

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

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

| <b>Member</b>            | <b>Constituency</b>  | <b>Political Affiliation</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| ALLUM, James             | Fort Garry-Riverview | NDP                          |
| ALTEMEYER, Rob           | Wolseley             | NDP                          |
| BINDLE, Kelly            | Thompson             | PC                           |
| CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.     | Agassiz              | PC                           |
| COX, Cathy, Hon.         | River East           | PC                           |
| CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.      | Spruce Woods         | PC                           |
| CURRY, Nic               | Kildonan             | PC                           |
| DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.    | Charleswood          | PC                           |
| EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.     | Lakeside             | PC                           |
| EWASKO, Wayne            | Lac du Bonnet        | PC                           |
| FIELDING, Scott, Hon.    | Kirkfield Park       | PC                           |
| FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.   | Assiniboia           | 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, April 10, 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.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### **Bill 22—The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended)**

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage, that Bill 22, The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, Bill 22 enables reconciliation of business registration under requirements of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement. It creates a category for extra-provincial limited partnerships to enable registration across multiple Canadian jurisdictions. It requires corporations to track information of persons who control privately held corporations and eliminate the use of bearer warrants, separate registrar functions under The Cooperatives Act, and this amendment will allow Manitoba to meet its business registration and reporting reconciliation requirements under the New West Partnership act, effective January 1st, 2020.

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

Committee reports?

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to

table Manitoba Hydro's 2017-18 annual provincial review of demand-side management.

**Madam Speaker:** Further tabling of reports?

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Manitoba Labour Board 2017-2018 annual report.

**Madam Speaker:** Ministerial statements?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### South Winnipeg Garden Club

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honour the South Winnipeg Garden Club. This organization provides a gardening experience for over 160 gardeners and their families in my Riel constituency.

The club's origins date back to the 1930s with the Grey Nuns and the Fort Garry Horticultural Society. They have been leasing garden plots at St. Amant Centre since 2001. The Fort Garry Horticultural Society merged with community members who have been gardening at the St. Amant Centre for over 30 years, and in 2004 the name was changed to the South Winnipeg Garden Club to better reflect the membership and core activities of the club.

The club has regular meetings throughout the winter and provides opportunities to learn horticultural practices from other members and external gardening experts. The club promotes sustainable gardening practices, as well as organic and non-GMO gardening.

Over the years, the club has purchased composting equipment, irrigation systems, and have built equipment storage facilities in site, and in 2010, with funding assistance, a large, three-bin compost facility was constructed which turns leaves and garden waste into rich gardening material.

This dedicated group of gardeners provides the chance for community members to grow their own vegetables, working the land and enjoying the great outdoors. These gardens have also provided new Manitobans with the opportunity to grow vegetables

from their homeland and share their produce with the other members.

The members of the South Winnipeg Garden Club are an amazing group in my Riel constituency. They enhance our quality of life in the neighbourhood, and I am very proud to be able to honour them.

And I'd ask all my colleagues in the Manitoba Legislature to welcome and congratulate members of the South Winnipeg Garden Club, who are here to join us today.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Sustainable Development.

**Ms. Squires:** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of those here today entered into Hansard.

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

*South Winnipeg Garden Club: Richard Ellis, Jeannette Gelmich, Ron Koskie, Eric Malo, Jasmine Malo, Lise Malo, Heather Nawolsky, Chu Pei, Alf Poetker, Linda Poetker, Ron Stecy, Doris Wiebe, Evelyn Wray, Harry Wray, Marguerite Zaworonak.*

#### **Recognizing Frontier Collegiate Students**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Today I want to recognize three outstanding young people from Frontier Collegiate who are in the gallery with us.

Manitoba, they have devoted their time and energy to mastering their skills and they deserve congratulations.

Austin Halkett, 18 years old, hails from Brochet, Manitoba. He has completed the building construction program and soon will be seeking an apprenticeship in the building construction trade after he graduates this coming winter.

Jonathan McDougall from St. Theresa Point, Manitoba, is 19 years old. Jonathan is currently enrolled in the automotive service technician program. He will complete the AST program after the first semester of 2019 school year, and afterwards will seek employment as a welder. However, he's already purchased a welder and will be providing services this summer.

Finally, Alexis Ballantyne is 18 years old, from Traders Lake, Manitoba. She is enrolled in the automotive service technician program at Frontier and will be completing the AST program later this year.

Alexis is already making her mark, having competed in the northern skills competition at the University College of the North, where she placed second. Following her graduation, she plans to seek an apprenticeship in the automotive trade.

These three students represent some of the best we have. They are going to transform their trades with their creativity, talent and perseverance while they continue to hone their skills and strive for more. We are tremendously proud of what they have already accomplished.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Austin, Jonathan and Alexis for taking the time to be in the gallery today, and I want to thank their instructors and Frontier Collegiate for giving them such a great education. I'm excited to see where your talents will take you in the future and I wish you nothing but the best.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Flin Flon.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I ask for leave to enter the names of the students, their parents and instructors into Hansard.

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

*Frontier Collegiate Institute students: Alexis Ballantyne, Austin Halkett, Jonathan McDougall; parents: Oscar McDougall, Verna McDougall; staff: Shannon Burroughs, Brent Johnson, Sheldon Yaremchuk.*

#### **Don Dewar**

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, each year, the Dauphin Agricultural Society presents the Ron Brook Memorial Award to local individuals who've made lifelong contributions to agriculture.

The 2019 recipient of the award was Don Dewar, a career farmer with a passion for agriculture and farm politics who served his community, his province and his industry for many years.

In 1967 Don attended the University of Manitoba to pursue a degree in ag economics, before returning home to farm near Dauphin. Don got involved with the Manitoba Seed Growers' Association and was active with the Canadian seed growers from 1984 to 1991.

\* (13:40)

The 1980s saw farmers facing 20 per cent interest rates and depressed commodity prices, and

Don served on the Farm Debt Review Board to help struggling farmers. In the 1990s farm incomes did not improve, and Don Dewar played a significant role in organizing one of the largest ever farmer-led rallies to fight to save Canadian agriculture.

It was October 9th, 1991, on the steps of this Legislature, that Don Dewar jumped feet-first into the world of farm politics. Don spoke out about—against the cost pressures placed on producers and has been politically engaged ever since.

Don got involved with Keystone Agricultural Producers, serving as president from 1998 to 2002, and also served as a representative for the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Locally, in Dauphin, Don was a member of the Kinsmen club and K40, served on the parish council and a board member of the Dauphin Regional Airport Authority.

Don currently serves on the Parkland industrial hemp board and the Canadian Hemp Trade Alliance board.

The importance of agriculture is often overlooked and under-heard, and farmers like Don Dewar have acted to raise awareness and advocate on behalf of producers and various farm organizations.

Don's service to agricultural producers, to his community and his province is outstanding, and I want to recognize and congratulate Don Dewar for receiving the 2019 Ron Brook Memorial Award.

Thank you.

### **Health-Care Reforms**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** A valley of despair, Madam Speaker, that is what nurses and front-line workers are experiencing in our health-care system under this Premier (Mr. Pallister).

The Premier's policy of deep cuts have stressed health-care workers and undermined the quality and access to health care in our province. Nursing staff and front-line workers are stretched thin between staff shortages and forced overtime due to budget cuts. They—this Premier underspent the health-care budget last year by \$240 million, and this year they cut \$120 million from their budget.

At Seven Oaks hospital staff vacancy is at 34 per cent due to this understaffing. They had to close one of their ER rooms. By September this Premier plans to close Seven Oaks ER altogether,

Madam Speaker. St. Johns constituents rely on Seven Oaks for their health care.

