

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

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

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

<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

Thursday, May 9, 2019

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills?

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** I'd like to ask for a quorum call.

\* (13:30)

**Madam Speaker:** A quorum count has been requested. The division bells will ring for one minute.

I would ask all members present to rise in their places and ask the Clerk at the table to count out those present.

*A QUORUM COUNT was taken, the result being as follows – Members present: 45.*

**Madam Speaker:** A quorum is present.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs  
Fifth Report

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

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Fifth Report.*

**Meetings**

*Your Committee met on May 8, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.*

**Matters under Consideration**

- **Bill (No. 2) – The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités (exigences accrues à l'égard des codes de conduite visant les conseillers)**

- **Bill (No. 13) – The Private Vocational Institutions Act/Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés**
- **Bill (No. 14) – The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2019/Loi de 2019 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services**
- **Bill (No. 21) – The Legislative Building Centennial Restoration and Preservation Act/Loi sur la restauration et la préservation du Palais législatif marquant son centenaire**

**Committee Membership**

- Hon. Mr. FIELDING
- Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN
- Mrs. GUILLEMARD (Chairperson)
- Mr. LAMONT
- Mr. MALOWAY
- Mr. MICHALESKI
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. SWAN
- Hon. Mr. WHARTON
- Mr. WIEBE
- Mr. WOWCHUK

**Public Presentations**

*Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 2) – The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités (exigences accrues à l'égard des codes de conduite visant les conseillers):***

*Ralph Groening, Association of Manitoba Municipalities  
Orvel Currie, DD West LLP  
Diane Duma (by leave), Private Citizen*

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 13) – The Private Vocational Institutions Act/Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés:***

*Robin Day, Herzog College*

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 14) – The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2019/Loi de 2019 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services:***

*John Graham, Retail Council of Canada*

**Bills Considered and Reported**

- **Bill (No. 2)** – *The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités (exigences accrues à l'égard des codes de conduite visant les conseillers)*

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendment:*

*THAT Clause 4 of the Bill be amended by striking out "180 days after it receives royal assent" and substituting "on November 1, 2020".*

- **Bill (No. 13)** – *The Private Vocational Institutions Act/Loi sur les établissements d'enseignement professionnel privés*

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.*

- **Bill (No. 14)** – *The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2019/Loi de 2019 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services*

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.*

- **Bill (No. 21)** – *The Legislative Building Centennial Restoration and Preservation Act/Loi sur la restauration et la préservation du Palais législatif marquant son centenaire*

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.*

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing Committee on Justice  
First Report**

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

**Clerk:** Your Standing Committee on Justice—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on JUSTICE presents the following as its First Report.*

**Meetings**

*Your Committee met on May 8, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

**Matters under Consideration**

- **Bill (No. 7)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (imposition immédiate de sanctions).*
- **Bill (No. 11)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cider and Cooler Sales at Beer Vendors)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis (vente de cidre et de panachés par les vendeurs de bière).*
- **Bill (No. 15)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Possession Restrictions)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis (restrictions relatives à la possession de cannabis).*
- **Bill (No. 17)** – *The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services de police (agents de sécurité en établissement).*
- **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation.*

**Committee Membership**

- Mr. ALLUM
- Mr. BINDLE
- Hon. Mr. CULLEN
- Ms. FONTAINE
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. HELWER
- Mr. ISLEIFSON (Vice Chairperson)
- Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park)
- Hon. Mrs. MAYER
- Mr. NESBITT
- Mr. PIWNIUK (Chairperson)

**Public Presentations**

*Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 7)** – The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (imposition immédiate de sanctions):*

*Eric Dumschat, MADD Canada*

*Scott Jocelyn, Manitoba Hotel Association*

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 11)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cider and Cooler Sales at Beer Vendors)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis (vente de cidre et de panachés par les vendeurs de bière)*:

Scott Jocelyn, Manitoba Hotel Association

Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 17)** – *The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services de police (agents de sécurité en établissement)*:

Darlene Jackson, Manitoba Nurses Union  
Michelle Gawronsky, MGEU - Manitoba  
Craig Doerkson, Health Sciences Centre

Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation*:

Jerra Fraser, Klinik Community Health

#### **Bills Considered and Reported**

- **Bill (No. 7)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions)/Loi modifiant le Code de la route (imposition immédiate de sanctions)*.

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 11)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cider and Cooler Sales at Beer Vendors)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis (vente de cidre et de panachés par les vendeurs de bière)*.

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 15)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Possession Restrictions)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis (restrictions relatives à la possession de cannabis)*.

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 17)** – *The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers)/Loi modifiant*

*la Loi sur les services de police (agents de sécurité en établissement)*.

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation*.

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Madam Speaker:** Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Lexi Taylor**

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, this Sunday, May 12th, is Manitoba Day, and Manitoba will be 149 years old.

As we celebrate this great province, it is only right to recognize a tremendous young Manitoban, Lexi Taylor from the RM of Springfield. Lexi was recently selected as one of four students to win the Manitoba Teacher's Society young 'humanitarian' award.

Courage, compassion and humility was the theme on April 16th when Lexi received the award. She has demonstrated all of those characteristics through her tremendous work. Lexi has committed herself to helping others and has shown leadership in doing so.

Lexi's story started three years ago when she used money she received for her birthday to start an initiative called A Little Bit of Warm. A Little Bit of Warm is where Lexi makes and distributes bags containing important supplies for the winter such as toques, mittens, candy canes and even hot chocolate for homeless people. Every year Lexi sets more ambitious goals and raises more money to grow this initiative.

Starting A Little Bit of Warm wasn't the end of the good deeds Lexi has done; it is only the start. Lexi regularly volunteers with Got Bannock, an organization which helps make meals twice a month and then shares them with people who are less

fortunate. Lexi also distributes the bags from A Little Bit of Warm to homeless people at this time.

The commitment and courage of this young woman is amazing, especially considering she has been doing all of this work for three years and is only in grade 7.

This Sunday, I would encourage all of us in the Legislature to not only think about how great Manitoba is, but also I would suggest we do as Lexi Taylor has done and find a way to give back.

I would like to invite all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing Manitoba Day and this outstanding Manitoban, Lexi Taylor.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Infrastructure.

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Speaker, I ask leave to add the names of Lexi Taylor and her mother Rhonda Taylor to the record.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to include those names in Hansard? [*Agreed*] Although they were already mentioned, so the member really didn't need leave to do that.

*Lexi Taylor, Rhonda Taylor*

#### **St. Mary's Academy**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate St. Mary's Academy on its 150th anniversary this year. For 150 years, St. Mary's Academy, the oldest continuously operating independent school in the province, has been paving the way in very effective education for young women in Winnipeg.

Opened May 1st, 1869, La Maison Ste. Marie was established by a congregation of women in the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, Grey Nuns, who transferred the teaching responsibilities to the congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in 1874.

The academy has been a beacon of hope for young women. Alongside the high-quality university entrance courses offered at the school, the academy also provides opportunities for young women to engage in debate tournaments, choral music programs and varied extracurricular programs, including very competitive sports teams and a variety of clubs.

Two notable groups are the Human Rights Team and the Leadership Council, which provide

platforms for young women to grapple with modern issues of significant importance. Service Learning is yet another incredible program offered by the academy, allowing students in grades 7 to 12 to serve people with specific needs in applied volunteering opportunities.

To date, over 62,000 students have graduated from St. Mary's Academy. Many young women in the constituency of River Heights attend the academy. Graduates have gone on to amazing careers in Manitoba and globally.

Some noteworthy events in honour of the 150th anniversary include the Marian Awards for Excellence this Saturday, May the 11th, and the 150th Birthday Picnic on August 28th.

I would like to conclude by recognizing the team of staff and students from St. Mary's Academy who are here in the gallery today. I ask for leave to have their names included in Hansard.

Thank you. Merci.

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

*St. Mary's Academy: Students: Nuria Abbawaajii, Amy Adamkowicz, Ashlynn Argo, Gabriella Barone, Denby Bayer, Brooke Buchan, Emma Callbeck, Mia Dale, Ashley Didyk, Fatima Faiz, Grace Francis, Lily Francis, Gregoria Ginakes, Mackenzie Gray, Alicia Gubala, Leah Handford, Theresa James, Bethany Kolisniak, Alyssa Lyons-Keeley, Sandra Mariya Siby, Nadia Medynska, Linh Nguyen, Jordan O'Leary, Janae Stewart, Marya Syed, Emma Tanchack, Malisa Thoudsanikone. Staff: Michelle Klus, principal; Michelle Garlinski, director of charism; Gina Borkofski, director of communications; Robyn Gacek, Connie Yunyk, Stephanie Zirino, teachers; Sisters from the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.*

#### **First Nations Consultations**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** This government has repeatedly failed to fulfill their duty to consult with indigenous peoples in Manitoba. Their actions have shown that they have no interested-no interest in meaningful consultation other than to give it lip service.

Since 2016, the PCs have opened up Pemmican Island to mining speculation and allowed mining in Nopiming Provincial Park without adequate consultation of affected communities.

In 2017, the former minister for Sustainable Development sent a letter to the people of Fisher River Cree Nation stating, quote, they don't have a right to fish for economic purposes, end quote, despite fishing being a foundational way of life for the community well before settlers arrived in this country.

\* (13:40)

Now they are forcing ahead construction on the Lake St. Martin flood outlet without even informing the First Nations communities of their development plan. The Lake St. Martin development threatens environment integrity and the exercise of indigenous treaty rights. The government failed to inform the community of their intention to develop, and they began construction before obtaining the proper environmental licensing. They've been doing the same things in Hollow Water First Nation.

But we shouldn't be surprised by this government's failure to consult. This is the same Premier (Mr. Pallister) who described indigenous hunters as, I quote, young indigenous men with criminal records, end quote, and called the Manitoba Metis Federation, quote, a special interest group, end quote.

It is time for this government to treat indigenous peoples with respect and meaningful engagement in consultation.

Ekosi.

### **George Chapman**

**Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an accomplished Manitoban and a builder of the St. James-Assiniboia community, George Chapman.

George was born and raised in Winnipeg, completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Manitoba and later attained his law degree with honours. George is also a long-time military reservist, commissioned in 1952.

Starting in 1954, George's 64-year career at Chapman Goddard and Kagan, and practice—a practice established by his father in 1923, led to an appointment to the Queen's Counsel in 1988. Chapman Goddard and Kagan still exists in—today in St. James.

His rich and distinguished career led him to—led to—him to community service and volunteerism with the Rotary service club, the Law Society of Manitoba and the Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce. George

has received the City of Winnipeg Community Service Award, the Canadian centennial and the Canada 125th anniversary medal.

He is a life member of the Royal Canadian Legion No. 4 St. James branch, a director and officer of the royal western Canada aviation museum and in 2013 George was appointed as honorary colonel of 402 City of Winnipeg Squadron.

George's racing abilities on foot, and in a race car, led him to Manitoba's runners hall of fame, as well as the Canadian and Manitoba motorsports halls of fame. George was also president of the motorsport in Canada that oversaw the construction of the Gilles Villeneuve race park and Gimli Motorsports Park. This provided a valued revenue for racing in the province of Manitoba.

I would like to ask my colleagues in the House to congratulate George, who is joined by his partner, Marilyn Whyte, and his brother, Bob Chapman, for his many years of dedicated service to the community of St. James, as well as the province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Kiara Shergold and Taylor Kauppila**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake):** Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize two Interlake constituents.

The Horatio Alger Association of Canada is a charitable organization dedicated to a simple but powerful belief that hard work, honesty and determination can conquer obstacles. They chose two students, out of 170 across Canada, to receive a post-secondary scholarship and I am proud to say that they are both from the Interlake.

Seventeen-year-old Kiara Shergold is attending school at Fisher Branch Collegiate and graduating this June. She's applied to the Faculty of Science at the University of Manitoba and plans on pursuing a degree in psychology.

She will graduate a—with a very impressive list of courses. All along with this Kiara being competitive in sports and also volunteering in her community, she will use this scholarship to help her financially navigate post-secondary education as her family is a single income due to an early passing of her father in 2012.

Just as impressive, Taylor Kauppila from Eriksdale will soon graduate from Lundar collegiate,

my home school. Taylor has also lost her father a few years ago and has had to grow up all too quick to meet the challenges of life.

Growing up on a farm has taught Taylor a healthy work ethic and has made her the strong, caring, well-rounded individual that she is today. A degree in environmental studies and hopefully getting a career involving horticulture is Taylor's ambition now that she has been accepted to the University of Waterloo.

I would ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Kiara and Taylor with—and wish them success in their upcoming paths in life.

### Introduction of Guests

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

Seated in the loge to my left we have Drew Caldwell, the former MLA for Brandon East, and we welcome him back to the Manitoba Legislature.

And also seated in the public gallery from Seven Oaks Met School, we have 52 grade 11 and 12 students under the direction of Jane Samaroo, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry).

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals Request to Retain ER Services

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I can still hear the people chanting save our ER, save our ER. Hundreds of Manitobans gathered yesterday on the steps of the Concordia emergency room to demand that this Premier keep the Concordia emergency room open and dozens and dozens of people drove by honking their horns in full support.

It seems that the only person who wants to close the Concordia ER is sitting opposite in the Chamber here in the Legislative Building.

We know that health care is moving in the wrong direction under this government. Wait times at emergency rooms are increasing, as are surgery wait times. Nurses are being forced to work more mandatory overtime than ever before.

Will the Premier simply stand up today, admit that the plan is not working, and instead announce that Concordia emergency room will stay open?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** We inherited a mess in health care from the previous NDP government, Madam Speaker, and, more importantly than that, we are committed to improving the situation for Manitobans, who deserve to get better care sooner.

Of course, specific to the Concordia facility, it was actually less functioning as an emergency room, many times, as it was a waiting room, and the average waits were the longest in Canada—seven and a half hours on average, Madam Speaker, so you can only—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —imagine that the frustration of patients and family members was significant. I certainly received many messages asking for us to undertake reforms and improvements, and that's exactly what we're doing and exactly what the previous government failed to do.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the Premier's plan for health care is failing. It's very clear wait times are increasing in emergency rooms; they're increasing for surgeries; and now we know that it would also be irresponsible of this government to close the emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks hospitals.

