Attorney General, the

first ever in the history of Canada, the prospects of reconciliation and the remediation of decades of neglect and abrogation of duties and responsibilities towards Aboriginal peoples and other marginalized sectors of society rose high. There were good legislations and programs made, no doubt, and we rejoice and welcome them.

However, significant promises and early pronouncements, like elections reforms, were set aside and, who knows, forever forgotten. And then a most explosive revelation came to light when the Justice minister and Attorney General resigned from her position when it became untenable for her to be part of the Trudeau Cabinet rather than compromise her values and principles of truth, respect for the rule of law and diligence in carrying out her duties.

When I saw Jody Wilson-Raybould took the witness stand before the justice committee last week, I said to myself, that is what you get when you appoint an honest and principled woman in Cabinet. As we now know, the Prime Minister and his government have justified their political interference because of the potential for job losses as a result of the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. They say they're trying to consider the middle class, and, of course, we know this is simply not the case.

As Jody Wilson-Raybould explained, his only real worry was about a Quebec by-election and his re-election, not the integrity of a system that is to hold people to the same standard. Unfortunately, Canadians have a Prime Minister focused on fixing corruption prosecutions and only answering to corporate executives. If only the Prime Minister was so quick to respect and defend his Cabinet ministers' decisions from staff and the public, things would not have gone this way.

The Clerk of the Privy Council has also allegedly intervened in the federal corruption case against SNC-Lavalin to the—to achieve a political objective. This is a big problem. The Clerk's interference, a person who's supposed to be non-partisan, also raises concern for the integrity of Prime Minister Trudeau's government.

The Prime Minister and his government sustained an unethical pressure placed upon former Attorney General, and their current dismissal and rebuttal of the former minister's testimony is unacceptable. As the SNC-Lavalin scandal continues to grow, it is time we hear from the Prime Minister himself, and it is time he waived all solicitor-client privileges against the former Attorney General.

Furthermore, we have heard recently the president of the Treasury Board, Jane Philpott, also expressed her concern over how the Prime Minister has handled this matter, causing her to resign from Cabinet.

Our NDP team will always stand for workers and the protection of jobs. Canadians expect companies and those operating them to behave in a just way. We don't believe big corporations should get free passes because they broke the law.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further speakers on this debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the opposition day motion in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith).

Do the members wish to have the motion read? Yes?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The opposition day motion says that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the Prime Minister and the federal government for politically interfering in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin, and condemn the poor and inappropriate treatment of the former Attorney General of Canada and the veiled threats made against her, and call for the creation of a public inquiry to provide Canadians the answers they deserve.

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

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): I'm requesting a recorded vote, please.

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

Order, please. The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am therefore directing that the division bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is the opposition day motion.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Bindle, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Fontaine, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Saran, Schuler, Smith (Point Douglas), Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Swan, Teitsma, Wharton, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Gerrard.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 46, Nays 1.

* (17:00)

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Madam Speaker: And the hour being just past 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

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