This closure will leave north Winnipeggers without access to health-care services, forcing them to travel to one of the few remaining overcrowded ERs in the city. For people without reliable transportation or frequent health-care needs, having to travel 20 minutes or more to access health care is simply unacceptable, not to mention the long waits they face once they arrive at the ER.

This Premier refuses to listen to Manitobans. He simply does not care about Manitobans and their health-care needs. This Premier needs to reverse his decision and commit to keeping Seven Oaks ER open.

Miigwech.

### **Strathmillan Elementary School**

**Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James):** Did I have the privilege to introduce you to a group of very passionate young students from Strathmillan elementary school? They are accompanied by Principal Heather Palmer and staff. Two classes are here today to receive recognition for their effort to help Manitoba polar bears.

I am told these grade 2 and 3 students have been reading books, watching documentaries, researching websites and have interviewed experts from the Assiniboine Park Zoo. They learned that polar bears have become endangered due to global warming and climate change, and were eager to help and make positive change.

They discovered polar bear rescue and care teams are called to action by Manitoba Sustainable Development when there are polar bear cubs in need of rescue, with polar bear cubs not being able to survive without their mothers.

To raise awareness, they organized a polar bear walk, they did art wear based on—artwork based on the Arctic and they are currently writing a book to educate others about climate change and how it affects other arctic animals in Manitoba. These youngsters raised \$340 to support polar bear rescue and care teams.

Please join me as I recognize these young students and their teachers for their consideration and support of our endangered animals.

Madam Speaker, I ask leave to have the names of our guests entered into Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to include the names of the guests into Hansard? *[Agreed]*

*Strathmillan School students: Crystal Almendral, Henry Baldwin, Cole Beaulieu, Braelyn Broszeit, Cade Burley, Kristina Cadangan, Joshua Camara, Vincent Cao, Kaydence Clermont, Ricardo Coronado III, Lilianna Feheregyhazi, Kyler Fraser, Samuel Gamblin Robinson, Sina Gizaw, Katie Hamm, Tai Haney, Runa Hayward, Anna Hohertz, Emily Kostiuk, Elpiniki Kourgiali, Liam Lecuyer, Sylora McBurney, William McKechnie, Gabriela Molina, Jesse Moose, Kingston Muise, Lily Munson, Avah Patterson, Ronin Saseniuk, Grace Scott, Jacob Sharp, Sofia Shone, Jady Shorten, Brice Smith, Jersee Stevenson, Haiden Tran, Landon Toupin-Blanchard, Ryder Villanueva, Julie Young, Everhett Weiser, Nathan Lee Yap, Mica Zeif. Teachers, staff and volunteers: May Adanza, Irene Beaulieu, Ghizele Coronado, Kirsten Fraser, Emmanuel German, Susan MacLean-Pilat, Marnie McLaren, Sandra Marsh Hamm, Kristine Kosiak, Erin Murray, Trish Richardson, Heather Palmer, Lisa Taylor, Lynette Young.*

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Manitoba Hydro Rates Request to Cancel Increase

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, life is getting more expensive for the average family in Manitoba, and this Premier's hydro rate increases are a big part of the reason why. Right now, even after already increasing people's hydro bills, the Hydro board that he's named is asking for a 3 and a half per cent rate increase.

But according to these documents that are before the Public Utilities Board right now—that I will table for the First Minister—I'm quoting here: The projected financial results for 2019-20 has been revised to a net income of \$64 million without the proposed rate increase. End quote.

So, again, I'm tabling the document for the Premier, and if he glances at it before he throws it on the floor, he will see that Manitoba Hydro will clear \$64 million net income this year without a rate increase.

Will the Premier work with Hydro to ensure that Manitobans' bills don't go up this year?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Speaking of wasting Manitobans' money on unnecessary hydro

projects, Madam Speaker—which is something the NDP could do with authority and with personal experience—I would say to the member, where was that concern for Manitobans and their hydro bills when the members opposite were proceeding, against all market signals, to expand Manitoba Hydro with record levels of new investment.

When our purchasers of hydro were sending us the signal that they weren't interested in more, the NDP proceeded to invest literally billions of dollars in things like Keeyask and the bipole line.

Madam Speaker, these debts are real. The NDP ran up these Hydro debts and now Hydro faces this incredible burden, and the member now claims, belatedly, that he cares about Manitoba Hydro ratepayers and their bills.

Nobody's buying it, Madam Speaker. They created a massive mess. We're cleaning it up.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** This is what happens when you just throw documents on the floor without even reading them, Madam Speaker.

Yes, let's talk about Manitoba Hydro's current financial situation. What those documents show is that this year, without raising people's hydro bills one cent, Manitoba Hydro will clear \$64 million in net income. They don't have—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —to raise bills one cent and they will profit 64—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order, please.

I would ask the table to stop the clock.

I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please. I'm having difficulty hearing the member's question. We have a lot of students in the gallery, and I would please ask for everybody's co-operation. Although topics can get—you know, people can get hot under the collar, it's probably not a good idea to heckle the way the members are already at the very beginning of question period.

So I would ask for everybody on all sides: co-operation, please.

**Mr. Kinew:** Thanks, Madam Speaker.

The bottom line is this: if the Premier cancels his rate increase, it will save the average family \$45 this

coming year and Manitoba Hydro will still profit \$64 million.

So will he simply commit to the House today that he and his hand-picked Hydro board will withdraw their rate increase?

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, the direct consequences of the NDP manipulation of Hydro and the over-politicization of Hydro are being borne by Manitobans today.

Hydro experts didn't want to build the bipole line halfway around the province at a cost of in excess of \$5 billion, but the NDP wanted—for some unknown reason they wanted it built. No experts at Hydro said that it was a great idea to do that, but they went ahead with it anyway, and now this year, the member speaks about \$64 million of profit this year. The interest burden alone on Hydro debt is 10 times that high: \$675 million.

Madam Speaker, this is the problem with the NDP. They see a little money from the taxpayer or the ratepayer, they say, let's spend it real quick.

Madam Speaker, Hydro's going to get stronger under this government. It got weaker under the NDP.

\* (13:50)

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I've got a lot of sympathy, Madam Speaker. It must pain the Premier so much to have to go against all those financial arguments he's baking—been making over the years, right now, when he knows full well that Manitoba Hydro would make \$64 million even after paying for debt servicing this year: they will profit \$64 million even without having to raise peoples' Hydro bills by one penny.

So the case is very clear, because I would remind the Premier, \$64 million is more than twice what Hydro said was a comfortable amount of profit for them this coming year. So it seems as though raising people's hydro bills this year is completely unnecessary, and all the arguments the Premier have—has offered today simply bolster the case for that.

So will he simply sit down with the Hydro board that has not yet walked out on him and cancel the rate increases for people's hydro bills this year?

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate any question on walking out on obligation and principle from the member

opposite, Madam Speaker, and he has a record of doing so on a regular basis.

Hydro has a grand total, in just the next 10 years, of \$14 billion of additional debt that it will be assuming. I'm asking the member to develop a little foresight. Don't just think about today, think about the future for Manitoba, because Manitobans are thinking about it, and they know it was bleak under the NDP and they know it's brighter now.

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

### Fixed Election Date Law Government Position

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The electoral prospects for anybody running under that Premier's banner are looking bleaker by the day, Madam Speaker, and a big part of the reason why is because they break promise after promise in their 2016 election booklet.

Again, I'll repeat my request that the Premier read promise No. 2 on page 32, the document that I'll table here, which is their platform from 2016. Again, I would remind the House, this is a document that the Premier, the ministers, all of the backbenchers campaigned on, they went stumping on. They went a-knock-knock-knocking on doors right across the province, saying, we are going to respect the fixed election date; and not only will we do that, we'll actually go further and announce when the start of the election period will be.