The reason is once this government closes those emergency rooms, tens of thousands of patients from Winnipeg and around Manitoba are going to have to go to the other emergency rooms, including St. Boniface.

Well, we know that the St. Boniface renovation is ongoing. That hospital is a construction zone right now, and it's months behind schedule. So they're irresponsibly rushing forward with this plan to close emergency rooms, and yet there's no capacity elsewhere in the health-care system to care for all those patients.

The plan is a disaster. The Premier is failing when it comes to health care.

Will he simply reverse course and announce that the emergency rooms at Seven Oaks and Concordia Hospital are going to stay open?



**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate the member using the word irresponsible in his preamble because that's exactly what he's demonstrated he's willing to do—be irresponsible, mislead, and misrepresent the facts.

The facts are these: that change is difficult. The member doesn't want to confront that challenge personally or on the political level and, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, that policy of retreat and surrender and give up and go backward isn't going to give Manitobans better health care, is it?

So the reality is that we have a situation where we have actually seen improvements, according to the Canadian institute of health information in Manitoba on reducing wait times where nine other provinces have not.

\* (13:50)

It's progress, Madam Speaker. It's going in the right direction, but if the member thought it was easy, he would be wrong. Front-line workers know that it's a challenge and we thank them for their support in this transformation to a system that works for patients.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, there he goes again, going negative, Madam Speaker. And like I said yesterday, the Premier can attack me all he wants; I'll keep standing up for health care for the people of Manitoba.

The facts when it comes to health care in Manitoba are these: the government's own department—the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority—says that emergency room wait times are up month over month and year over year. You want to talk about the Canadian institute of health information? Well, they've told us that surgery wait times are up at unprecedented levels and moving in the wrong direction. And when you ask the nurses themselves, they tell us not only are they working more mandatory overtime than ever—meaning they can't go home of their own free will at the end of their shift—but also they tell us that the health-care system in Manitoba has never been this bad.

The Premier's plan is failing.

Will he simply reverse course and announce that the emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks hospitals will stay open?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, there he goes again, Madam Speaker. It's all about him to him. It's not—his thin ego, thin skin. It's not about him. It's about patient care. The NDP never made it about patient care.

Madam Speaker, they were run by public sector union bosses, and they still are. We're running this system for the people of Manitoba who need care. That's why, versus the last two years the NDP were in, in our first two years Manitobans spent a half a century less time in waiting rooms in emergency wards than they did under the NDP. That's why the Canadian institute of health information says one province is making progress: this province, Manitoba.

What they broke, Madam Speaker, we are committed to fixing.

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

#### **Civil Service Survey Employee Engagement**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Yes, the new survey results of the employee engagement of government employees show that the government's failing plan goes far beyond health care, Madam Speaker.

Just a few quotes from this report. One civil servant reports that they have no support from senior management and, at times, it's very confusing on exactly what they want or where they are going. It applies quite well to this government's direction.

There's been more than a 16-point drop in employees of the government understanding how their work contributes to the achievement of their department's goals.

What was the Premier's response, Madam Speaker? Well, I'll table the letter. The Premier sent an all-staff email about a gnome named Gerome. And that was supposed to inspire employees to go out and serve the people of Manitoba better.

It's clear that this government is getting it wrong when it comes to health care. It's also clear that government employees are not buying in to their mission.

Will the Premier simply reverse course and start to listen to the people of Manitoba and the public servants who serve them?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** We've encouraged genuine involvement and engaged in genuine

listening. The previous government had a rebellion, Madam Speaker, because they couldn't even stand to listen to one another. They demonstrated dysfunction in every respect to the people of Manitoba, and that's why they are the rump they are today.

Madam Speaker, we're increasing job security. We're making sure that people understand and are involved in the communications and discussions around how to work better in our civil service. We're creating a better workplace environment where people are safe, something the NDP failed to do in their time in office. In fact, women in their employ were endangered, were harassed, and they did absolutely nothing about it.

So, I know it's a sensitive point for the members, but they should not deny the reality of the situation. They should confront the challenge of—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —making the workplace safer for women. And we're doing that here.

Madam Speaker, what they made a mess of repeatedly, we are cleaning up on this side of the House.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, Madam Speaker, the Premier can dart off madly in all directions, but I'll stay glued to the task at hand, which is serving the people of Manitoba.

And I ought to make clear—I really should make clear that the survey results we're talking about compare results from government employees in 2018 as opposed to 2015. During that period, there was more than a 10-point drop in the people who serve the public of Manitoba feeling like they're engaged with their work. One of the suggestions that these employees had was have vacant positions filled so work-health balance can be maintained. Elsewhere in the report, again, there was a 16-point drop in terms of people being satisfied their work, and a 12-point drop in people being satisfied with the Manitoba government.

These are the employees who go out and serve Manitobans with special needs, who help families get the services that they enjoy. And yet this government is failing.

When will the Premier start to listen to employees of Manitoba?

**Mr. Pallister:** Unlike the member, having had some experience in working with the civil service and with employees of government for some time, Madam Speaker, I understand the importance of genuine listening. We have demonstrated that by encouraging—aggressively encouraging—the people in our civil service to participate in these surveys and seeing the most significant increase and the largest participation in the surveys ever in the history of the province. Madam Speaker, we encourage that feedback because we value it.

The member chooses to put a dark light over it, but his previous government was not involved, Madam Speaker, in asking civil servants what they wanted, and they did not engage in the processes of improving workplace safety, for example, for women. They did not engage in the process of managing sustainably. Instead, they created a billion-dollar deficit situation and no employee in our civil service thinks that's job security. There's no security in an operation that's losing \$1 billion a year.

So increased job security, increased sustainability—they go hand in hand, as do lower taxes under this government. These are all things that will help and improve the quality of life and the work conditions for the people who work within our government.

We value their service and we'll continue to support them, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, here's the problem that the Premier has, Madam Speaker. These are the voices of the employees of the Manitoba government. These are the people who go out and fix our roads; these are people who support families with special-needs children; these are employees who help deliver education and health-care services to people right across the province. And what do they say?

Well, from 2018 compared to 2015, the indicators are down dramatically across the board. Overall, this is a condemnation of this Premier's direction, and it paints the picture of a government where leadership is centralized and yet also dysfunctional, Madam Speaker.

It's no surprise. We've been hearing this anecdotally for months, but now the Premier's own report shows the evidence. I'll table the evidence for the Premier so he might have a chance to review it.

But again, the question is simple: When will the Premier start to listen to the people of Manitoba and get down to the tasks that they're asking him to do: to stop cutting health care and to repair services that people rely on?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the member's caught, Madam Speaker, in a misadventure in misleading statements. We're actually investing over \$400 million more this year alone in our health-care budget than the NDP ever did.

But the more important thing, I think, to understand, Madam Speaker, is the culture of fear which the Auditor General spoke about in reference to the NDP government. They said that civil servants were afraid to come forward with negative comments or information. That they were afraid to do so was understandable given the fact the NDP politicized the civil service while they were in office. They used civil servants to organize protest rallies for themselves, Madam Speaker, and did the various things that discouraged civil servants from even being willing to come forward with opinions.

We expect to see, for example, Madam Speaker, a healthy increase in the number of reported incidents of harassment in the workplace. The member will say that's a bad thing. We say when people are afraid to report harassment, like they were under the NDP, that's a bad thing. Cover-ups, non-disclosure, the kinds of things that caused Steve Ashton's disgrace under the NDP and his inability to even seek office.

Cover-ups, non-disclosure and deception, Madam Speaker. That's what this member appears to be about and what the NDP has always been about.

### **Celebrating Manitoba 150 Act Request for Government Support**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Yesterday, Madam Speaker, we introduced Bill 236, The Celebrating Manitoba 150 Act. It would allow the Province to promote events and activities for Manitoba's 150th anniversary in 2020 without breaking election laws.

We debated this morning; it became very clear that a lot of PC members who asked questions and spoke weren't aware of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) stated fear that the existing law could prevent the promotion of Manitoba 150 events. This legislation's intended to settle any fears this Premier may have.

Will the Premier support the bill and direct his members to agree to send it on to committee?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** We certainly want to look forward to celebrating Manitoba's 150th year, Madam Speaker. I think maybe now the NDP are ready to come to the party as well.

\* (14:00)

We're preparing, Madam Speaker; we've got a Manitoba 150 committee in front of us. And I think Manitobans are looking forward to celebrating the greatest province in the country—and also now, Madam Speaker, the most improved province in the country, thanks to this government.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Well, I think the Minister of Justice had better take a look at the crime statistics before he starts spouting lines like that.

You know, Madam Speaker, we have a Premier who tells us every chance he gets that he believes in the rule of law. And, of course, the law in Manitoba is that the next provincial election will be held on the date set by legislation, October 6th, 2020. With Bill 236 we're giving the Premier the chance of the best of both worlds. He can attend and his government can promote Manitoba 150 in May and even throughout next summer without breaking the letter and the spirit of Manitoba's election laws. It's a win-win for the Premier and for democracy in Manitoba. We think that's something to celebrate.

Why won't let the Premier let us help him out and confirm today that he'll support Bill 236?

**Mr. Cullen:** Certainly, I've been reading Bill 236, and on this side of the House we're trying to always figure out what the NDP priorities are. We're not sure it's about 150 or not, but we knew—know their first priority is about subsidies, and they're—always got their hand out looking to taxpayers for subsidies.

Clearly, the NDP opposition are not ready; they're not ready for an election. They need their hand out for a subsidy. In fact, they're not even sure who's going to be running in the party. They have this race in there whether—who's going to run for Thompson or not.

Madam Speaker, they are not ready for the election. Clearly they're trying to delay it as much as possible. We're ready for election. I think

Manitobans are ready for election. Maybe the NDP should get onside and let Manitobans decide—

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

The honourable member for Minto, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Swan:** Yes, if that's the kind of attitude we have from this government, I'm not sure who's going to want to come to their party.

You know, Madam Speaker, our NDP caucus gives Manitobans a lot more credit than this Premier. We do believe they can handle a celebration in May and even into the summer and an election in October. But Manitobans expect the letter and the spirit of our election laws to be followed. They don't want excuses to justify an election that nobody, not business, not labour, not anybody except this Premier wants. The Celebrating Manitoba 150 Act addresses the Premier's fears, and we're letting him get through without having to break the law.

So why won't the Premier join with us and support Bill 236?

**Mr. Cullen:** Certainly, if we're going to talk about breaking the law, let's talk about the NDP track record, Madam Speaker. When they're—when there is blackout periods in place, the NDP, prior to the last election, chose to ignore that and chose to ignore it on more than one occasion. In fact, ministers—previous ministers of the Crown actually went and broke out their own blackout rules.

Now, if the member wouldn't have been so busy trying to run for federal politics, maybe he would've been ready for an election, Madam Speaker.

We're ready for an election. Tell them, Madam Speaker, to get onside, and Manitobans are ready for an election too.

#### **Snow Lake Centre on Family Violence Request to Reinstate Funding**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** For over 35 years, the Snow Lake centre on family violence has been providing preventative, proactive resources and supports for families in Snow Lake to educate against and assist those experiencing domestic violence find safety, Madam Speaker.

Unfortunately, it has come to our attention this minister has cut funding for the Snow Lake centre on family violence, and I table the letter today. Without this funding, the centre will be forced to cut critically needed services in the community.

Manitoba accessing these services are in crisis situations, and their next closest access is two hours away. Two hours is too long.

Will the minister reinstate funding for the Family Violence Prevention Program in Snow Lake?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Madam Speaker, our government is committed to getting results for women and girls throughout the province. That is why we invested money in the West Central Women's Resource Centre, something that the NDP government never did. They never brought the West Central Women's Resource Centre into the fold. They rejected them year after year after year.

We know that that is the busiest women's—  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Squires:** —resource centre in the province, and so we're committed to helping get results for women throughout the entire province.

We know that the Snow Lake counselling centre only received five requests for services last year, and we're looking at ensuring that we are utilizing all of our resources to get the most impact for women and girls in the province of Manitoba.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Sadly, rather than talking to women and children in Snow Lake, the minister ordered a review and cut the program, hoping that no one would notice.

The minister should know these services are working and they make a huge difference for women and children in Snow Lake. They—already fewer services available to women in the North, and yet the minister thought it was best to cut even more. This is in the wrong direction. She should be investing, not cutting services for women in Snow Lake.

Why should women and children be forced to leave their community to receive the supports they need?

Will she reconsider and promise the families that she will reinstate funding for Snow Lake?

**Ms. Squires:** Speaking of heading in the wrong direction, I'd like to point out that the member for St. Johns was an adviser to a government during the time when child poverty in this province

increased at unprecedented levels. They jacked taxes on Manitobans that disproportionately hurt single mothers the most.

That was under her so-called guidance and her so-called advice to a government who made lives difficult—more difficult for women and girls in the province, unlike what our—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Squires:** —government is doing. We are getting real results. We are making a difference for the—improving the lives of women and girls throughout the province of Manitoba.

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

#### **Family Violence Prevention Funding Reduction Concerns**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Without adequate funding, the centre will be forced to cut not only family violence prevention programming but other services that assist and aid in social and mental well-being for families in Snow Lake, as the remaining funding will be stretched even further.

Not only has the minister underspent their Family Violence Prevention Program budget every year, but they have reduced the budget every single year. This is shameful and disrespectful to all women and families experiencing domestic violence and other well-being issues.

Can the minister please explain why, year after year, she has chosen to cut, reduce and underspend in the family violence prevention budget?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Speaking of shameful and disrespectful, that's the entire NDP caucus's method of treating women and girls in the province of Manitoba.

Unlike the NDP, who turned—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Squires:** —away the West Central Women's Resource Centre year after year after year, we're investing more money in that West Central—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Squires:** —Women's Resource Centre. We're investing more money in the Brandon resource centre. We're investing more money in women's

shelters in the province of Manitoba so that we can get results for women throughout the entire province. And we're going to continue to do that, make strategic investments to help women and girls who are fleeing domestic violence.

Domestic violence is an issue that this government takes very seriously. We're committed to eradicating domestic violence. I wish that the NDP would make a statement to help improve the lives of women and girls and take a stand against domestic violence.

#### **Cancer Treatment Medication Provincial Pharmacare Coverage**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Recently, the Liberal caucus received a letter from Jennette Heinrichs, a cancer patient, who told us she is paying half of her modest income for the life-saving medication prescribed by her oncologist. The drug she is on, fulvestrant, is not covered by the provincial formulary. It costs \$4,000 in the first month and \$1,000 a month afterwards. She has already exhausted her savings after only three months.

\* (14:10)

I want to thank her for coming forward with this issue. It's a tragic situation that too many Manitobans are facing. We are happy to support her call for the government to fund this drug because Manitoba Liberals believe that no Manitoban should have to choose between life-saving medication and bankruptcy, and no Manitoban should have to choose between life-saving medication, shelter and food.

I table the recommendation of the pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review from February 1st, 2018, which said this drug should be covered by provinces.

Will this government act to fast-track approval of this drug and restore the life-saving drug program so no Manitoban faces bankruptcy for a drug they need to save their life?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I thank the member for the question. And first, I would want to acknowledge Jennette Heinrichs, and obviously, all Manitobans are sympathetic when the price of pharmaceuticals is high and prevents people from getting necessary prescriptions.

I wonder if the Leader of the Second Opposition also explained to Jennette Heinrichs how his government in Ottawa has brought a supposed

review of a federal pharmacy program that has done nothing more than kick it down the road three years. Where they could have acted, all they have done is declined to act. Will that member stand today and acknowledge that the federal government and his Liberals need to do more and more to help provinces deliver health care?

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

**Mr. Lamont:** We do need to address the serial exaggerations and distortions of this government when it comes to health-care funding in Manitoba.

This is a government that's receiving over \$730 million more this year alone in transfers from the federal government. Federal health transfers have been going up at a rate of 3 per cent every year. I don't recall the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or any of his ministers objecting when this decision was imposed unilaterally on the provinces by the Harper Conservative government. I opposed it then and I oppose it today.

And actual health-care spending is not \$700 million or \$500 million or \$400 million more than it was under the NDP. With a growing and aging population, this government posted a one-year increase of \$105 million and has frozen actual funding since.

Can the Premier explain why, since this government can find \$200 million for a Blue Bombers stadium, they can't find money for life-saving drugs?

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, that member knows full well, if he reads government press releases, that it was on April 4th, only weeks ago, that the government added 68 new drugs to the Manitoba formulary, saving Manitobans millions of dollars each year: 68 new drugs for cancer care; 68 new drugs including, I should say, 'naltroxate' and acamprosate, which are both designed to specifically help in the addictions medicine world to provide patients with new drugs.

These are all ways in which the government is making important investments, but if that member truly cared about these issues, he would ask the federal government why they are, on one hand, talking about the possibility of a federal pharmacare program, and on the other hand deciding to delay any action two and three years into the future when people need that access now—

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

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

### **Pharmaceutical Companies Patent Protections**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** It's the Premier's job to speak to the federal government, but if the Minister of Health thinks that I can do it better than him, we agree.

One of the problems with the drug in question is its price. There is no generic version of this price, and there should be. It should have been approved over a decade ago, and the company got an extension.

I know the Premier and I don't share—  
[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** The Premier and I don't share the same views on trade deals because—perhaps it's because I've read the fine print, Madam Speaker. Trade deals, ideally, are supposed to increase competition and lower prices, but the trade deals this Premier supports do just the opposite. They reduce competition and result in higher prices, especially for drugs, by extending patent protections for monopolies.

We need a national health—pharmacare program, but we also be—need to be willing to challenge the abuse of monopoly power and avoid price gouging on drugs.

Will the Premier and his government join us in calling on the federal government to help reduce medication costs for all Canadians by getting serious about the abuse of patent protection by pharmaceutical companies?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, I thank the member for the question.

He is quite wrong, though. It is my role, as the Health Minister, to engage with the federal government as well. I have told Ginette Petitpas Taylor, the Minister of Health federally, many times that the federal efforts, in respect of a pharmacy program nationally, must focus on the opportunity of high-cost drugs, exactly the kind that he references and has been brought to his attention.

This is the area in which the federal government, if it were willing, would make the best impact to help all Canadians have access to drugs that are increasingly beyond reach.

This government is making very good investments in Pharmacare, spending hundreds of millions of dollars a year, but his government in Ottawa needs to do more and more to concern itself with price and pharmaceuticals. And we'll continue to lead the way.

### **Northern Manitoba Communities Services and Economic Development**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Thousands of jobs are being lost in northern Manitoba. We know that. This government has said it. So far, their response hasn't really inspired confidence in anyone. They've frozen business loans for two years, refused to support mining communities. Now, after three years in government, the government isn't pledging action. No, instead they're going to hire yet another high-priced consultant, this time in northern affairs, at a cost of \$500,000.

Why is this government only interested in cuts in the North instead of doing something positive for the North?

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** In retrospect, our northern affairs communities in Manitoba are kind of a gem in our province. They are very small communities and they have been, basically, what I think they would call bumping along under the previous government.

We have taken a great interest in them and we have been working with them and we look forward to doing a review on our northern affairs communities so that they get better attention within our government because they matter to us.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** I don't think northern communities would appreciate the comment that they're just bumping along, but, you know, we know that so far—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —this government has—going to review northern affairs programs' service delivery—\$500,000 contract on top of the \$23 million they're already paying to consultants. It's an obscene amount of money, Madam Speaker, especially in a small

department like indigenous and northern affairs, which is getting even smaller.

Why does the Pallister government have endless resources for external consultants and yet nothing to help people in northern Manitoba?

**Ms. Clarke:** The member opposite is totally wrong. This just goes to show how committed our government is. These communities, although they are small in population, matter to our government. We are bringing them up to date with the rest of Manitoba, doing regional work on water—waste water, solid waste, all sorts of services, and even their buying within their small communities.

I spent a lot of time with them this past year, talking to them in their communities and understanding the consequences that they deal with being remote, and they are very pleased that this government is finally taking interest in what they are doing and how they can best be sustainable into the future.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** In the last three years, the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations has been gutted: 28 per cent of positions in that department have either been cut or left vacant. People are leaving; they're not being replaced. You can't even buy a fishing licence, for heaven sakes. The government's so-called solution is to hire yet another consultant for half a million dollars while they're making more cuts in northern Manitoba.

Here's a real solution, Madam Speaker: invest in the people of the North, unfreeze economic development programs, hire to fill those vacant positions, take your foot off the throat of northern Manitoba.

Will the minister do that?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** The NDP took the North for granted for years. Their idea of job creation was to go up to The Pas just before the last election and the premier promised that they'd get some jobs at OCN if they promised to vote NDP in return—didn't even deliver on the jobs, Madam Speaker.

Now the member is grumpy because he has to go to the doors and tell them his party believes in leave it in the ground, his party believes in higher taxes—higher taxes on every household, his party believes in higher taxes, Madam Speaker, for people who

drive to work. Can you imagine that? Higher taxes for people who heat their—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —homes in Flin Flon, Madam Speaker.

\* (14:20)

And the member doesn't even understand, hasn't the slightest idea, about the kinds of magnitude of importance of the investments we've been making in the North because he just doesn't seem them. All he sees is the negative, grumpy world he lives in, Madam Speaker, but the real world, the world northerners live in, is being made better by this government's focus on the North.

The Golden Boy looks north for a reason, and we understand that on this side of the House.

#### **Disaster Financial Assistance Program Review and Recommendations**

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake):** Manitoba's Disaster Financial Assistance program provides an invaluable service to our province. When natural disasters strike, DFA helps Manitobans and municipalities respond and recover without facing unreasonable financial burdens. Unlike the NDP, our government takes a results-based approach to the programs and the services delivered to Manitobans. That's why we undertook an extensive review of the Disaster Financial Assistance program.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure please update the House on the results of this review?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Well, Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the excellent member for the Interlake for that excellent question.

Earlier this week I was pleased to join our municipal partners to announce the completion of the extensive review of the Disaster Financial Assistance program. The review was conducted on a collaboration with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association and made a number of recommendations, including providing more training to help people navigate a Disaster Financial Assistance claim, enabling online access for claim status and document submission, improving the timeliness of municipal inspections, providing a clear criteria for when a DFA program is established.

Madam Speaker, by working together in a positive way, not calling them names—municipalities

on this review, we worked with them—we're ensuring that the DFA program works best for Manitobans—

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

#### **Fixed-Date Election Law Government Position**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Since December, the Premier's been floating the idea of ignoring Manitoba's fixed-date election law and calling an election this spring or summer. And since then he's been coming up with ever less believable reasons to call that election and to try and pin it on somebody else.

He said the PST would pass, then he said it wouldn't. He claimed that elections and advertising bans during Manitoba 150 would spoil the party, though 'despart'—despite having a majority, that his hands are tied and he's unable to change the rules, though he's been able to find time to change lots of other election rules to rig the game in his favour.

In a rare moment of candour, the Premier said, and I quote: I was in sports too long; I'm not giving away whatever minor advantages I may have. I'm not giving them away.

Can the Premier explain how his time in sports inspired him to want to ignore the fixed-date election law?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, I don't think that the member opposite could argue he hasn't been given a heads-up. That's one of the reasons that you want to have that legislation, I suppose, to make sure that opposition parties are ready. It would be on him and the opposition leader to get their parties ready.

The second thing would be that we don't want to have what happened under the NDP happen again, which is that governments shouldn't use their resources to promote themselves, which is exactly what government would be doing in 2020 when dozens and dozens and dozens of events sponsored by the government will be held throughout the entire year.

You're put in an impossible situation as a public servant, Madam Speaker, in the sense that if you go to them, you're accused of doing the wrong thing, and they'd be doing that on January 1 next year, and they know that.

So, Madam Speaker, it's most certain that the member has the obligation to get his party ready, and he needs to accept that challenge.



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

**Election Financing Laws  
Expenses Rebate**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** The Premier's also had a shifting stance on election finances. When the NDP were first elected in 1999, they changed election financing laws in order to undermine their opposition opponents, and the Premier has been doing the same. And he has referred to a rebate for approved election expenses which, by law, are audited as, quote, kickbacks, end quote.

It's unfortunate the Premier would use that kind of language to describe something that is perfectly legal, but it's also surprising, Madam Speaker, because no party has received more than—in what the Premier calls kickbacks—than the PCs.

And when the Premier was first elected in Fort Whyte, his campaign took what he called kickbacks, and after this legislation was amended he also said that they would continue to take what he called kickbacks.

So can the Premier explain a sudden change of heart? Did someone from his own party point out, then, in an attempt to undermine his opponents, he would devastate his own party's finances?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I appreciate the fact that the member has made several points in his preamble, none of which align with each other, Madam Speaker.

That being said, this political organization, which I lead, is the only one in the province that has never taken the vote tax subsidy. His party live by it. The NDP live by it. They felt they were entitled to it and they didn't have to work for it, Madam Speaker.

We eliminated the vote tax and we also feel that it's appropriate that political organizations should earn their money by going and fundraising the way most charities—of course, all charities in our province do and other organizations. They work for the support that they earn.

The member feels he's entitled to a larger subsidy and a larger office, Madam Speaker. I feel he's entitled to neither.

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

**Manitoba's Economy  
Keeyask and Bipole III**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Well, the Premier's decision to raise the donation limit to \$5,000 has been a positive change, so.

Now, there is a lot of speculation as to why the Premier—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —would ignore the fixed date. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** There is a lot of—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

The honourable Leader of the Second Opposition, to continue.

**Mr. Lamont:** There is a lot of speculation as to why the Premier would ignore the fixed-date election law. Next year, the economy is supposed to tank. The Premier's complete lack of a plan and the consequences of his cuts are all coming home to roost.

But there's something else, Madam Speaker. When Keeyask and Bipole III come fully online, their debt payments are going to start, and they are going to blow a hole in Hydro's bottom line to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Is the Premier just trying to stay ahead of the impending implosion at Hydro's—of Hydro's finances for which he and the NDP share responsibility?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, the old adage would be—and I'm not sure it's valid today, but the old adage was that the PCs would benefit by a strong Liberal Party. If I was really just interested in politics, I'd wait 'til the Liberal Party was stronger. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** But, really, Madam Speaker, the issue that we should be discussing today is from an article the CBC published just a year and a half ago. Steve Ashton released a statement to media condemning his leadership rival for not owning up to the domestic violence charge. And it says that incomplete statements do a disservice to women who are survivors of gender-based violence.

Is this the reason, Madam Speaker, that Steve Ashton is not going to be allowed to be an NDP candidate in the next election? And if it is, we should all deplore that.

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

### Point of Order

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Morris, on a point of order?

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Morris, on a point of order.

**Mr. Martin:** Madam Speaker, earlier this morning, actually, ironically, during the member for The Pas' (Ms. Lathlin) resolution on mental health, I was sharing a story about my mother's institutionalization, battle with depression and anxiety and ultimate death as a result of a brain tumour.

The MLA for St. Johns, when I was sharing that story, said, and I quote, do you have a brain?

Madam Speaker, this comment, directed at myself, was not only disrespectful, but further highlights how far as a society we need to go when NDP legislatures shame and name-call individuals when they share their personal stories about mental health issues.

While I doubt that the MLA will apologize and withdraw her personal attack, it is my hope that her attitude does not silence others who wish to share or seek help.

Thank you.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, in respect of the point of order, I absolutely never said that. In fact, when the member for Morris was speaking about his mother, I didn't say one word. As a daughter of a mother who had mental health issues from the moment that I was born and attempted suicide probably about—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** As a daughter to a mother who attempted suicide probably about five or six times—of which three times I had to wake up in the middle of the night and call 911 when my mom had blood all over her in the room—and ultimately ended up dying

of a heroin overdose, I would never, ever say anything about anyone's mother.

So he is absolutely wrong. And I would also say and suggest to check Hansard because you will see that I never said that.

\*(14:30)

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Morris for bringing this matter to your attention.

I think this type of comment certainly goes against the decorum that you, Madam Speaker, are trying to bring to this Legislature, and we look to you for your guidance on this matter.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** On this point of order, I will take it under advisement so that we can consult Hansard.

But it maybe is a good time for me to also indicate that we do need to make more serious efforts in here that we are very careful in the comments we're making because sometimes in the passion of a moment, it is easy enough to make a comment that hurts somebody else. And I hope everybody realizes that comments in here can hurt individuals.