So I'd ask the Premier to confirm for the House simply that he's going to reverse course on all this nonsense he's been peddling over the past few weeks and commit to respecting the fixed election date law in Manitoba.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Gosh, I love it when the NDP leader uses the word nonsense in a preamble.

They run up Hydro debt by billions of dollars, and then the member gives us the old crocodile tears thing about how he cares about Manitoba ratepayers. They run up the PST while telling Manitobans they won't; they do anyway, and then they say they care about money at the kitchen table.

They want a higher carbon tax than the federal government is going to impose. Because it's so good for them? No. Is it good for Manitobans? No. It's not good for anybody. It certainly doesn't help the

environment, and the member opposite is on the wrong side of every issue.

But he should be careful citing polls, because I seem to remember the NDP staged a rebellion because the polls didn't look good. He'd better not start celebrating too early, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** If the Premier keeps this up, he just might win the 2016 election.

On this side of the House we'll be standing up for health care. We'll be standing up democracy—for democracy for Manitobans in 2019, in 2020 and beyond. Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

So we know that the Premier clearly promised to uphold the fixed election date law in the last election. We also know that he promised to announce clearly when the start of the campaign period would be. We know why former-Premier Doer brought in these laws in the first place: because they guarantee a level playing field.

Now, maybe the Premier is afraid that he can't win a fair contest in the next election. Perhaps he's trembling in his boots, Madam Speaker. That's what all this spin, spin, spin is about. This is why the Finance Minister was out in the hall yesterday trying to lay the groundwork.

But we'd ask the Premier simply to confirm for the House today he will respect the fixed election date law.

**Mr. Pallister:** The member need not worry about my fear or the fear of my colleagues. Although he is an expert on instilling fear in others, Madam Speaker, he does not frighten us on this side of the House.

The fact remains, Madam Speaker, that the member referenced standing down. When he had the opportunity, he and his colleagues, to stand up for Manitobans, they stood down. And they had the chance to—when they had the chance to defend women who were being harassed, they stood down. When they had the chance to stand up for Manitobans and not invoke higher taxes, they stood down. When they had the chance, Madam Speaker, to stand up and defend the future of Manitoba families, they ran and hid. The member's going to do it again.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** We know full well that we're on the side of Manitobans and we call on this government to stop cutting health care and to keep the emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks open.

Now, we know that the Premier is afraid that he can't win a fair election in Manitoba and that's why he's laying the groundwork for an early call, but as they say, give the Premier a million dollars and the flexibility to start the contest when he chooses and maybe then it will be a fair fight, Madam Speaker.

In the meantime, we'll be out here talking about the issues that matter to Manitobans, keeping their hydro bills affordable, keeping health care strong in Manitoba—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —keeping jobs right across the province so people everywhere, including in the North, can work.

But in the meantime, will the Premier please tamper down all the controversy he's been raising these past few weeks and simply commit that he will respect the fixed election date law in Manitoba?

**Mr. Pallister:** We all know the NDP's concern, Madam Speaker. They want a subsidy from the people of Manitoba. They don't want Manitobans to get a break. They want a break.

That's what his predecessor wanted when he brought in the—Gary Doer did when he brought in the vote tax. He brought in a subsidy for lazy political parties, and the member is now leading a lazy political party that wants a subsidy at the expense of hard-working Manitoba seniors and families.

Madam Speaker, it's a sad, sad thing, but there's nothing new with the new leader of the NDP. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

### Effective Date for Tax Changes Finance Minister's Comments

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Speaker, yesterday the Finance Minister walked out into the Rotunda and told Manitobans his bizarre theory that tax changes may not come into effect on the date the government announced in their budget.

Could the government table the legal advice or whatever advice the Department of Finance might have given the minister to support that theory?



**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Acting Minister of Finance):** It certainly is a pleasure to answer the question from the member for Minto and I'll simply just remind the member that we are, on this side of the House, keeping our promises.

We promised to reduce the PST that the NDP went to every door in Manitoba and promised not to raise. Well, guess what? I can remind the member that it's going to happen on July 1st.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Well, I think this minister needs to have a word with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) and listen to what he told Manitobans out in the Rotunda yesterday.

We know the government can't back up the minister's theory because he made it up on the spot. On March 8th, the Premier went out to the media and said these tax changes were going to come into effect on the announced date, regardless of whether the supporting budget legislation passed or not.

That's what the Premier said. That's what the courts have said. That's what's happening in legislatures across the country, and the matter's long settled. But yesterday, the Finance Minister wants us to believe the minister's wrong, the Premier's wrong.

And why is he trying to manufacture an excuse for breaking the fixed date election law?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Well, Madam Speaker, we see clearly what the NDP is doing and Manitobans see it as well. Of course, in 2013 they did everything they could to increase the PST. They didn't go to committees. They didn't go to the protests. They broke the law. They went to court to fight against Manitobans.

\* (14:00)

Now they're doing exactly the opposite. They're doing everything they can in the House to stall the PST from going down. They're talking things out. They're delaying question period. They don't want Manitobans to get a break, Madam Speaker.

I'm not here to give them political advice, but it didn't work last time. They might want to try a different tack this time, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Well, I think Manitobans are having difficulty understanding this government's message because it now appears there's four different stories going around.

The Premier went out in front of the media and told Manitobans, back on March the 8th, that whatever happened there would be the 'implamation'—implementation of the tax measures in their budget.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance went out and said something entirely different. I'm not sure what the Minister of Municipal Relations just said. I'm not really sure what the Government House Leader just said.

But, you know, even though the Premier and I, we've had our issues, I think I'll agree with the Premier.

Will he confirm that he's correct and his Minister of Finance is wrong? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, this may be a rarity, Madam Speaker, but I have to confirm for the House that the member for Minto and I are in agreement and that he is confused. He jumped—he tried to jump off the Titanic, Madam Speaker, and he completely missed the lifeboat, and now he wants to stand up and say Manitobans don't deserve a break, he and his party do. He's wrong.

We'll stand up for Manitobans. The NDP hasn't for a long, long time.

### **Safe Consumption Site Request for Government Support**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Yesterday the Premier stood up and dismissed the views of Manitobans suffering from addictions. These are vulnerable and hurting individuals that in many cases, as the report states, have experienced, and I quote, pain, trauma, loss and situational crisis. As well, Madam Speaker, more than 50 per cent of the participants also had no permanent residence.

Participants felt strongly having a safe consumption space could provide an entry point to other services, and those using drugs said they desired more safe spaces while accessing services and resources.

Will the Premier stand up today, apologize for his dismissive comments and commit to opening a safe consumption site?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** While the member knows full well that the paper to which she refers does not actually indicate that conclusions could be drawn on that subject, even so, she can be reminded again that what she's referring to is a paper that includes a qualitative survey of 35 individuals who use drugs, in a context which was described as a small-group café-approach discussion. They wanted snacks. They wanted some chairs and couches. We do not believe that would be the basis on which to draw conclusions about the safety of such meth injection sites, which are not called for by any expert.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Front-line experts said clearly a key barrier to safe consumption space in Winnipeg is the archaic and regressive views of this Premier (Mr. Pallister), and front-line experts were clear they support a safe consumption site. One line—one front-line worker said, on page 49, for the minister and Premier's reference, and I quote: We would also need to be able to speak—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —out in support of supervised consumption sites without fear of reprisal. End quote.

Yesterday we heard the current minister—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —also dismiss the front-line expert's opinion and methodology of the study, which he just did right now, a study conducted by his own department and agencies.

Will the Minister of Health apologize this afternoon for dismissing the findings of the report—

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

**Mr. Friesen:** That member knows that this is a paper that is qualitative in its assessment of 35 individuals, some of whom said they would use these sites. I do note, though, that more of those same respondents said they'd prefer the RAAM clinics and thought that would be a significant way which they could receive treatment from.

But, in any case, the one issue that this paper is silent on is on the issue of the rising concerns around—in North America around these meth

injection sites and safety for the community, for users and the general public. What would the member say about those concerns being raised about safety?

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Page 65 of the report provides a summary of the evidence of the effectiveness of safe consumption spaces in Canada, including those on meth, and I quote, Madam Speaker: Newer SCS across Canada are serving greater proportions of people who use psychostimulants, including crystal meth, indicating that these services are valued by people who use drugs other than opioids. Sound evidence shows that SCS allow for safer injection, reduce the transmission of infectious diseases, are associated with lower 'overdoses'—overdoses, facilitate referrals to treatment and rehabilitation programs, benefit public order, are cost effective, do not contribute to crime and do not promote initiation of—into injection use.

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

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, I did not hear a question. Nevertheless, page 50 makes clear that drug users themselves in this paper said the greatest harm arises from the social environment in which they use drugs.

Last week Danielle Desroches, assistant manager for the Dollar Tree in Lethbridge said: Because of the consumption sites my workers are afraid to come to work. It gets scary.

And she says, and I quote: I just wish it was safer. Madam Speaker, if safety is the issue, will that member actually admit for once that it is exactly questions around safety that such sites invite?

#### **New Police Headquarters Request for Public Inquiry**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Winnipeg's mayor is once again calling the Province to call a public inquiry into the real estate scandals at City Hall. The fact that the construction of Winnipeg's police headquarters—our police headquarters—is still under criminal investigation by the RCMP speaks volumes about the depths of problems there were at City Hall. It seems to me, Madam Speaker, that the fact that there is an RCMP investigation is more reason to have a public inquiry, not less.

But, Madam Speaker, the RCMP will only tell us if charges are warranted. We still won't fully

understand what made it possible for all these things to happen without people knowing about it.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) was a minister of EPC at the time. He did the right thing and resigned. An inquiry could explain how someone with the insight and ability of the Minister of Finance could be deceived for so long.

The NDP never called an inquiry into Crocus.

Madam Speaker, will the Premier follow in their footsteps or do the right thing and call an inquiry?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, I do sincerely appreciate any question from a Liberal member on the rule of law.

As the member noted in his interesting preamble, this is a police investigation and it is under way. The member has now just advocated that he would like to see a concurrent public inquiry running in tandem with a police investigation.

I think we, at this point in time, certainly believe that the police investigation should be allowed to run its course, and if subsequent actions are required, we'll most certainly be taking those.

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

#### **Conflict of Interest Legislation Government Intention**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** We all know the Premier's always easily distracted by what's going on elsewhere in Canada, but he's not paying attention to what's going on in his own backyard.

One of the challenges the mayor of Winnipeg discussed was that Manitoba needs to update its conflict of interest and ethics laws. As the Conflict of Interest Commissioner said, we have the oldest and weakest conflict of interest laws in Canada. For example, the Premier has no legal obligation to disclose that he owns two corporations in an offshore tax haven.

The problem at the City of Winnipeg would—have their root in inadequate and weak provincial legislation.

Is this government going to bring in and pass effective conflict of interest legislation for the Province and municipalities before the next election?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, the member is like the little kid, Madam Speaker, that goes under

the Christmas tree and tears through the wrapping paper to find out what the present is, and then starts screaming that he wants it.

We've already said we're going to be proceeding with the legislation he now requests. I guess he just wants credit for us doing what we already said we're going to do.

\* (14:10)

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

#### **Conflict of Interest Commissioner Request for Independent Body**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Madam Speaker, we've been steadfast in calling for the creation of an independent conflict of interest and ethics commissioner.

Our current Conflict of Interest Commissioner is one of the only ones in Canada who has no powers of investigation. Manitoba needs an independent watchdog with bark and bite, and we need rules, due process, to make sure the punishment fits the crime.

The Premier once again has an MLA whose disgusting behaviour would've been kept secret until it ended up in the newspaper. It's pretty clear that the no-wrong-door and sensitivity training isn't working. The Premier's refusal to deal with these issues is sending a message to his own caucus, which is that as long as they keep their mouths shut, they can get away with it.

How is this any different than what the NDP did for so many years?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, we've, as a government, taken steps which actually put us in a position to say, quite honestly, we are leading the country in making improvements in terms of reducing cases or incidences of harassment and offensive behaviour in our workplace.

Where the previous government covered things up for a decade, we deal with issues professionally within days. That is the approach that needs to be taken. And, also, the confidentiality of those who are launching those concerns needs to be respected, and that is why we have laws under workplace health and safety that we must follow in respect of how these issues are handled—not internally, but in terms of disclosure.

This puts us in the position of looking like we're covering something up. But Madam Speaker, I

recognize that we have to accept the fact that if we're dealing with these issues professionally and appropriately, we have to be open to criticism such as the member has just launched without justification or without fairness.

### **Provincial Nominee Program Application Fee and Support Services**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** The new \$500 application fee means the minister has \$3.5 million of new revenue from newcomers applying to the Provincial Nominee Program.

The previous minister committed to using funds from newcomers to enhance their supports, but that hasn't happened.

I ask the minister: Will he remove this offensive fee on newcomers and deliver the programming that was promised?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training):** Well, speaking of programming, Madam Speaker, the programming that those who are applying to the Provincial Nominee Program wanted to see was that their applications would be adhered to and would be vetted in a relatively quick period of time, but under the NDP, individuals waited not months, but years. They waited in their home countries trying to get a response. They wanted to come to Canada, they wanted to come to Manitoba to start a new life, but they spent a good portion of their life waiting for their applications to be heard.

Because of this government and the former minister of Education, that is now down to six months, Madam Speaker, and we're proud of that.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** In a press release dated March 22nd, 2018, the former minister pledged that at least some of the funds from the \$500 fee would go towards new programs that support newcomers. A request for proposals was put out. It's nearly a year later. Millions of dollars have been taken from newcomers, but we simply aren't seeing the supports that were promised.

Can the minister tell us: Has this RFP been awarded?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, we know the most important thing to those who are applying through the Provincial Nominee Program—which celebrated its 20th anniversary last year, after having been

launched by Bonnie Mitchelson together with Rosemary Vodrey and Harold Gilleshammer in the 1990s—whether those applications would be reviewed in a timely manner, Madam Speaker.

Many had to wait years before they got any response at all under the NDP. They said that they supported the program and they said that they thought it was valuable, but it wasn't backed up by their actions. Because of the hard work of this government, this Premier (Mr. Pallister), the former minister of Education, those wait times are down to six months, Madam Speaker.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** Two questions; no answers.

Madam Speaker, the minister is forcing new costs onto newcomers: \$500 is a lot of money for this—for those coming to Canada for the first time. My constituents and many newcomers are calling on the minister to provide more services for newcomers and eliminate the \$500 fee.

Will the minister listen?

**Mr. Goertzen:** We're always listening, Madam Speaker, and one of the things that we heard very clearly from those who are looking to come to Canada to start a new life, either individually or with their families, is it was taking years to get their application through the Provincial Nominee Program heard. That was the clearest thing that they said to us. They wanted to come to Canada, they wanted to come to Manitoba, they wanted to start a new life, they wanted to have a new and a better life for themselves and for their family, but they couldn't do it because there was such a backlog.

Because of this government and the hard work of the former minister, that has been reduced, Madam Speaker.

### **Young Farmer Support Loan Rebate Increase**

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** Manitoba farms feed the world and none of that would be possible without the dedication of our hard-working farm families.

Farming is a rewarding way of life, but it's not without its challenges. Changing weather patterns, fluctuating commodity prices and now a federal carbon tax supported by the Manitoba NDP are all placing financial pressure on farm families.