So I just would urge, you know, all members to be very careful in their comments. It's not only a decorum issue, it even goes beyond that. So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

## PETITIONS

### 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 saving time has serious consequences for physical and mental health and has been linked to increases in traffic accidents and workplace injuries.

(2) According to the 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 saving time change when compared to all other Mondays in 2014.

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

(4) There is no conclusive evidence that daylight saving 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, resulting in Manitoba remaining on Central Standard Time throughout the year and in perpetuity.

And this petition has been signed by Chris Wright, Abdul Azeem, Kayla Elias and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

#### **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 Erika Schneider, Emma Renz, Karin Tschritter and many others.

**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 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 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 Kirandeep Hundal, Ameleat [*phonetic*] Kaur, Marior [*phonetic*] Baron and many other Manitobans.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I wish to present the—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —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 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 this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Shayla Burke, Janett Konrad and Jill Richardson, along with many other Manitobans.

\* (14:40)

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** 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 and 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; and

(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 this petition is signed by Brittany Siemens, Meredith McCooeye and Gem Newman and many other fine Manitobans.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** 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 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 many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

And 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 petition was signed by John Van Batten [*phonetic*], Dietrich Bartel, James Moyka [*phonetic*] and many, many more.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** 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 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.

\* (14:50)

This is signed by Carol Lee, Saima Klippenstein and Trevor W. Klippenstein.

Miigwech.

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** 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 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 has been signed by many people.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** 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.

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Alex Schmik, Irene Schmik, Angelika Schmik and many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, ask to resume debate on Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2019.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will resume debate on second reading of Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2019.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS****Bill 24—The Minor Amendments  
and Corrections Act, 2019**

**Madam Speaker:** Resuming debate on Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2019, standing in the name of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, who has 17 minutes remaining.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I think it's been a couple of weeks since I had 13 glorious minutes on this speech, and I'm happy to complete it today, but it's—says something about the government that—it says something about the government that we're debating a bill called the minor amendments and corrections act today.

I can't imagine anything more inconsequential than something that is intended to correct typographical or numbering or other drafting issues that may occur from time to time. It may address, you know, grammar or punctuation or syntax, all of those important elements of speech, but it's really not something that really we should be debating potentially in the lead-up to an illegal election, possibly as early as this summer.

Now, we're debating something remarkably inconsequential, although I do want to talk about the consequential parts of it today, but let's remind folks that yesterday we were debating Interim Supply for 2020 which—I don't know if the government's aware—is actually next year, not this year, which is quite a remarkable fact that a government could be so confused and so ill-prepared that they would have this House talking about next year instead of actually addressing the issues that Manitobans want to see addressed in this House in 2019.

And then, of course, this follows yesterday's debate on Interim Supply, 2020, followed on an earlier debate we had this week on changing some corporate names and such matter. Again, highly inconsequential matters, things that could be cleared up in no time at all, and yet the government's spinning its wheels, looking for opportunity for the House to debate something.

It reminds me of a supply teacher trying to figure out what the students should do for the remainder of the afternoon because the supply teacher really doesn't have the curriculum in front of them, and so they just make something up and that's clearly what we're getting from the government. They're just making it up as they go along. They have no plan on

consequential issues and consequentially we're left to debate the inconsequential matters in particular.

And so I said in my earlier 13 minutes that the government mystifies me when they get on this kind of a path, but, in fact, it's not all that mysterious because when your only agenda is austerity, it's not surprising that you run out of ideas pretty quickly thereafter. And so we're left today with a circumstance in which there are colossal needs in our communities; the leader of the opposition raises every day important issues around health care.

Are we talking about a critical issue in health care today? No, we're talking about minor amendments.

My friend from Point Douglas also gets up and stands up on important health-care issues every single day. When will the government be closing the Concordia and Seven Oaks ERs? Do you think we can get an answer from this government? No, we can't. Are we debating it here this afternoon? No, we aren't.

Instead, what are we doing? We're looking at something called minor amendments. My friend from Concordia gets up every day. Of course he's very, very concerned about the closure of the ER at Concordia Hospital. He rallied with hundreds upon hundreds of other like-minded individuals yesterday to keep the Concordia ER open. Are we talking about that today, Madam Speaker? Oh, no, we're not. We're talking about minor amendments after yesterday talking about Interim Supply for 2020, after the day before that, talking about changing some corporate names.

I mean, my gosh, Madam Speaker, this is a government without an agenda other than austerity. We're not addressing the critical issues of the day.

My friend from Flin Flon gets up and talked about the northern review that the government is—has undertaken after having made substantial cuts to services all across the North. Are we debating that today? No, we're not, we're looking at minor amendments.

My friend from Minto, our newly minted Finance critic, desperately wants the opportunity to talk to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) in Estimates about critical issues facing the finances of this province. Are we debating it in Estimates this afternoon? No, we're not, we're talking about minor amendments.

My sister from The Pas had a very important resolution on the floor today, this morning—so proud of her—on mental health supports in northern Manitoba. Are we talking about that this afternoon? No, we're not; we're talking about minor amendments.

\* (15:00)

My friend from Wolseley wants desperately to talk to the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) in Estimates to talk about her green scam plan that she's put in front of this House.

Are we talking about that today? No, we're not. We're talking about minor amendments.

My friend from Logan wants to talk about the head tax—the head tax—a concept from—taken from the very first decade of the 20th century. She wants to talk about the head tax. She wants to know where that \$5 million went. It's missing. It's not around.

Are we talking about that this afternoon? No, we're not. We're talking about minor amendments instead, Madam Speaker.

You don't even want to leave, Madam Speaker. I don't blame you. You want to hear consequential stuff talked about in this House this afternoon. The volume I can't control; it's genetic. My dad was a preacher, and you should have heard the thunder and lightning coming out of the pulpit most Sundays.

My friend from Tyndall Park is our housing critic. He wants to talk about housing in Manitoba. He wants to talk about why not one affordable housing unit has been built under this government yet to date. He wants to know why they're imposing additional costs on seniors like at my—in my constituency at Fred Tipping Place where they've changed the management, wiped out security, added to the rent, taken other services away.

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

Are we talking about that critical issue today, Mr. Deputy Speaker? No, we're not. We're talking about minor amendments.

My friend from Elmwood, who is a tremendous expert on infrastructure, wants to talk about the government's decision to cut funding to infrastructure in this province, to leave a \$40-million pothole in the city of Winnipeg. He wants desperately, either in Estimates or in this House, to talk about the important issue of infrastructure.

Are we talking about that today? No, we're not. We're talking about minor amendments instead, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so it comes as no surprise that the critical issues facing this community, this province, should be what's on the agenda for this afternoon, and this is the only government that I am ever aware of that stalls and spins its wheels on its own agenda, on its own path to governing because the fact of the matter is they have one idea. That's austerity, and once they get past the cuts, there ain't nothin' left to do, and that's what we're faced with here this afternoon.

Now, having said all that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to remind you because I know you're very conversant yourself with Bill 24, having read it, as you would, of course, backwards and forwards, to make sure that you understand it, you no doubt saw all of the poison pills that have been put into not only Bill 24 but other omnibus bills like it. We saw it, as I reminded folks in my first opportunity, was the cut to the 50-50 transit formula, hidden, buried deep, deep in BITSA.

Also the pledge to make sure that fully 1 per cent of the sales tax went to infrastructure was also wiped out, buried deep, deep in an omnibus bill.

Now, omnibus bills are not new in Canadian politics, but they were perfected by Stephen Harper, and this is drawn straight out of the Harper playbook. It's the same thing we saw during a decade of despair out of Ottawa only a few years ago that we see here in Manitoba today.

And then we saw in other omnibus bills that came forward—my friend from Flin Flon will remember—the two of us being in committee listening to Manitobans come forward on an omnibus bill related to allegedly a red-tape reduction, but what was in that bill? Anaerobic digesters, for sure. We certainly learned a lot about anaerobic digesters that day, and that was—that was well worth it, I have to admit.

But inside of all of that was a bunch of cuts through the prism of red tape of—that really were about environmental deregulation as opposed to just sort of cutting red tape, and this is what the Conservative government, under this particular Premier (Mr. Pallister) and other Conservative administrations across this problem—country frequently do, is that they introduce omnibus bills. They pretend that they're about minor amendments and corrections and—or reducing red tape. They're always



about something really, really bad. And as my friend from Tyndall Park got up the other day, he was talking about one of the other inconsequential matters we're forced to debate in this House. And he said, you know, this is kind of inconsequential, but I don't trust them. I don't believe in what the government says. There must be something bad hidden in here, because in every other possible example I could cite, there's always been poisoned pills.

And so let's talk about a few of the poisoned pills that are in Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, allegedly for the purpose of correcting typographical, numbering and other drafting errors, but instead includes a number of things that are going to come as a great disappointment and, in fact, a great surprise to Manitobans.

It wasn't so long ago we were debating Bill 14 in which the government of Manitoba actually took a holiday away from the people of Manitoba. Who does that? Who thinks up that kind of stuff? Maybe that came straight from our friends in the Chamber of Commerce or the—

**An Honourable Member:** They wouldn't even do that.

**Mr. Allum:** Yes, they wouldn't even do that. They're actually a little bit more progressive than the current government.

When asked—the chamber of commerce chair asked if he thought an election was happening—should happen. He said, well, no members mentioned it to me. Nobody's clamouring it for me, so I won't blame the Chamber of Commerce for the government taking away a holiday for hard-working Manitobans. But you can be sure the day will come when Canada Day falls on a Saturday or a Sunday and, suddenly, they don't—a Manitoban doesn't have time off to spend with their family. Then the chickens are going to come home to roost, and they're going to have nobody to blame but the Premier of this province, the Cabinet and every single member of the government side who stood idly by and did nothing while such a reprehensible, poisoned pill was included in an omnibus bill.

Now this particular piece of legislation includes a commitment, although that's not exactly the right word. But it will ensure that the path to reconciliation report that was supposed to come out—I think within three months of—sort of by the end of

June—now won't appear until the end of September or the fall sometime. And the reason for that is quite simple. It's because the government actually has no ability, no desire to address the calls to action that are in the path—were in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

I know for a fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we were coming toward 2014 into 2015 and the calls to action came out, there was a requirement that the Department of Education, of which I was—had the great honour to be the Minister of Education and Advanced Learning, were tasked by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to ensure indigenous education became a priority in the curriculum, not only in Manitoba, but across this country. Our department immediately set on to work to do the proper kind of consultation. It was a very, very comprehensive consultation with First Nations, with Metis, with Inuit, with stakeholders all across this province. And we tabled in this House the First Nation, Metis and Inuit education framework.

And we were on the cusp of getting that passed and responding quite directly and clearly and enthusiastically to the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. And what happened? The opposition of the day—at that point, it was the Conservative government—delayed, delayed, delayed, stalled, stalled and stalled. And, sadly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the result of that is that the First Nation, Metis and Inuit education framework act died on the Order Paper.

Now, one might expect that that would be the first thing that the minister of Education—whichever one of them we're talking about, or the minister of indigenous affairs, would have taken on right off the hopper, would have said that is something we have to do; this is a priority. In fact, we should put it before the House and all members should get the chance to debate it.

\* (15:10)

You know what? We haven't seen a sign or a scintilla of anything resembling an indigenous education act that responds to the call to actions from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That's not only a shame, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it's a rank insult to indigenous peoples in this province. It's a rank insult to the recommendations that came from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It's a rank insult to indigenous peoples, as I've said. It's a rank insult all across the board because it shows that it's a government that doesn't care, isn't interested, has no

plan, has no interest in governing on behalf of all the people of Manitoba but instead is focused on one thing, and that's austerity, no matter what the consequences of that may be.

So I see my time is growing short. I had hoped that I would be the one selected to have the—to have unlimited time on this issue because there is so much to say about a government that does so very, very little day in and day out. But you can be sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker—and you have my guarantee on that—New Democrats will be standing up for health care, education. They'll be seeking to address climate change, child care, and every other in this issue. Get out of the way. We'll take over.

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

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** I want to commend and thank my hard-working colleague from Fort Garry-Riverview for the excellent presentation he just gave. It's going to be missed, believe me, as we—as he and I both head off to new adventures when this time here, but we're making the most of the time we've got left. And he once again has brought honour to our party and himself and the causes that we fight so valiantly for down here in the Legislature.

The—I mean, for the one or two people in all of history who may actually read what I'm about to say in Hansard later on, I think it's an important starting point to recognize that it's the government that decides what we're going to do on a daily basis in the afternoon when question period is done. They have all of the issues in Manitoba, all the legislation that they have proposed to choose from, and, lo and behold, the best that they can come up with today is something called Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, which is about as monumental as it sounds, which is to say, not at all. And yet it does have some quite devious and damaging components to it. So I'm not sure that the government realizes that they were going to give us this opportunity to expose their nefarious ways yet again, but they have, indeed, done so. And I hope in the time that I have to speak on this piece of legislation, I'll be able to get to some of that.

But really I think the starting point has to be the government's complete lack of interest and engagement in any of the significant issues that Manitobans are facing on a day-to-day basis. Because of this government's actions, health care is headed into a crisis situation. Because of

this government's inactions, we are making the climate crisis, which already existed, far worse. In the first full year of the Pallister government being in office, Manitoba's emissions increased by 700,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. That is triple the national average. Increases here were 3.3 per cent. The national average was 1.1 per cent. And climate science says, if we're going to survive, we have to cut our emissions in half in a decade.

But this government has absolutely no interest in engaging in any of that, just as they have absolutely no interest in ensuring that Manitobans have access to safe and effective health care located in their community. They have absolutely no interest in bringing anything positive for the 18,000 children that are now officially on the wait list for a child-care spot. That's the official number. Who knows how large the actual number is?

We have quite clearly had in Manitoba for some time a number of our citizens struggling with mental health issues and, in particular, addictions. And when—any time a new drug arrives, the challenges that those people face can become so much more severe. Well, with the arrival of opioids and crystal meth in particular, the impacts have been absolutely devastating. People have and will, tragically, continue to lose their lives in this province because of the arrival of those new drugs and the addictions that are leading to that.

And what has this government's response been? They can't even bring themselves to sign on to an agreement with the federal government that specifically had tens of millions of dollars targeted at exactly that crisis, which is—exists, of course, across our country and around the world.

They are so disengaged from the issues that actually matter to Manitobans, and in every community, speaking of a crisis: housing. Having a safe and affordable place to live, you would think, should be one of the top priorities of a government which actually cared about the citizens that it claims to represent. Lo and behold, we've had zero commitments from this government. It's got so bad for them, they've actually had to go back and try to retroactively take credit for projects that had already started construction before the last election took place.

I will never forget the day when they tabled a list, along with some pictures, of some projects, some housing projects underway that included the

U of W commons building. And the date right under—I was honoured, as the local MLA, to be invited to that sod-turning event, and the date on the document itself made it quite clear the housing minister at the time, the Families Minister at the time in the Pallister government—he was still a city councillor—hadn't even been elected as an MLA yet. And here, that project is appearing on a list of affordable housing efforts that this government's trying to claim credit for.

And this is true across the board; they have absolutely nothing to show for three years in office on one of the most fundamental underlying challenges that we have in our society, and that is a basic lack of safe and affordable housing for people who are low-income and even medium-income. And yet, with all of this background, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of these issues I've just mentioned off the top of my head, the best this government can come up with for today's debate and for today's actions is a discussion on the minor amendments and corrections act.

And this follows the exceedingly exciting debate that we had yesterday when this same government had as their top priority debate on something called interim supply, which is, again, almost as exciting as it sounds, except yesterday was particularly gruesome, because we couldn't even debate this current year's interim supply bill. This government had to go all the way to the next fiscal year and say, well, let's talk theoretically about what interim supply might look like, you know, 12 or 16 months from now. Are you kidding me? Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the best they can come up with, with everything that's going on in the world.

The Conservative bubble over there must be particularly thick, and the blinders are on and the earplugs are in, to be able to ignore what is quite clearly going on in our own province and in our own communities. Everybody else can see it. Everybody else knows that more action has to be taken.

And here's the fundamental problem for Conservative governments like this one and for any other Conservative government across the province: they actually don't believe in government. This is a group of people that seek office, and their basic line on the doorstep—if we consider an election to be a job interview, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the people who are doing the hiring's the general public, well, the Conservative candidate for the job will knock on the door, and if they were honest, they would say, look, I

don't believe in your organization, I don't like what it does and if you are dumb enough to hire me for this job, I will make sure it is in far worse shape than it is right now by the time I'm done with it.

\* (15:20)

And, when you do not believe in the role of government to actually address fundamental societal challenges, fundamental economic challenges, fundamental environmental challenges, you're delusional if you think life is going to get better for the vast majority of people who live here. It's just a return to a Wild West scenario where the people who have immense amounts of wealth and power already are going to continue to accumulate more. The planet is going to continue to be degraded. And everyone else is going to suffer the consequences. If the planet reaches the point where it is done with us, well, then everybody goes. But the 1 per cent even don't seem to understand that particular point.

And Conservative governments like this one and others across the country are quite simply in a conundrum because governments have two basic powers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have the power to pass laws and regulations, and they have the power to bring in budgets. And this government does not believe in regulation. They've ironically brought in a law explicitly stating they do not believe in law—or believe in regulation. For every regulation that they—heaven forbid—might be forced to bring in, they've said they're going to get rid of two. It doesn't matter if those two laws were making sure that the food that my constituents buy at the grocery store stays safe. Doesn't matter if those two regulations make sure that the water that we drink is safe, the water that we provide to our families, water we use every day. Those two regulations could be removed. They don't care if the toys or the products you might buy for your children in the store are still safe to use.

Doesn't matter if the person that you need to go and see for professional advice, whether it be legal or financial or health-related, all of those professions ultimately are regulated by government to make sure that when I as a citizen need a service, that I can know that I'm accessing someone with the credentials and the skills to be able to help me and my family achieve what we need to achieve. But, if you're just flat-out opposed to regulation, anything and everything is on the table.

And on the budget front this government can't even get its own political spin straight on something as simple as the PST thing. We had—the member for

Radisson (Mr. Teitsma)—was that just—what was that, yesterday? No, Tuesday? Would have been his private member's motion, and right in the resolution is the most blatant factual error that I'd seen even him produce in quite a while, and there's been a few. But he had right in there in the document this outlandish claim that reducing the PST by 1 per cent in Manitoba is going to save the average family of four \$3,000 over the next five years.

So let's just see how ludicrous that is. Let's just—bear with me for a moment. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Just to show you how out of touch this government is and why it is we end up debating—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** —the minor amendments and corrections act.

So if it's \$3,000 over five years, they're claiming \$600 a year of savings per year. Well, 1 per cent—in order to do that, you would have to spend \$60,000 in one year on PST items, on items where the PST is charged. You'd have to spend \$60,000 on that in order to save \$600 a year.

Now, let's think about that. In order for me to be able to spend—in order for any family, an average family of four, to be able to spend \$60,000 on PST, they have to have that money in their accounts already. Well, income tax collected by this government, well, that's going to be on top of that. Any property taxes, well, that would have to be on top of it. Taxes are going to take at least 25 to 33 per cent of income before you even have a chance to spend it, right? So we're looking at the average Manitoba family of four now suddenly, miraculously, having annual income of at least 85 or 90 thousand dollars a year.

And the PST is not assigned to a huge range of products and services in Manitoba. This is a family that, at 85 to 90 thousand dollars a year, does not buy any milk all year. They don't buy any fruits and vegetables all year because there's no PST assigned to that under the Tory—under the so-called Tory math. This is a family that doesn't buy any gasoline all year because there's no PST on that. So actually, the average family of four in the delusional Tory bubble over there is approaching six figures, easily more than double what the actual median family

income of four is in this province. Go look it up; you'll see for yourself.

They can't even get their own political spin right, and we end up being presented with the minor amendments and corrections act. That's how far the Pallister government is prepared to go to avoid talking about the legitimate issues that people face, all the while trying to spin them with information that is fundamentally inaccurate.

And all of this background does not in any way detract from the fact there's some really nasty stuff that they've slipped into Bill 24.

Now let me just raise the first one: Does anyone here remember the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or any of his candidates knocking on people's doors and saying, if elected we're taking away your long weekend? Did anyone see that on the pamphlets or the brochures? Anybody see—well, right here, in Bill 24, well, look at that—they're going to make Canada Day a fixed statutory holiday. That means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, anytime from now on, so long as the big blue Tory bubble of denial is in power here at the Legislature, anytime Canada Day falls on a Saturday or a Sunday, people will not have a holiday on the Friday or the Monday.

So where was that promised in the past election? Where is that admission going to be on the material they will no doubt inundate people with in the upcoming election campaign? Never mind the fact that this government fundamentally made only one promise—only one promise to the people of Manitoba. That was there would be no cuts and no layoffs. That's the only promise they made, and they have broken it hundreds and hundreds of times.

It was austerity from day one. Everyone knew in our party that that was the most likely scenario and, tragically, we have been proved right yet again.

And here are the other things—just a few of them—that are buried in the depths of Bill 24. A growing number, an encouragingly growing number of Manitobans of all backgrounds, are actively engaging in the task of reconciliation with indigenous people. It needs to be a central focus of our society if we are to properly acknowledge the damage and the wounds that have been caused in the past and move forward as a cohesive society where we understand each other's history and we work together to make sure that mistakes of the past are never repeated again.

Well, what has this government decided to do under the Bill 24, Minor Amendments and Corrections Act? Lo and behold, they no longer want to have a timeline or responsibility on when the annual report on progress related to reconciliation has to be completed.

Now we have noticed, time and time and time again, from the opposition benches, that this government has very little interest—very little interest—in properly engaging with First Nations communities or with First Nations people. Just yesterday I was honoured to attend a meeting of fishers, commercial fishers in Manitoba, a mix of indigenous and non-indigenous, and nobody around that table, not even the indigenous fishers of their communities where there is a constitutional obligation for the Crown to consult with indigenous communities if a change the government is making is going to impact them, it's a constitutional requirement—nobody around that table had been properly consulted with ahead of time.

And, lo and behold, all of the fishers—northern, southern, the channel fishers in the central area, indigenous or non-indigenous, none of them were happy with this government. The government had lost the room and they have taken the historic step of formally dissolving a decades-old co-management board where decisions about their livelihood used to be made in co-operation and in dialogue with previous governments.

\*(15:30)

Not anymore; not under this one, and here we have, yet again, another attempt to undermine, not promote, not enhance, but to undermine the path to reconciliation. That's an act that we passed while were in office, and it stated that within three months of the end of a fiscal year, June 30th, the minister had to table a copy of the report in the Assembly and make it available to the public so that everyone can see what it is that the government is doing and what the government has not yet done on the path to reconciliation.

And now, under this act that the Pallister government has brought forward today, buried away in the minor amendments and corrections act, they want to do away with that obligation to actually have people know and understand how little it is that they're doing for reconciliation, how little they care about reconciliation, which is not just—not just—about indigenous people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is about all of us. All of us need to be engaged in this

path, and it's very difficult to continue doing that when your provincial government is not engaged in that fundamental task.

And this is just one—those two examples—removing a holiday, removing obligations under The Path to Reconciliation Act—those are just examples of what's in this year's Minor Amendments and Corrections Act. This is a—an act of this name typically comes to the Legislature every single year, used to correct minor typos—a small change here, a small change there—just to make sure that the law is accurate to the very letter. It's not how the Pallister government has treated the minor amendments acts in years previous.

Where do you think the decision to cut public funding for public transit was buried, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a few years ago? It was in that year's minor amendments and corrections act. That was something the Pallister government reneged on. It was a cost-sharing arrangement with any local municipality that had a public transit system.

It obligated the provincial government to cover 50 per cent of the costs—not the entire cost, but 50 per cent of the cost. And, when Gary Filmon came to office, he got rid of that. He didn't like it. He didn't think people who didn't have enough money to buy their own car should be able to travel around on transit affordably, or people who might be trying, through their own purposes, perhaps, to reduce their ecological footprint. He wanted to make it harder for them to make the good choice.

Well, when we came to office, we restored the 50-50 funding arrangement with all municipalities offering public transit. And now that the Conservatives—who, we must remember, do not believe in government, do not believe in helping people, do not believe in regulations that protect all of us—they have cut the funding again. So that all of the vulnerable people, all of the lower-income people, all of the students, all of the parents of students, all of the people in Manitoba who rely on public transit to get around—the Pallister government tried to get away with burying that cut into an act like this just a few years ago.

We found out about it, we called them on it, and lo and behold, there is now a very large contingent of people across this province who are fully aware and informed of what this government did to them when it comes to transit, and they will make their own decisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on what they choose

to do with that knowledge as we head into the next provincial election.

Last time I checked, all of us need water in order to survive. Every industry, every school, every community needs access to safe and reliable quantities of water. And what did this government do in previous omnibus bills like this one? Like, they had the red tape reduction and government efficiency act; Orwell would be so proud. Oh, my goodness. That was a doozy right there, because, lo and behold, under that title, they actually weakened the regulations on the hog industry in Manitoba. They reduced the number of inspections that would be required on water infrastructure. They did a whole host of things—giant steps backwards in the protection of water resources and in the protection of the people who live here who depend on water in order to survive and earn a living.

And all of this is to say—all of this is to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker—that it is quite clear that the reason why we are debating the minor amendments and corrections act is because this government is not prepared to bring forward a legislative agenda, because they don't have a legislative agenda.

When you do not care about the challenges that the people of this province are facing, you do not have legislation to address those challenges. It's not just that they're incompetent. It's not just that, oh, there's a whole bunch of bills in the works. As a Conservative government dedicated to one thing and one thing only, namely, cuts—or, austerity, to use the more academic term—there's nothing much for them to do.

And this all, of course, flies in complete opposite—this is the complete opposite of what each and every one of the Conservative MLAs who got elected actually told the citizens they were going to should they be getting elected in the last contest. They said no cuts, no layoffs. They got into office; they've done nothing but that since.

And the reason why they have no interest—or no agenda and no programs to address the issues that people are facing is because they don't actually care about the issues that people are facing. And the people of Manitoba will have to decide if this type of absent, deceptive, removed, arrogant and utterly ineffective government is what they want to keep around.

I, for one, certainly hope that Manitobans choose a far better path, both for ourselves and for our children and grandchildren's sake.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before we start with the next speaker, I just—I received a letter from the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew).

Pursuant to rule 44(2) of the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceeding of the Legislative Assembly of the Manitoba, I am writing to advise that I will be designating my unlimited speaking time for the second reading of Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, to the member for—the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine).

Next speaker.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Minor Amendments and Corrections Act: more Tory doublespeak, gobbledygook, because it's more than that, isn't it? As we've heard from many speakers already, there's more than just some minor corrections that—normally, this corrects, like a typographical error, put a comma here, semicolon there, forgot to say and somewhere.

Well, in this case, they took out an and, and replaced it with an or. Seems relatively minor, except it's not. You know, it takes some things that we've fought about in other pieces of legislation put forward by this government. And they continue their insidious attack on democracy. They continue their insidious attack on being open and transparent.

While they stand up and say that they are, they do everything in their power to ensure that they're not. So a relatively minor wording change takes a requirement to put some things that are supposed to be in notices in local papers.

I don't know—I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can recall us talking about some of these things with a couple of other bills that the government introduced that they had to back off on some of them because some of their own supporters said, hey, wait a minute, wait just a minute. This is wrong. This limits people's ability to be informed.

But, really, that's what right-wing, ultra-right-wing governments do quite often is they limit people's ability to be informed, and instead inform them with the wrong information or hide the right information. And, really, we've seen that so many times with this particular government, that that's

either what they've done, what they've attempted to do.

\* (15:40)

Certainly, the Free Press and newspaper publishers were quite adamant in stopping this government or at least trying to stop this government from hiding information. I see the member from Riding Mountain has decided to pay attention when we talk about newspapers, something that's near and dear to his heart, apparently. So he should've, you know, said to his Premier (Mr. Pallister), wait a minute, wait just a minute, Mr. Premier. We've been down this road before. Why are you doing that again? He should've stood up. Maybe he tried, I don't know. I suspect he didn't put up a very forceful barrage against his Premier who's 'trompling' on the rights of citizens, 'trompling' on the rights of newspapers, trying to close down a free press. I'm sure the member from Riding Mountain, when he gets back to work in the papers that he manages, owns, does whatever it is he does with them, hands off, hands free, I don't know, I'm sure he'll say, I don't care what the government says, by golly, we need to make sure we publish information. We need to make sure that citizens of Riding Mountain, never mind the rest of Manitoba—he needs to say, you know, citizens in my constituency need to be informed.