Our government understands that agriculture is the backbone of the rural economy and that our young farmers are crucial to ensuring the industry's continued growth.

Can the Minister of Agriculture please tell the House about steps our government is taking to support young farmers here in the province of Manitoba?

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture):** I thank my colleague from Dauphin for that great question.

One of our government's priorities: to increase young farmers within the agriculture sector. As part of Budget 2019, the Manitoba government is going to increase the maximum rebate program on loans from \$150,000 to \$200,000, also increase the number of young farmers rebates—help us focus on growing the agriculture sector. As a 'dult' of the expansion, lifetime maximum rebate will increase from \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Agriculture is lifeline of our economy within the province of Manitoba. In regards to the 'carmet'—federal carbon tax, we're going to stand with our farm families, unlike the NDP.

### **Provincial Nominee Program Skilled Worker Applications**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has been absolutely critical to Manitoba's population growth and the well-being of our economy.

I was hoping the minister could share with us as to how many skilled-worker applications there were in 2018. What percentage of them were given a certificate and how many certificates is this government planning to issue in 2019?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question.

In 2017 there were 4,740 applications through the Provincial Nominee Program. In 2018 there was 5,119. That was a record number over the two decades, Madam Speaker.

I know that this member has often brought forward cases to my office. We appreciate her 'advocacy' for those who she brings forward. My officials are always willing to work with her and others in this House, and I know that she'll continue to bring forward cases to advocate for on behalf of

those who want to apply to the PNP program. I welcome that, Madam Speaker.

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

### **Fee Removal Inquiry**

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I thank the minister for his continued co-operation with all the case files from my office.

Madam Speaker, this year marks 20 years of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. When the program first began, it only took a few months to process an application. Under the NDP government and their mismanagement, the program became so backlogged that Manitoba was no longer even accepting applications.

Now, Madam Speaker, this government implemented a \$500 acceptance fee for new immigrants, and the former minister told us that it was going towards lowering the backlog.

Seeing how the backlog is getting better—and, Madam Speaker, I can attest to this—does the minister plan on removing the \$500 acceptance fee?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member for that thoughtful question. She is right. The application deadline—or the wait time, has gone down significantly.

\* (14:20)

In terms of the fee that she refers to, it will generate about \$3 million. We have now selected the various organizations to which that money will be attributed to. It will be, as promised, go to settlement services, to language services, Madam Speaker. The member opposite will hear very, very shortly the different organizations that will be receiving additional funding for those settlement services. It'll certainly benefit new Canadians, new residents, and it'll benefit them across the province. I think she'll like the news that's coming shortly, but I would certainly appreciate her feedback when it does come.

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

### **Meeting with Constituents**

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I do look forward to the news.

Whether it's in the North End of Winnipeg, in the community of Neepawa, or in the minister's riding of Steinbach, as a whole our province needs the Provincial Nominee Program.

I'm wondering if the minister can share with us if he has been working with other levels of government with respect to immigration and if he would, in his new position, agree to come down to my weekly McDonald's again to meet with constituents who have ideas for the program.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Certainly, the member, I know, who's been a strong advocate for the PNP program recognizes that we've added some additional streams for individuals who—can apply through, including international students and those who are taking apprenticeship training, Madam Speaker.

I did have the opportunity to meet with Minister Hussen a few weeks ago to talk about the future of the program and to ensure that it continues to grow and to hopefully expand and to ensure that the qualifications are proper.

I did have the opportunity, when I was Health minister, to join her at one of her weekly or bi-weekly McDonald's luncheons or suppers and meet with her constituents. I certainly would commit to doing that again, but only if she's buying, Madam Speaker.

#### **Discussions Involving MPI Request for Premier's Recusal**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** The facts are clear: the Premier—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —makes thousands of dollars each year from his 'insurancy' agency. Right now, today, he does that, and one source of his money is the accident insurance policies his company sells, and that is a fact.

That is the very same type of insurance MPI is authorized to sell: a clear conflict. The Premier has a direct pecuniary interest in the decisions MPI takes.

Will the Premier tell this House if he has removed himself from all discussions involving MPI?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families):** Madam Speaker, the member—I know it's recycle Wednesday. These questions have been asked before in this House. We know that members opposite like their smear campaigns against not only the Premier, but other members of the Legislature, including some of their own members.

But we think this kind of smear campaign is unbecoming of a member of this House and I think

the member opposite—this has been asked and answered. Enough is enough, please end this smear campaign.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Madam Speaker, the Premier can evade, he can avoid, he can refuse to answer questions and he can mislead Manitobans. But the facts are simple: the Premier has a direct financial interest in a company that sells the same kind of insurance—the exact same kind—as MPI sells.

And I table two documents—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —that show you can buy additional accident insurance through MPI, which is the same class of insurance under The Insurance Act that the Premier sells. The potential for conflict is real.

Has the Premier recused himself from all discussions regarding MPI?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I know the member opposite is having difficulty coming up with new questions to ask because our government is simply doing a great job for Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

But, Madam Speaker, on this particular line of questioning, the question has been asked and it's been answered.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** The disrespect this Premier shows for his obligation isn't really surprising. The manner the Premier misleads Manitobans is not surprising, but the potential for conflict and for the Premier to benefit personally is real.

Discussions this Premier makes regarding the types of insurance MPI sells—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —and the manner it sells those policies can have a direct impact on the business the Premier currently owns, operates and receives income from.

Will the Premier acknowledge the facts and recuse himself from all discussions regarding MPI?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Wherever potential for conflict exists in any discussion, Madam Speaker, I would always recuse myself from that discussion.

Let me also share with the members there is an important message here that all members should be made aware of; it was just placed on my desk.

Environment Canada has just issued a warning for around 7 o'clock this evening. There are going to be whiteout conditions when the puck drops between the Blues and the Jets, and I know all of us want to join in wishing the Winnipeg Jets the absolute best of fortune.

**An Honourable Member:** Shameful.

**Mr. Pallister:** The shame—member—Madam Speaker, I hear the member for Flin Flon shout shame.

I know—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —that he is not a Jets fan, Madam Speaker. Nonetheless—nonetheless—most Manitobans are, and I know that we stand together, most of us, certainly all of us on this side of the House, in wishing the Jets the very best in this year's Stanley Cup playoffs.

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

**An Honourable Member:** Matter of privilege, Madam Speaker.

#### MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, on a matter of privilege.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** At approximately the 13-minute mark in question period, the member for St. Norbert yelled across the Chamber, and I quote: Sit down, Flor.

It is the member for Logan's (Ms. Marcelino) right and privilege as a sitting MLA to be able to get up in the House and ask questions whether or not members opposite like or appreciate those questions.

The member for St. Norbert clearly attempted to intimidate the member for Logan. It is a form of bullying for a male member of this Chamber to yell out to a female member of this House. It is a violation of the member for Logan's privileges and rights as a sitting MLA.

I ask, Madam Speaker, that this matter be taken seriously, as I'm sure that we all want to be able to operate and execute our duties in this House in a safe way, in a respectful way and in a way that allows us to do our job as sitting MLAs.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to refer this matter to a committee of the House.

**Madam Speaker:** Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

**Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert):** I fully, unequivocally, apologize to the member for Logan and to all members of the House for my conduct. I know I'm not known for this, and I apologize. I am a little bit embarrassed because, as a football official I had got caught, and you know what? I respect the rules of the House, and I respect the members on the other side of the House, and I fully, unequivocally, apologize to the member of Logan, to all my colleagues on all sides.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the member for—and is the member for Tyndall Park rising on the same matter of privilege?

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** I guess I would hear the member if there is additional information, but I would indicate that the member for St. Norbert has apologized unequivocally, and I would hope that that takes care of the matter.

**Mr. Marcelino:** It does not end it.

The member from St. Norbert also tweeted on Twitter something insulting, and it's one of the reasons why I'm standing up. Social media has a way of inflicting injury. And when we were trying to console the bereaved family of Jimboy Adao, it was not out of politics—

\* (14:30)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

I had asked the member if he was referring to this same matter of privilege, and he seems to be on a different topic right now. So if the member wishes to raise something else separately, then I would ask him to do that.

As far as the current matter of privilege that was just brought forward by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Reyes) has apologized unequivocally. It is normally procedure in this House that we would then accept that apology and the matter should be taken care of.

I would ask now if that matter is now concluded, is the member now raising—rising on another matter of privilege?

**Mr. Marcelino:** I'm not. I'm not accepting the apology on its own. There is a Twitter account where it says something embarrassing about the—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

The member has now taken this a bit further and is now reflecting on the ruling of the Chair. That is unacceptable.

If the member is wishing to move a new matter of privilege—but I have now ruled on this issue, this matter of privilege. That takes care of it. And in the House—and the member's been here long enough, should know that that takes care of the issue.

If he wishes now to rise on something different without then reflecting on my ruling and on the Chair of this House, then I would ask him to move a new either point of order or matter of privilege that he wishes to move forward on.

**Mr. Marcelino:** I apologize to the—Madam Speaker, for reflecting on your judgment, and I'm sorry if I offended you. It's never meant to do that. I just want to make it of record that the member from St. Norbert inflicted injury upon the insult.

**Madam Speaker:** I would indicate, then, as has been determined, the—this matter has been resolved. My mic is on?

I would indicate that this matter of privilege has been resolved accordingly. And, hopefully, then, we can now move on.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Madam Speaker:** And I have a ruling for the House.

On March 15th, 2019, the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) raised a matter of privilege contending that comments made by the honourable Minister of Education had breached the privileges of the House because a letter had been received by the chair of the Winnipeg School

Division Board of Trustees requesting an apology for remarks made by the minister.

At the conclusion of his remarks, the honourable member for Concordia moved, and I quote, that the Minister of Education's statements, which are an attack on the administration of Manitoba school boards, be moved to an all-party committee immediately. End quote. The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) also offered advice to the Chair. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. I thank both honourable members for their contributions to the matter of privilege.

In raising privilege, members must satisfy two conditions in order for the matter to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege: it needs to be demonstrated that the issue was raised at the earliest opportunity, and also that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order for the matter to be put to the House.

The honourable member for Concordia advised that he was raising the issue at the earliest opportunity, as he had only received a copy of the letter a few minutes prior, and I accept the word of the honourable member that it was the earliest opportunity.

Regarding the second condition of whether a prima facie case of privilege was demonstrated, I would note that House of Commons Speakers Fraser, Parent and Milliken have reminded members of the importance of exercising fairness with respect to those who are not in a position to defend themselves. This sentiment can be found on pages 98 and 99 of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition by Bosc and Gagnon.

However, it is also important to remember that it is not a violation of privilege for a member to express opinions under the protection of freedom of speech.

I would reiterate for the House that parliamentary privilege provides protection for members of the Legislative Assembly but does not protect the public or civil servants, as has been ruled in the House on numerous occasions by Speakers Walding, Dacquay, Hickes and Reid.

The minister is protected by privilege for comments that he makes in the House under the protection of freedom of speech. Persons outside of the House can contact members requesting apologies



for comments—of the privileges of the House if individuals write to request such an apology. Nor can members be held liable for statements made during a proceeding of Parliament or of the Legislature.

With the greatest of respect, I rule that a prima facie case of privilege has not been demonstrated.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Respectfully and ever so gently, I do—*[interjection]*—miigwech, challenge your ruling. Sorry, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The ruling of the Speaker—the ruling of the Chair's been challenged.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

#### Recorded Vote

**Ms. Fontaine:** A recorded vote, please, Madam Speaker.

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

Order. 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 shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

#### Division

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

#### Yeas

*Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.*

#### Nays

*Allum, Fontaine, Gerrard, Klassen, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.*

\* (15:40)

**Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Yeas 31, Nays 14.

**Madam Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

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**Madam Speaker:** Petitions?

#### House Business

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (Second Opposition House Leader):** On House business, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member—the honourable member for River Heights, on House business.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, on House business and in accordance with rule 2(9), I'd like to table the title of the bill designated by the second opposition party for this Fourth Session of the 41st Legislature.

Our designated bill for session is Bill 12, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced by the honourable House leader for the second opposition that in accordance with rule 2(9) they have tabled the title of the bill designated by the second opposition party for this Legislature.

Their designated bill is Bill 12, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act, and the list was tabled.

#### PETITIONS

##### Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

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

### Daylight Saving Time

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The loss of sleep associated with the beginning of daylight savings time has serious consequences for physical and mental health and has been linked to increased traffic accidents and workplace safety—injuries.

(2) According to a Manitoba Public Insurance news release, collision data collected in 2014 showed that there was a 20 per cent increase in collisions on Manitoba roadways following the spring daylight savings time change when compared to all other Mondays of 2014.

(3) Daylight savings time is associated with a decrease in productivity the day after clocks are turned forward with no corresponding increase in productivity when the clocks are turned back.

(4) There is no conclusive evidence that daylight savings time is effective in reducing energy consumption.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to amend The Official Time Act to abolish daylight saving time in Manitoba effective November 4, 2019—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Graydon:**—resulting in Manitoba remaining on Central Standard Time throughout the year and in perpetuity.

And this petition has been signed by Patrick French, Stephan French [phonetic], Brian Remus and many, many more.

### Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Signed by Agnieszka Desjardins, Alexandra Scrinzi, Courtney Burns and many others.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this position-petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Signed Carla Rak, Michael Epp, Amelia Curran and many others.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** I rise today to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

\* (15:50)

(2) Madam Speaker, licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually. The cost of living continued to increase annually.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact, Madam Speaker, on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase. I should clarify, Madam Speaker—as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase—I hear the member from Elmwood just asking me to repeat that and reinforce that. Number 5, Madam Speaker—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I would just urge the member there's not to be repetition of phrases and I would ask the member to please read her petition as it's laid out before her.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Okay, Madam Speaker, thank you.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early—  
[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** —childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated'.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce 'shortage'—shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Crystal Bisson, David Lambert, Patty Deschamps and many other Manitobans.

### **Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Access to quality health care is a fundamental right of all Manitobans, no matter where they live.

(2) The Premier has slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary health care they need.

(3) The budget of the northern regional health authority has been slashed by over \$6 million, which has negatively affected doctor retention programs and the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(4) With limited services in the North, the Premier is forcing families and seniors to travel further for the health care they need.

(5) On November 6th, 2018, the northern regional health authority announced that obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital would be suspended, with no discussion regarding when they will be reinstated.

(6) The result of this decision is that mothers in Flin Flon and the surrounding area will have to travel at least an hour and a half to The Pas, creating unnecessary risk for mothers and babies.

(7) The people of Flin Flon are concerned for the health and safety of mothers-to-be and their babies, including the extra physical and financial stress that will be placed upon them by this decision of the provincial government.

(8) There has been no commitment from this provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the northern patient transport program.

(9) Flin Flon General Hospital is a regional hub that serves several communities on both sides of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

(10) Because this provincial government has refused to invest in much-needed health-care services in The Pas, the hospital in The Pas may not be able to handle the extra workload created by this decision.

\* (16:00)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reinstate obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to ensure obstetric services continue to be available on a regular basis.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Tamra Martin, Sandra Wheeler, Marco Blackman and many other Manitobans.