So will he go back to Riding Mountain? You know, we got a weekend coming up; maybe he'll go back and say, hey, wait a minute, folks, I perhaps misled you. We're not as open and transparent as we claimed we were going to be. We, in fact, are going to take information out of the newspapers that people still read.

**An Honourable Member:** We were there for Riding Mountain.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Yes.

You know, so I hope that the member from Riding Mountain, as my colleague from Fort Garry points out, we did him—us all a favour, and you know, we don't want to hold that over his head because I'm sure he's got enough held over his head every time he goes to see his own Premier, so. You know, we just want to make sure that not just people in Riding Mountain, but people in every constituency and every jurisdiction of this province understand really what this government is up to yet again. Yet again, once more they're trying to slip things in, minor amendments that aren't so minor. You know,

they're saying that this is the most important thing that they've got to discuss as a government is making minor changes. Well, maybe it is. Maybe it is the most important thing they've got to do as a government. Maybe this government's priority is to simply hide the facts from citizens because certainly that seems to be their history, so.

I don't want to go on too long about this government and how they're trying to hide the information or put, you know, false information on the record, and then they stand up with great bluster all the time and say, well, that's not the right information; that's false information. But now they just want to make sure there's no information, which is really—well, there's been some other governments that have tried that, you know, some famous governments. Oh, I don't know, back in Germany once upon a time tried to make sure that they controlled how much information was available to their citizens, and we certainly hope that that's not what this is about. Maybe it was just a minor—maybe autocorrect. When they were typing it up on their computer, maybe autocorrect changed and to or. Let's hope that's the case, and they'll say, wait a minute, we got to go back and change that back to what it should say.

So, you know, I'll give the member from Riding Mountain credit that I'm sure he'll go back to his Premier and say, hey, boss, this is wrong, we got to change this. This is just plain wrong, and I'm sure that it was done, you know, by mistake, not intentionally. So we'll give them credit to look forward to seeing the amendment that they bring forward. You know, a friendly amendment by the government, I'm sure we'd support that change. So we look forward to that. So I look forward to that amendment being, you know, in the member from Riding Mountain's name.

So what else is in this minor amendment? What else are they hiding from Manitobans or attempting to? Well, I heard my colleague from The Pas talk about reconciliation. So, now, my understanding is that there's supposed to be a report under the pathways to reconciliation act. And there's some timelines tied to that.

Now that act was proclaimed by the previous NDP government. I wouldn't expect this government to, you know, want to honour something that was brought in by a previous government. But that's kind of how the law works is you're supposed to honour it and obey it. Except that this government doesn't

really have a strong history with that, either, do they? They don't really want to honour the fixed-election-date law, either.

I guess maybe it's—when you're the government in power, you get to pick and choose which laws. I don't think so, but, you know, this reporting requirement under the pathways to reconciliation act—it's an important part of the whole act because, currently, the act requires a report to be completed—within three months of a fiscal year.

So a minor amendment or correction—minor. Maybe we'll have to look in the dictionary and look at what the word minor actually means in a dictionary, because I don't think it means the same thing as what this Pallister government thinks it means.

So a minor change that they've proposed—and I use minor somewhat—

**An Honourable Member:** Facetiously.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —facetiously; there you go. That's as good a word as any. Thanks. I appreciate that.

So now the minor change is that the—strikes out this requirement. They don't have to report. There's nothing that says when they do have to report; that part is stricken out altogether.

That, to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seems to be so much more than a minor change. So I think that, again, what the heck are they up to? This is not merely changing a comma or a semicolon; this is changing, really, the whole intent of what was required by that act to report on things that had been done to move us along the path to reconciliation. So should I assume from the fact that they don't want to report on that, is it going to be because they intend to not have anything to report? Because that would be much more than a minor amendment. If they have no intention to do anything so that they don't have to report on what they've done, then that is a serious change in the entire intent of the path to reconciliation.

And I mean, we've seen how this government has treated indigenous folks, when, basically, called young guys a bunch of criminals. They—we've seen how they've treated the Metis folks in this province when they just unilaterally rip up agreements that are in place and do away with them.

\* (15:50)

You know, it's one thing that they've done, they've—Manitoba Hydro, a Crown corporation, had an agreement with the Metis Federation about how they were going to proceed on a path that both parties had agreed to—until this Premier (Mr. Pallister) stuck his fingers in and decided that he wasn't paying hush money to special interest groups. Well, you know, there goes consultation out the window because, when Manitoba Hydro actually sat down and consulted with people that were affected by things like Hydro transmission lines, and came up with—come up with a solution that both parties agreed to.

Really, shouldn't that be what consultation is all about? Shouldn't that be what a pathway to reconciliation is about? Because certainly, once upon a time, governments didn't consult and just unilaterally made decisions—imposed their will on, particularly, indigenous people in this province. But now there should be a new way forward. Certainly, the federal courts have ruled that consultation has to be more than just lip service.

So this government says, no, we don't like that agreement. We're throwing it out. We're ripping it up. And then they turn around and say, well, what other agreements do we think we can ignore?

Well, there's another agreement with the Manitoba Metis Federation. The—now, the name is escaping me at the moment, but it—the Turning the Page Agreement; that's what it was. Well, it seems this government has now decided, well, that agreement's not an agreement either. We're going to turn the pages backwards. That's what this government wants to do when it comes to reconciliation, is go back in time where they just get to be the lord and master, make the decisions and don't care what anybody says.

And, quite frankly, that is wrong. This government knows it's wrong. So why would they suggest, in a bill that's supposed to just make minor spelling corrections and minor typographical errors, why do they insist on sneaking other stuff into these type of bills?

You know, there's been other omnibus bills that we had to go through with fine-tooth comb to see exactly what they're up to. Well, we did the same with this one, because we've learned after three years of watching this Pallister government in action that we have to very meticulously and carefully scrutinize every word in every piece of legislation they introduce because relatively minor pieces of



legislation, which this one traditionally has been, they've put other stuff in there that's, eh, not so minor. So we always need to make sure that we're going through this stuff to catch them out at their tricks. And that's what we've done again this time.

So, you know, there's so much more to reconciliation that really we need to progress along the path, and we're not—certainly not under this government, and certainly not under things that we see this government doing.

So, you know, those are some of the important things that we've picked up on. And just to get back to one of the themes that some of my colleagues have brought up, you know, initially we think that—is this the most important thing this government has got is to make some minor spelling corrections? And on the surface of it, it seems ludicrous that a government with such a majority can't think of anything better to do, can't think of anything better for us to debate in this House than some minor corrections.

But then, like I say, once we start to peel away the layers of what actually is buried in these legislation—this legislation is, wait a minute. Maybe it is worth debating. Maybe it is worth putting a stop to. Maybe it is worth calling the government to task for trying to once again sneak things into legislation that really shouldn't be. And it would be nice if they kind of stuck to if something's going to be called minor amendments that that's what it really was, was minor amendments.

So, you know, here we go again trying to avoid—not us—the government trying to avoid accountability. And, really, what Manitobans want is their Premier (Mr. Pallister) to inspire trust and accountability, but that's not what they got, certainly not with this Premier.

He's consistently tried to shield, certainly, his own activities from citizens. I mean, we've seen that. I won't go too far down that road, where we've looked at corporations that he's owned, and he only admits to things after getting caught at it.

So now, we look at legislation that he and his government are bringing in, and it's kind of the same deal, isn't it? It's not open and it's trying to hide accountability. It's trying to take accountability out of the public eye.

It's trying to make sure that the public can't hold the Premier accountable, can't hold his government ministers accountable, can't hold their own MLAs

accountable because they're trying to hide what they're doing or trying to hide that which they're not doing, which is just as bad, isn't it, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

So, just to get back to this government notices bit for a minute or two, you know, we've had this argument that just posting things in the Manitoba Gazette is not sufficient. Making the Manitoba Gazette free is—it—well, it's nice, I guess, for people that—lawyers, things like that, that really want to peruse the Manitoba Gazette.

What it doesn't do is it doesn't make the information available to the public because I guess—I question every member opposite, do they go to the Manitoba Gazette every day of the week to see what's new? Do they go to see, I wonder what my government's up to today. I should go to that Manitoba Gazette. Where the heck do I find that again? Oh, let me see. Well, it's somewhere on the Internet and—oh, wait a minute, lots of communities in northern Manitoba don't have the Internet.

How would they go about finding information that may be affecting them? Well, oh, oopsie. I guess the government forgot that—or did they? Did they do it on purpose? Once again, we're left to wonder what the ulterior motives of this government are.

And I just see a little note here in some notes I've got that—does everybody know how many Manitobans subscribe to the Manitoba Gazette? Let's take a guess.

**An Honourable Member:** 100.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Oh, way too high, way too high, way too high. Cut that number in half: 55 people subscribe to the Manitoba Gazette.

**An Honourable Member:** Trying to be participatory; nobody knows.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Yes. You know, I try and engage people when I'm speaking and, you know, I want them to listen. But once again, they're not listening to me, but they're also not listening to people in Manitoba.

And that's where they start to have their downfall, isn't it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is—sooner or later, people or Manitoba are going to say, hey, wait a minute, this is not what we expected from this government. This is not what they promised. This is not what we've asked them to do. Are they not listening?

Maybe we should put something in the newspaper—oh, wait a minute, they're probably not reading that, either, because they think they've taken everything out of a newspaper that somebody would pay attention to, so, you know, that's kind of, too bad.

So, you know, this Manitoba Gazette is only published once a week now. Oh, well, that's good. That's good to know; means I don't have to go there every day and look. I only have to go once a week. Better news: the government's making my life so much easier. I certainly appreciate that.

\* (16:00)

You know, I was talking to a fella up in Pukatawagan, it was, and he wanted to know about some road closures and some changes that were happening. So I told him, well, between us, we'll keep an eye on the government notices in the paper and we'll keep an eye on some notices that should be coming out in the spring in relation to that.

Well, he thought that was a heck of a good idea that it would come out in the local paper. Of course, being in Pukatawagan, a local paper's a little hard to come by, but not as hard to come by as the Manitoba Gazette, because guess what he doesn't have at home? Doesn't have Internet. So publishing a notice in the Gazette will do him absolutely no good whatsoever.

So, you know, I'm hoping that—they say that, if you repeat something often enough, people will begin to understand. So, you know, I hope that the government begins to understand, if we repeat often enough, to quit trying to hide—quit trying to hide information that's important to people, that maybe the message will get through to them. And I'm sure that the member from Riding Mountain, big newspaper publisher, knows that if you put enough things in an ad often enough, that people begin to think it's right. That—

**An Honourable Member:** Hence the bill.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Yes.

So, you know, we also look at a little bit of lost revenue for newspapers, and, certainly, when we listen to newspaper publishers, that really wasn't their major concern. Their major concern was about the loss of information to their readers.

But what do we know about this government? They're going to pinch every penny they can find. They're going to pinch it so tight because they have

to live up to their promise to cut the PST. Nothing else matters—not health care, not education, not roads, not information.

The only thing that drives this government is we must reduce the PST, so we can get re-elected, because we said we were going to do that. Doesn't matter about any other promise they made. Doesn't matter about protecting front-line services. Doesn't matter about protecting services that people rely on. That's the only thing it matters, is cutting that 1 per cent, so if people don't know what's going on, that's fine. They don't care as long as they've managed to live up to one promise out of six. I guess that's good enough for them.

So, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're still puzzling as to why they decided to bring forward a bill like this, because normally my understanding is the minor amendments and corrections act doesn't require days and days and days of debate. It's brought up, everybody has a quick look at it. Yes, fixed a couple of spelling mistakes, changed a comma here. Good. Let's go, let's move on, let's debate something of substance.

But then this government introduces this, hoping that we would just assume it was the same old, same old, and that we would just pass it quickly and move on. And then, uh oh, surprise—look what was in that bill.

But here's the surprise to this government, is we in the loyal opposition take our job seriously and we caught out the surprise before it passed. So this government needs to quit thinking they can not just hoodwink the opposition, but they think they can hoodwink the public. And we will be here to hold them to account, to point out to the public what exactly this government is up to every day that we're sitting until such a time as the Premier (Mr. Pallister) makes up an excuse that he thinks is good enough to call an early election.

And we will hold this government to account for things like these minor amendments that they've made. We'll hold them to account in the next election, to talk to people when we're out knocking on the doors of Manitobans to tell them—maybe to ask them: Is this what you voted for? Did you vote for a government to go behind your backs to try and introduce legislation to limit your ability to be informed? Did you vote for a government to be not open? Did you vote for a government that's not being transparent? Did you vote for a government that is trying to hide facts from you as a citizen?

And I'm pretty sure that most citizens we talk to will say, well, gosh, no, that's not what we voted for. That's not what this government said they were going to do. And then, when we say, well, you know, here's just one—just one—piece of legislation where they tried to trick you—there's more—that the people will say, well, gosh, that's not right. How can they do that? And we'll be able to stand there on the doorstep and tell them, we did everything in our power to stop them from trying to trick you as Manitobans. But the only way to truly stop them is to say goodbye to them.

And, in that sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker, perhaps maybe the election can't come soon enough so that we can say goodbye to a government that is not open and transparent, that keeps trying to slip things in—slip things in a bill with an innocuous name. We can say goodbye to a government, then, that has done the complete opposite of what they've claimed, that they've only lived up to one promise. At the same time, they've starved our front-line services for resources, for people, that they've done everything in their power to make life harder for Manitobans. They claim to be the most improved province. Well, only if you're one of their rich cronies; that's the only time.

Thank you.

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

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** We have talked about some of the issues with this bill before, that these are supposed to be minor amendments and corrections and that there are a number of things that are frustrating that have been slipped into these bills. Number—it starts, one being the—I mean, even The Aboriginal Languages Recognition Act. We spoke with the member from Kewatinook, who's my caucus colleague, and said that her frustration with this is that this is a change. We don't know that there was any consultation that happened before this happened, before this decision was made. There doesn't seem to be any consensus within her own community about this change being made.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other is the issue of The Path to Reconciliation Act. When it says it's amending tabling the annual report within three months—any of the first 15 days—but also removes the requirement to make it available to the public. And it allows only for the report summary to be translated rather than the whole report. This is frustrating, in part, because one of the issues here that also relates

to making sure that these things are translated into—translated fully into indigenous languages—we've seen other areas where this government has cut back on translations in French, but here as well.