### **Early Learning and Child-Care Programs**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Signed Lara Johnson, Lisa Pham, Harvey Heather and many, many Manitobans.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and childhood–child-care, pardon me, Madam Speaker—programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

Three—sorry, I'm having a hard time hearing, lot of noise in the Chamber. Sorry, Madam Speaker.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Signed, Madam Speaker, by Lois Johnson, Katherine Ann Verchina [*phonetic*] and Jodine Droux and many more Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

\* (16:10)

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

This petition was signed by many, many Manitobans.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a

fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding to licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

And this petition is signed by Robyn Jones, Linda Rempel, Jackie Palatiski [*phonetic*] and many other Manitobans.

**An Honourable Member:** Point of order.

#### Point of Order

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

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

I know the members opposite have suggested that—and I believe them—that petitions are serious matters, that Manitobans sign them to bring forward their views and I respect those views; I did in opposition, I do in government.

But I do think it brings disrespect to the petitions that the members themselves have said should be listened to respectfully, when they're reading them in the way that they are. And I know that it won't be reflected in Hansard, Madam Speaker, but any reasonable person listening to an audio recording or if they were in the House here listening wouldn't feel this is a reasonable way to treat petitions which Manitobans have brought forward, and would expect them to be read in a respectful way.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** I appreciate the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) getting up on a point of order.

I do just want to put it on the record that it is incumbent on us on this side of the House to actually take very seriously the 26,000 signatures on these petitions. And, if that means that we very methodically and succinctly and articulately read every petition that is put before us in a comprehensive manner, then that is our responsibility to do so. And so I would disabuse the Government House Leader and officially put on the record, Madam Speaker, that we take this very seriously.

And, you know, let me just take a moment, Madam Speaker, to also say *miigwech* to each and every one of those 26,000 Manitobans that took the time to sign those memberships and to also entrust those petitions in—with us and also with our brethren in the Liberal Party.

*Miigwech*, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just point out for the member that points of order are not to be used for debate, and I would also indicate that this isn't a point of order because there are no rules about how to read petitions.

So therefore I respectfully indicate that that is not a point of order.

#### **Addictions Services— Brandon and Western Manitoba**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that requires co-ordinated responses from the health-care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise here—on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of methamphetamine and opioids, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

\* (16:20)

(3) Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need.

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using methamphetamine and opioids, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addictions facilities in Manitoba.

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addictions, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy and direct access to free 'noloxalone.'

And this is signed by Don Webster, Lisa Hoglaide, Don Thompson and many, many other Manitobans.

#### **Early Learning and Child-Care Programs**

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) Early learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

(6) Accessible, affordable and quality early learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Terry Thompson, Bridget Thompson, Angela McDonald and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, could you please call for second reading and debate Bill 16, the budget 'impletation' tax statute amendment act.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will resume second reading debate of Bill 16 this afternoon.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 16—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2019

**Madam Speaker:** So I will now call Bill 16—second reading, Bill 16, The Budget Implementation and

Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2019, standing in the name of the honourable member for Logan, who has 17 minutes remaining.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** Last year, the per vote subsidy was eliminated. This year the party rebate is being eliminated. Another provision in the BITSA bill is increasing allowable annual personal contribution from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

What the Pallister government is doing is exactly copying from the Harper Conservative playbook. It was right after the 2008 elections; the Harper government introduced legislation to remove the quarterly allowance to political parties. It came to fruition after winning a majority government in 2011. The quarterly allowance was officially ended in spring of 2015.

\* (16:30)

Madam Speaker, surely the Conservative Party members will say taxpayers' money should not be used to pay part of the campaign election expenses of political parties and that parties should, instead, fundraise. That is correct and should be done, and is the prevailing practice already by all political parties. However, the direct contribution of citizens should not be discounted, as it will lend towards transparency, accountability and effectively result in good governance.

When contributions—when citizens are able to actively participate in elections with their financial contributions, they become stakeholders and active participants in the democratic process, where transparency and accountability are assured. When public financing is at play, the independent electoral body—in our case, Elections Manitoba, assumes greater role in regulating, overseeing and implementing the election loss and procedures.

While on this, Madam Speaker, it will be recalled that in recent past, Elections Canada, as well as Elections Manitoba, have prosecuted some candidates, which ended in convictions over election overspending.

Two prominent Conservative candidates easily come to mind: the honourable Vic Toews during the 1999 provincial election, where he lost to NDP candidate, Harry Schellenberg. The other is former MP, Dean Del Mastro, former parliamentary secretary, who often spoke for then-Prime Minister Harper against election fraud allegations hurled against Conservatives.



The elections body can prosecute elections-related violations to the full extent of the law without fear or favour, as public funding is used in the rebate to candidates of political parties.

When public funds are involved, strict adherence to rules are expected of everyone. Therein lies the importance of public financing in the conduct of elections and in levelling the playing field. With taxpayers participating in elections—in election funding, seekers of public office will not be only limited to candidates with connections to donors who can fork several thousands easily. With public financing, elected officials are beholden to no interest groups or big donors but to the public, who contributed to the candidates and their party's election expenses.

The other egregious provision in this bill is increasing the yearly contribution to political parties to \$5,000 per individual per year.

So a rich family of four, for example, who is a friend of the Conservative Party, can potentially donate \$20,000 of personal funds a year or \$80,000 over the life of a political term.

Is there something wrong with that? I believe there is. If a constituent will generously contribute without—a big amount without receiving substantial tax credit, there could be a chance to peddle influence over that elected official or that generous donor has interests that the donor may want protected or enhanced.

In contrast, grassroots-level donors willingly supporting a candidate out of hard-earned dollars to the extent that it could even be sacrificial giving on their part, has no vested interest but to support the candidate they believe will work towards making their community safe, their livelihood vibrant and secured, social programs intact and serve with honesty and dedication, reduce or eliminate—thus reducing or eliminating an elected official's being beholden to big donors.

While at this, I recall, in one of my fundraising letters, a constituent responded by giving me an envelope with \$30 and a note saying that she is unable to contribute more because she is only a minimum-wage earner and has family obligations.

I can fully relate to that donor and that constituent and I'm—I was so grateful for her. That note tugged my heart and heightened my resolve to serve all of my constituents at all times to the best of my ability and possibility.

We all know how much rebate a donor or contributor receives, but I would like to state that political contributions are subsidized via a personal income tax credit. That credit is 75 per cent of the first \$400 contributed, 50 per cent of the amount between \$400 and \$750, and 33.33 per cent of the amount over \$760.

So a grassroots contribution of \$400 and under are quite popular and has to be encouraged. While big contributions would certainly be a windfall, personally, I would appreciate contributions in this amount, because the people from—the people that I talk to because I know their situation in life and these, I believe, are sacrificial giving on their part and they still give because they believe that I will do the best I can while in this position of service to the public.

Madam Speaker, I am a living example of one who was encouraged to put my name on the ballot but was hesitant to do so despite long years of experience working actively in my community starting from high school, and those years were in the Philippines up to the time we immigrated to Manitoba in 1982 and years after that.

I recall very vividly one fine day I was minding my very small business—very small business, at the Garden City shopping mall when three members of the New Democratic Party—first, when I got a call from a friend, who's an active NDP member, asking me to stay put; don't leave my storefront because they'll be seeing me in a few hours.

\*(16:40)

And I asked why, and he said—by the way, his name is Les Crisostomo. And Les said, don't ask questions now. We'll explain it to you later. But just don't leave the store. We will be there before noon. So I—got me thinking why did—what did I do wrong? Why will they want to speak to me?

So I phoned my husband, and he said—and I related the story, and he said, oh, they might want you to be a candidate for them. And I said, no way. It's already into the second week of the campaign period. Must be something else. There was already a nominated candidate. All nominations were done, and campaign is in full force already for all constituencies.