We have an obligation to all the many people who live in this province to communicate with them in their language. This is not a monolithic or homogenous province by any means, nor has it ever been. And the fact is, if we're going to govern from—for everybody, we have to make sure that we actually communicate to everybody.

\* (16:10)

The other is the—the question of renaming private schools is fairly minor. But I do want to talk about, in the bigger context, about issues with—of reconciliation. Even though the path of reconciliation—and not having full reports on it—seems to be not even—to being taking two steps forward and no steps—that's two steps back with no steps forward. There are all sorts of areas where this government has had issues with it—with dealing with indigenous communities in a number of ways—the really shocking disrespect with which the Manitoba Metis Federation has been treated, referring it to it as a special interest group, just as one—basically using Crown corporations to essentially punish groups like the Manitoba Metis Federation.

And I think part of the concern here is that it's—even though this is a very minor change, that there's even a pattern of vindictiveness on the part of this government where—that they're—that if somebody speaks up or objects to what happens under this government, that as a result is the people who end up speaking up end up having their 'frund'—or their funding threatened or cut.

And there have been other areas as well. I talked earlier this week about the Community Places grants or the Community Places program, which has been clearly and very seriously politicized. We saw not only that 85 per cent of all the projects were being—going into ridings held by government members. When we actually did an analysis of the breakdown of how that spending went, we found that the average PC constituency received about \$80,000; the average NDP constituency received about \$33,000; the average Liberal constituency received less than \$20,000.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

And not only that, as those programs and those—have been changed, one of the things that's happened

is that under the new program, First Nations have effectively been eliminated from participating. They can only—they cannot apply on their own. They can apply so long as they have a co-participant, but none of the projects are actually available to happen on-reserve.

This is shameful, really. There—the fact is, as we've said many times, First Nations are Manitobans and they have a right to vote, they have a right to participate. We have an obligation as a government to govern for them and not just brush them off to the side or argue that we only have a responsibility in certain areas and not others because it's—because First Nations are in some ways a federal responsibility, but not entirely, and the fact is that all sorts of services that—and infrastructure and programs that First Nations rely on are provided by the provincial government and not the federal government.

There is a landmark report in the last few months that came out that talked about the contributions of indigenous people to Manitoba's economy. It was on the order of \$9 billion, and I've talked to people who were for some reason skeptical about that, but that was a business contribution. The fact is, and this is important to say because people said, well, how much of that is—I've heard people cynically suggesting that that was as a result of government funding they received. The amount of government funding is actually relatively a tiny portion of that, that the vast majority of it is the result of businesses being run by First Nations and indigenous people across Manitoba who make a major, major contribution to this province's economy.

So, again, the fact that First Nations are being excluded from this, from the Community Places program, is the sort of thing that undermines reconciliation and—but has been part of a larger problem, generally speaking, with this government's entire approach to govern, that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has been willing to pick fights with just about everybody: municipalities, the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Metis Federation, appointed board members, the federal government, and, as a result, we have a situation where we have a government that in many ways is dysfunctional.

And we—and part of it, we're seeing some of that here today. I mean, we are debating what are minor amendments. We're spending a huge amount of time talking about it, but one of the ironies is that there are a whole bunch of really important things that need to be talked about, including this budget. I

think this is, in many ways, an opportunity for this government to distract and postpone discussions of the things that really matter to Manitobans, and avoid questions for what they're actually doing with their agenda, on the budget, to avoid talking about—to avoid going to Estimates where the Premier and ministers would actually face personal questions—not personal questions, intense scrutiny for what they're doing and be obliged to answer those questions, and instead we have what is basically an entire giant act of avoidance.

We've seen this come forward. We have Interim Supply from 2020 coming up. I don't understand on what possible basis we should be talking about Interim Supply for a budget from next year where we don't know who's going to be in government, we don't know—and essentially that the Premier, on the one hand, is talking about having an election before next year while he's also presenting a budget for next year, so that completely undermines any sort of sense of authority for his—for this government's ability to bring that budget forward.

The only thing is it does show is that there's a long-standing practice across many different aspects of governing that there are attempts on the part of PC governments to try to force future governments to enact their agenda or enact their ideologic—stick to their ideology in ways that are ways that are unacceptable.

I did also—I just want to talk—mention one of the challenges, or one of the things that I found with the Premier in some of the arguments that take place here is that we often end up talking about things that are essentially imaginary, and this is a strange place to be in terms of debate. Sometimes I've heard people argue that this Chamber is a kind of theatre, but a theatre is a place where people pretend to be something they're not. They say things they don't believe that somebody else wrote for them, so I don't think this place is—actually is—I don't think theatre is the right word for it, Madam Speaker. I think that degrades what we're trying to achieve here.

But the frustration is when we talk—how much argument in this Chamber actually is based on imaginary ideas. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has, in the last couple of days, has talked about what the deficit was headed for. He didn't talk about what that deficit was. He talked about the direction it would have been based on some projection for it in the future, so it was simply based on a projection. It wasn't anything real, and the trajectory of that deficit

has changed, but it has changed largely because of a change in the amount of transfer payments being received by this government. It's the single greatest factor.

I don't think that there's been any other change that compares to it because it's seven—over \$700 million this year alone in increased funding for federal transfers, not including other kinds of transfers that have come into the province.

I've also heard this government take credit for trying to—for doing something about child poverty. I don't know that there's a shred of evidence that there has been any contribution to changing child poverty in this province as far as I can tell. It seems to be entirely as a result of the Canada child benefit under the federal government and—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, order.

**Mr. Lamont:** The member's out of order, Madam Speaker. Thank you—*[interjection]*—yes, and no, but I will say one of the things that's happened is that the amount of—one of the things that changed—I mean I'm not—and I know that there's a temptation on the part of others to want to endlessly associate me with the federal party, but, frankly, I'm just trying to talk about the facts of what are—of the changes that are being made in terms of federal financing for a province that relies—where over a quarter of our budget relies on federal funding.

It is a huge amount of money, and we are incredibly dependent for that, and so the reality of what the amount of money that the federal government is bringing in, we're not for—is either contributing, whether that money is going up, whether it's going down, whether it's been frozen, as it was for five years prior—it was between 2010–2016, these have enormous impacts on Manitoba's finances.

And I know that once the Canada child benefit came in, one of the changes was that Manitoba was receiving \$500 million a year more per year than they were previously simply because, under the new program, it tended to flow to people in need rather than people who were not in need.

So—and in a breakdown of the province, that naturally meant that constituencies like Churchill–Keewatinook Aski ended up getting advancements like—much more in funding. Areas like Winnipeg Centre have much more in funding, whereas areas of the province which were better off where people were making much more money and simply didn't

need the same sort of level of support didn't see it. It basically flowed where it needed to go.

\* (16:20)

And that is when we've seen major changes in the increases of child support of hundreds of dollars a month, it's—and thousands of dollars a year per child that is clearly going to make a very major difference in the lives of children. And it hasn't been anything—and I have not—that is, I've—when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) says that the—it's due to Rent Assist, I would also point out that one of the things—changes that was made with Rent Assist is that the threshold was increased, so many people were actually kicked off Rent Assist as well.

And as—I recall actually sitting at a committee where, as—that—the number of people—I don't—I would say that one of the things that has happened despite these claims is that—one of the things we do know, again, from the government's own figures are the number of people falling into—who are on income assistance has also been going up. So I—it's been going up continually since 2008. There are over 10,000 more people on EIA this year than there were 10 years ago.

So I—again, it's not been clear to me, especially when the report on poverty that was released by the Families Minister ended up cherry-picking data all over the place. Some year started in 2008, some started in 2010, some in 2006. And in many cases, we are looking at situations where the—where things are actually worse now than they were even 10 years ago.

But I was also—I was talking about some of the challenges with having a debate when we're essentially talking about imaginary problems. The other issue that's always come up is the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his ministers keep saying—they talking about where health-care funding was going to go, where health-care funding would have been. So when health-care funding is actually going up, although it was once going up 6 per cent, it's now going up by 3 per cent. Again, that was a change that was made as a unilateral decision of the Conservative—Harper Conservative government.

When it comes to the green plan, the Premier has argued that Manitoba deserves credit for building imaginary coal-fired stations that were never built. So—and again, if we were to just talk about the arguments that were made recently about why we have to have Interim Supply for 2020 passed, we

also had imaginary arguments and a completely—and a description of the—of what happened when Estimates were held up before that was completely at odds with, well, with what I saw with my own eyes and that I think if anyone would read Hansard, that we would see.

As I recall, the vote for Interim Supply for this year was called at 4:30 in the afternoon just before the break. The member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) was identified, ended up talking it out. I will regret the NDP actually absolutely didn't work with the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen). They reached out to him in an attempt to stop the clock, to try to get the bill passed. And, ultimately, it was a mistake, but not abuse. There was no effort—there was no effort whatsoever of obstruction on the part of the opposition. It was quite the contrary. It was simply an accident, or it was a result of missed timing on the—*[interjection]*—I will defer to the member from Point Douglas on that. I won't—on that point.

But it was basically that—it was left to the absolute last minute before a break and inadvertently—or perhaps I will give some credit to the Government House Leader—as a result it made it possible for the member of Assiniboia to filibuster for 20 minutes and the vote not to happen and the for the bill not to pass.

That being said, as I once mentioned with, or I once discussed with the member for Minto (Mr. Swan)—I said that the—when the member for Assiniboia is right, he's right, as the member for Minto said, and when he's wrong, he's very wrong. But on the issue of Interim Supply, which—again, very odd that we're talking about 2020—but the entire premise that people will not get paid if Interim Supply fails to pass is not true, or is inaccurate, because there have been other times when bills have been held up. There was an entire summer that, before I was an MLA or leader, that when the members opposite were in opposition, they sat through the summer, held up and used procedural means to hold up legislation, but it did not result in anyone not getting paid.

So that's part of the frustration here, is that, again, we should—there are very important things we should and could be debating and we have—should and could have the opportunity to be talking to the—having—asking questions of the Premier, asking questions of the minister. There are—and there are also other bills that have—we've seen waiting on the

Order Paper that have not materialized. That—one is the conflict of interest act. They did finally bring forward the transparency and ownership act, but that has also been incredibly disappointing in that it doesn't actually require—doesn't make transparency. It requires businesses to create registers of ownership which don't actually—but which aren't in themselves accessible.

And that's been one of the—again, one of the great frustrations is that ultimately, I think, there is an element of performance to what we do here, but that performance should not stray too far from or be—there's still a—we still have to have that connection to reality, the real world and what's actually going on out there, and, frankly, that sometimes breaks down in a way that's most unfortunate.

So, and again, one of the reasons we are all here, I would hope, is that we recognize that Manitoba, though it's great, has significant challenges that need to be dealt with, that Canada has significant challenges to be dealt with and we would all be better off if we were actually able to talk about those challenges, to talk about what the government's agenda so that we could actually find out what is clear and what is happening because it has become increasingly difficult to get that kind of information from the government in many different ways.

I think I've run my course, so I would give in to—

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

**An Honourable Member:** Eleven more minutes.

**Mr. Lamont:** Eleven more? Do I? No, I think I've run my—I have—I've run my course today. Thank you very much.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Getting up to just put a few words on the record about Bill 24, something that if this government thought was a priority should've brought this forward earlier and made this one of their designated bills. But, of course, you know, this government doesn't seem to know what they're doing from day to day.

One day we're doing Interim Supply on 2020; that is actually next year, and they're saying, oh, it's because civil servants won't get paid. Well, we know that that's not true. You know, we've talked to civil servants. You know, they've used Michelle Gawronsky's name and said that she was the one that wanted them to bring this forward when, in fact, you know, she—that wasn't something she asked for.

So, you know, I find it ironic that this government on the other side, they can't operate without paying a consultant to tell them what to do: \$23 million they've spent of Manitoba's taxpayers' dollars to tell them what to do. And do they listen? Well, they pick and choose, actually, what they want to have inside these reports. We know that the VIRGO report had said that, you know, Manitoba needs a safe consumption site. Did this government listen? No, because, you know, it wasn't something that they wanted to see in Manitoba. Unfortunately, Manitobans have been telling them that it's something that they want to see.

When we talk about reconciliation, you know, I haven't seen one thing on reconciliation in this House since I've been a sitting member, which is unfortunate, because I came into this position to help make change for people, to help create a better Manitoba, to help ensure that those that need support get those supports. But, unfortunately, under this government, this—the support that Manitobans are getting continue to diminish. You know, people that are wealthy are getting the support that they need, but people who, you know, are struggling to survive day to day aren't getting any support. And this government talks about, oh, let's—you know, Manitobans are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet; they have less than \$200 at the end of the month. Well, I can tell you, the constituency that I represent, they're lucky if they have \$10 at the end of the month. They're lucky if they have \$3 to get on the bus to go to an appointment.

This government has made it so hard for indigenous people right across Manitoba. You know, they've taken out four dialysis machines out of a community that need it. Yet, did they consult with them? No.

Today we just heard Snow Lake, you know, in fact, is losing their centre that supports women who are going through domestic violence. And the minister got up and she talked and she said, well, in fact, there are only five women in that community that actually use that centre.

\* (16:30)

Well, I can tell that member—that minister that that is one too many women that needs to use that centre. And if there's one woman in that community that needs that centre, that centre should be there for that woman so that they can get out of that domestic abusive relationship that they're in and, you know, maybe their life can be saved. I've seen way too

many women in this province not get the help under this government since they've taken government in the last three years.

And, you know, I work in the North End. I work with the North Point Douglas Women's Centre. I go and visit the women there all the time. And men—they actually have brought men in. They're actually doing men's circles there now because they recognize that men need to be a part of it. You know, women love their partners but they don't love to be hit. They don't love to be abused.