Lo and behold, they came and asked me to be candidate for then the constituency of Wellington because they said the nominated candidate had to

bow out, there were shenanigans happening, and they needed a candidate right away.

I said, give me some time to think it over. Oh, there's no time for you to think it over. It's already into the second week of the campaign period. So I responded, at least let me ask my family. I cannot make the decision by myself. Sure, ask your family, but we need an answer before end of the day today.

So I did ask my family, and each one of my adult children said, it's up to you, Nanay, or Mother. Do you think you can handle that? Do you know what politics is?

So it's—I did get the full support, but they left everything to my decision. And then I thought there's one more person I should ask, and that person was my church minister, Reverend Dr. Raymond Cuthbert.

Thankfully, he took the phone right away, and when I told him the story, he said, Auntie Flor, you have enough integrity. Go for it.

I thought about it and prayed about it, and then I remembered I needed to respond right away to the folks at NDP. So I phoned them and said, yes, I'm taking the challenge. I like—I think they were happy that I did—took the challenge.

When I went home that evening from the store, still I was kind of half-hearted. Oh, by the way, the reason why I—at first I told them I'm not interested is because of money. I told them I cannot be a candidate; I don't have money. This is a very small store, and I'm not realizing much from it. But they said, no, money will come if you are the candidate. You can fundraise. So somehow I got assured, although that was my biggest, biggest reservation.

Anyway, back to the—my story. In the evening I went home, still not certain if I am the right candidate. So, as usual, after dinner, I checked my email and I saw an email from a friend who works as librarian in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

And in her email was a link to a YouTube, and so I clicked the link, and lo and behold it was a music video by a famous Filipino singer who was singing Lead Me Lord, the title of the song. The singer was Gary Valenciano. And in that song were visuals of children in need, families in need and also a path, a well-trodden path versus a rough road.

So I listened to that music. I knew that music before, but I—when I listened to it the first time, it was different. I felt different. I listened another time. The third time. And, by the fourth time, tears were welling in my eyes, and I said, Lord, if this is the leading that you want me, yes, I'll accept the challenge and I'll do my best, if this particular work will lead me into helping people, helping communities, to the best of my knowledge.

So Sunday came, in our church—it's a very small church, everyone knows everyone, and I asked for prayer from my church family to help me discern the—

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

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** I would like to put a few words regarding this BITSA discussion.

First of all, I think, instead of criticizing government, when I have to budget my time—so, first, I will bring forward some issues which are very important to me and my community, and community in general, and especially immigrant communities. And so I will take it issue by issue.

First of all, I would like to talk about Seniors' School Tax Rebate. That was, and is, a very important issue to me and many seniors in Manitoba. I brought this issue to the caucus; in the NDP caucus, first, there was distance from the members, but I was able to convince that seniors need a break, because after 2007 when I got elected and I talked to many seniors in The Maples area—and they were asking: we paid school tax part of our whole life, why we cannot take a tax break, because if we take that tax break, we can stay longer in our houses.

And one thing, they're emotionally attached to the houses, their homes. And the other thing, government can save money on this initiative because if we stay in our houses, we may have better grandchildren, our other children who stay with us. So government don't have to provide us those services.

And also, if we go to affordable housing, government still have to assist us—Rent Assist, on the Rent Assist side—and government will win and we will win. And so I said, okay, I will discuss with the—in the caucus, discuss with the premier.

I was able to discuss in the caucus and with the premier. That's hard; it will cost too much. I said, yes, it will cost too much, but, on the other hand, think about their emotional and mental health. We

will save money on that side. And also think about that when people are in their middle age, and they are thinking about retiring, where will they retire, where will they stay?

\*(16:50)

And that means the immigrants are others—and the seniors, other residents of Manitoba, they will think about their old age. If they can get this kind of break, they will stay in Manitoba. Otherwise, they will move to the other provinces.

By making these arguments—there are also argument, what about the people who live on rent? What kind of break do they have? I think I told them they're already getting Rent Assist. They're already getting all the other benefits.

But these people who own houses, they worked hard all their life, even they may not have had taken break to fly or see somewhere else. And other people may have chose to just stay or rental—or rent, but maybe flying all over the place, but I am not against the people who are on rent.

But I am in favour of the people, in favour of these seniors, who can stay longer in their houses. They will be mentally—they will be healthy and they will have—they'll emotionally fulfill their expectations.

So, by doing that, at the end, caucus agreed, okay, sure, we will do it. But still, first year, they did not do it. I—next year, I waited, I waited, and next year I said, listen, I feel ashamed of when I go to people's houses because I thought we will give them break. And at the end premier and caucus agreed.

First year, they gave \$235 rebate, irrespective of income. Next year, they gave \$470 and I was not satisfied. I said, no, no, no, we must have to eliminate this school tax for the seniors. They already paid—already have paid enough.

So then I was able to convince them, let us try something so at least the majority of seniors can get that break. So we approved \$2,300 school tax rebate if you are 700—or, rather, \$300–\$3,000. It means you got that break.

And so, in that way, more than 90 per cent of seniors could have got a school tax—eliminated their school tax. So that's why the main reasons, so we—I convinced, I argued and we announced that 2016, that it will be \$2,300 school tax rebate.

So, but then there was election. Same thing, PC also said, yes, we are going to do the same thing. But what happened after the election? PC did not keep the promise and, instead of giving \$2,300, they kept it to \$470.

Also, they attached other strings. If a family makes \$40,000, they will get a full amount, \$470. If they get more than that, I think it's \$53,000, then that will be zero. If it is less than that, then other deduction will click and it won't be \$470, it will be less than that.

So that is really disappointing. It does not matter which government it is. I wish it could have been—done that, but we could have saved quite a bit of money on the back side and the seniors could have been happy.

Then I brought other issue. Perhaps this government also budgeted some money in that one. That is third language compulsory in the school system—when I say third language, other than French and English—because it's very important we understand other cultures. Only we will understand other cultures better after we know their language, after we can read their history.

Actually, I also emphasize that one time there should be optional history subject from the other countries—say, from India, say, from Philippines—so our children will understand where we come from and what are the multicultural values, and that will help understanding not only that way, also we will be understanding each other's cultures and values and that really—I emphasize to the Education minister—former Education minister—and he said, yes, I agree with you, but we cannot find the teachers.

So I think when he said we cannot find the teachers, I think he was talking about the French teachers, but you can find teachers in Tagalog and in Punjabi, and so you can find teachers, and they can teach those languages.

There's another interesting story, Madam Speaker. When I proposed that history—optional history, and I was going door to door talking to people, one person said, why we should pay—have our tax to pay part of your history?

I said, yes, I agree with you, but I also pay the taxes; those taxes will not pay the taxes. It means I also should get benefit of those taxes too.

So, like, why it's important knowing the history and knowing the language. For example, last week, Madam Speaker, some Sikhs came over here. They want April Sikh heritage month, but if the same thing I tell my children—they go, what's the use of that?

They won't understand that unless I explain who are the people out of 130, 93 people were freedom fighters, while the Punjabis who were hanged. What made them to sacrifice their life to have democracy, to have freedom? So that will make me to—they will understand why the tenth guru sacrificed his whole family for the sake of human rights.

So, to understand the human rights, will you to understand the democracy, why people sacrifice their life in those countries, it's important to teach their

language, to teach their history so that we can understand where this is Sikh April month—Sikh heritage month come from.

Although I would not emphasize that a religion should be used for politics, but it should—but when we come to the human rights, we must think about that, where we come from, what kind of these people are who are asking for having this month.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member will have 17 minutes remaining.

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, April 10, 2019**

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