So they've now created a circle where they're bringing men in that have been abusive to their partners, to help change that behaviour, to help get some help with—help them to get the help they need with, you know, some of their anger issues or addiction issues. But this government has been making it harder and harder to do. They've had to scale back on counselling for these women. They used to have counselling three days a week; now they only have it half day a week. So, you know, they have a load that they just can't sustain. They have so many women on this list that need to come and speak to someone, but there's not enough people there to speak with.

This program also would help women get on their feet. So—get them in touch with some employment programs. So not only were they counselling women around, you know, healthy relationships, but it was also about, you know, getting into education, getting into jobs, finding daycare, finding some programs that they can, you know, whether it was getting into the workforce, this centre provided those skills and those supports and those—gave them the tools that they needed.

In fact, some of these women—and this is a part of reconciliation, is helping these centres to ensure that they have the tools to support the community that they represent, that they—that every woman that comes into their centre, or a man or person, gets the support they need so that they can live a better life in Manitoba. It's not about, you know, putting money over people, because we need to create the society where we all take care of one another. You know, we've become this society where it's all about, you know, what I own and how much I can get and how much I have in the bank, when people are just trying to survive in our society.

And, you know, I think about these women who work at this centre now. These were actually women who got services from the centre. They were women

who came out of abusive relationships. These are women who—they work there, but they also volunteer there. They volunteer their time. They go out into the community with Mama Bear Clan and their partners sometimes come with them as well. And they've helped to keep many families together through their reconciliation circles. And it's troubling when I see our government, you know, devalue programs like that, that really look at, you know, the calls to action and ensuring that families have the support they need to exit domestic relationships, or to make those relationships healthier.

You know, I think about, you know, our call to action around missing and murdered indigenous women here. You know, this government, when they took office, the first thing they did was get rid of the special adviser. You know, I'm not saying that the special adviser that was there was someone that, you know, the government should have kept.

You know, it's up to their prerogative who they want to bring in, but they certainly shouldn't have got rid of that position, because I benefited from that program or that position as someone, you know, who often needed to find support for advocacy. As you know, my sister's case wasn't reported for 10 days from the police. They didn't investigate. And it was, in fact, you know, that special adviser that helped navigate the police and create a better relationship in terms of trusting relationships.

And, you know, people still reach out and are asking for support—are looking for supports in this province. And I—they often call my office and ask, you know, what is the government doing on the TRC calls to actions in terms of missing and murdered indigenous women? And I can't tell them that—one thing that this province is doing because they're not doing one single thing to address the high numbers of violence against women, indigenous women in this province.

There's—you know, in fact, what they're doing is they're diminishing the services. I look at the North End Women's Centre, another one who lost their funding. They received Neighbourhoods Alive! funding, which is—now they've renamed it. And they provided services to women, you know, who were experiencing violence, and that program was cut. That funding was cut.

You know, thankfully, the—they're able to get funding from, you know, another stream of government other than our province, but it's our duty as, you know, MLAs, as the government, to provide

those services to Manitobans. When there is a need, we should be, you know, providing for that need.

And there's statistics at that centre—and I was telling about North Point Douglas Women's Centre, and the women that work there were actually women who were getting services from there. So they became, you know, board members. They were volunteers, and then they became people who worked there.

Well, it's the same kind of system over at North End Women's Centre, where they uplift the women and they help them to—often, some of them will come in with no hope at all. You know, they've been beaten down so hard that, you know, they don't see their self-worth, and these women work in their store.

It's called the up store. It's a store that's right next to their centre, and these women get—gain skills: you know, how to work a till, how to do customer service, how to price things, you know, how to put them on racks and display them. So they're gaining skills through these programs.

It's not just about, you know, someone coming in and getting service for, you know, coming out of a domestic relationship, but it's also finding alternatives and helping these women to see that, you know, there is a future for them, and that there are programs and there are things out there that can help them. But those things are becoming fewer and fewer under this government.

You know, we have people that are in justice. You know, they're incarcerated. They used to be able to get skills when they were in jail. So they were incarcerated, and it's a suppressive model, Madam Speaker.

I worked in a program called cruising to success. It was with level 5 car thieves. They were mandated to be in my program. In the morning, we did education. In the afternoon, we did alternatives, and a lot of it was cultural and community-based. And that's the kind of things that we need in—to help people to see that there's something different for them.

When we put people in jail and simply, you know, feed them three meals a day and, you know, provide them TV and an exercise room, but we're not training people to have different behaviours while they're in there, well, of course, they're going to come out and they're going to, you know, re-offend.



But, if we look to a rehabilitative model such as what was in place, where people learned skills—they worked on the farm. You know, they learned how to fix cars, many different things. They worked in the kitchen. But, you know, unfortunately this government didn't see the value in that.

It wasn't value for money for them, as they say it. They'd rather see people just sit in a cell and come out with the same behaviours and not come out with any other skills, and we need to move past that. That's part of reconciliation.

If I—if we look at, you know, the colonization of Canada and, you know, our people were a people that helped each other. We didn't take stuff for ourselves. We took only what we needed. So, when a hunter would go out and he would come back with, you know, with what he hunted—let's say a deer or a moose—he would distribute that based on your family size. And that still does happen in some communities, you know.

But this government continues to put regulations again on, you know, hunting and fishing for indigenous peoples, when this was the First Nations peoples—you know, this was where they lived. They, you know, Canada entered into treaties with indigenous peoples and said that they would have the right to hunt, to fish.

And this government continues to, you know, put regulation after regulation after regulation, and you know, force some of our fishers to actually sell their fishing licence because, you know, they're living in poverty. Because what happens is, they fish during the summer and then during the winter, they're, you know, collecting EI, and some may have big families.

\* (16:40)

So when the government throws out, you know, 40, 45, 50 grand at someone when they're in need, you know, instead of working with those communities and figuring out, hey, how do we help you sustain your communities? How do we help you grow your economy and your indigenous communities?

Instead, what they're worried about is their bottom line, which isn't, you know, in line with indigenous communities.

You look at what's happening now with, you know, the fisheries, and them having a big gathering to talk about what the issues are, and, you know, I

don't know if the Minister for Sustainable Development has even met with the fishers and if she's even listening, and that's something that I think the government should take note of is starting to actually listen to Manitobans and not just, you know, giving them whatever your hour of time and then having them go on their way and having their agenda set already, but actually really listening and taking some of those ideas from people and putting them into play into Manitoba.

So I want to read some of these—this—these TRC commission. So, in this Winnipeg Free Press article, and it's titled Manitoba's TRC Report Behind Schedule. It says: Hey there, time traveller. More than three years ago, after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada unveiled its 94 calls to action, it's unclear about how much progress has been made by the Manitoba government when it comes to implementing them, nor when an official update can be expected.

Why I haven't heard one update from, you know, this government on any of these 94 calls to action and, you know, that's something that they should be taking, that they should be going through, and every decision that they make that they should be looking at that and going, okay, which call to action does that go with, and make sure that they're implementing those.

But, you know, instead this government is worried about putting money over people at the detriment of the services to Manitobans. This province's annual progress report expected in June and legislated under the Path to Reconciliation Act from 2016 is late. Well, that's not a surprise to me. We talk about, you know, the poverty reduction strategy that this government—they were late on that, you know.

And that's something that affects all of Manitobans. You know, if my family isn't doing good, then the next family isn't doing good. You know, we should all be worried about our economy and making sure that everybody's doing good in this province.

The government spokesman said the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke) would not be able to comment on the province's TRC progress while the report is being finalized.

Well, I don't know when this—when the report's coming out, like, how long is it going to take them to finalize?

The report still needs to be tabled in the House as well, and, I mean, that should be a priority, to table that report in this House. You know, indigenous people in this province matter too, and this government has not shown that they care about indigenous rights. You know, they pick fights with the Metis community and call them a special interest group. Well, the Metis are the ones who helped form this province. You know, Manitoba wouldn't be a province unless they fought for confederation and for us to be a part of that.

Does this government recognize that? No; no, they don't. They instead want to pick fights with David Chartrand and, in fact, have picked more than one fight, and now has started to take away their funding because, you know, the government or the Metis leader has spoken up about it.

Well, having relationships with First Nations people and Metis people and Inuit people is—I don't know if they know—but a part of the calls to truth and reconciliation in this province.

So, you know, it's something that this province or this government should really be looking at.

Guiding our government's efforts towards reconciliations are the principles of respect, engagement, understanding and action. Manitoba Indigenous and Northern Relations is working collaboratively, something we know that doesn't happen very often with this government. You know, they say that they work with First Nations, but really what we've heard from First Nations, and we heard at the last committee last session, was that someone would come in and say, oh, come for coffee and invite people to come in, and that was their consultation. And they didn't even know that that was a consultation. So that's how this government holds consultations with First Nations people.

And then they come in and they bulldoze, and they said, yes, we've done, we've checked all our boxes off. We've consulted, and we're just going to do whatever we want. Well, you know, indigenous people are starting to stand up just like those fishers are. You know, no longer will indigenous people be silenced, you know. I can say what the member from St. Johns, the member from Fort Rouge, myself, the member from The Pas, the member from Kewatinook, is a testament to we will no longer be silent and not have a voice at the table.

We are stronger together, you know, and we need to work together. We need to work

collaboratively together, and this government needs to figure out how collaboration works and, you know, I invite them, maybe, to, you know, go to one of our child-care centres that they've, you know, failed to give any operating dollars to in the last three years, and they would learn something about co-op collaboration and working together. And, you know, the young children have so much to teach us, and that's a good place for our government to go, have a go and have a guided tour, spend some time with the little ones.

So, until this report is finalized and tabled in the House, it would be inappropriate to comment. We will comment in due course. Well, this was, you know, in due course two years ago. This should be something that's tabled in this House every single year. What is this government doing around reconciliation? But, you know, we have reports that come 18 months after—you know, hearing, oh, it's coming, and then they change, you know, the parameters around it.

They said this year's report will focus on the themes of the TRC's call to action, which seek to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation according to background information provided.

Well, when I first got elected in this House, I had to actually leave the House because there was a member in the House that was talking about having to be a parent to Manitobans. And that really hurt me because that made me feel like we were back in residential school, because that's how the children in residential schools were treated, including my own mother. We are not the parents of Manitobans. Manitobans can make their own decisions. They don't need someone to call them their parent and that they can't manage their own finances and, you know, be responsible people, because Manitobans are smart people. You know, they elected us in this House to do a good job, you know, to make sure that their services are there that they need and that those that need them can get them.

But what has this government done? They've continued to cut away at those services. You know, now it's become a chopping block where it's no longer just, you know, taking a little bit of funding away but actually taking whole grants away from organizations.

So at least 29 calls to action are directly addressed to provincial and territory governments, including a call to commit to reducing the number of

Aboriginal children in care. So that's actually No. 1. So, when I was first elected, you know, I talked about being a kid in care myself and how important that was to, you know, Manitobans and especially to indigenous people, because 80 per cent, if not 90 per cent, of the kids that are in care are indigenous. And only 15 per cent of those kids that are in care are in care because they are in need of protection, and that's the only reason that a child should ever be taken away from their parents is due to protection, you know, whether they're being physically, sexually abused.

But the other 85 per cent of those kids are taken because of poverty, because the family simply doesn't have the supports that they need to maybe make the parenting decisions that, you know, they should.

\* (16:50)

And that's a direct result of the residential schools. You know, kids did not receive love in there; kids did not receive proper parenting when they had to live there—some of them for the whole year. You know, some of them were in there were—my mother was in there for 14 years. You know, that's a long time to be in a place. Well, she wasn't in the residential school for 14 years; she went to boarding school for three years. So 11 years of her life were spent in residential school.

That takes a toll on you, not to have a hug, not to have a kiss, not to be told I love you. So, you know, when I think about what we're doing—you know, we say the numbers have decreased—well, we've heard from First Nations that the numbers have not decreased. The way the government is counting kids in care has changed. And no matter if kids are living with their families, they are still being serviced by this government because they are still kids in care and they still deserve to be a part of that count. And, in fact, that number is actually over 11,000 now.

And, if we're ever going to change this, you know, we need to stop taking babies right from the hospital—right from their mothers. You now, I've—I brought a bill to this House that says that very thing. You know, we need to stop taking kids away from parents just because their parent was a kid in care. Kids in care deserve to be parents, too. So, you know, that's something that, of course, is near and dear to my heart.

And then we look at the history of indigenous people in this province. You know, I remember

being a young girl and growing up in the North End. And I've told this story many times, about not seeing myself reflected. Whether it was in school or it was in stores, you know—in the workforce. You know, I remember going to The Bay downtown because they had the—what do you call that thing—the wheel, the paddlewheel. Yes, we would go downtown just to see the paddlewheel. And I remember them having displays, too, in the windows.

And, you know, we didn't have a lot of money, but that was like an outing for us. Right? We would go downtown. I don't remember seeing anyone reflective of me as an indigenous person. You know, so when we talk about reconciliation, that's also—you know, indigenous people need to be a part of every industry throughout this province, and throughout Canada, for that fact.

Ry Moran, the director of the Winnipeg-based National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, called it concerning, the Province's legislation isn't being compiled in a timely manner. And, you know, I would have to agree with him. You know, this is something that should be important, that should be a priority for this government. They should be ensuring that the work that they're doing is in collaboration with indigenous people and is following the 94 calls to action.

Leadership has to lead in this regard, and it has to set a tone. This is not easy work. And the fact that there are delays on this may suggest that it's not being taken as seriously as it could be. End of Moran's quote. And then he goes on to say, this province doesn't have any external pressures on them right now to deliver this report on time. And that's very indicative of the reconciliation process overall. We shouldn't have to put pressure on a government to, you know, give a report on reconciliation. This report came out, you know, some years ago now and it should have—it should be a priority of this government, especially when they're working with First Nations in this province who, you know, have contributed so much to the creation of Manitoba. It requires self motivation to reach targets, to set goals, to achieve those goals. I haven't seen any goals set by this Province in terms of, you know, any of these 94 calls to action.

So the concern, obviously, is when we see timelines slipping this year. Will it slip again next year? Will it slip again the year after, he asked. And then he goes on to say, when does reconciliation just become a sort of passing fancy? How committed is

the Province and the other agencies across the country to achieve this? And I'd have to agree with him. You know, as someone who, you know, sees thousands and thousands of students come through that centre, I'm sure he hears so many questions from students about what is our province doing, in fact, to, you know, recognize, honour and to put things in place that address the 94 calls to action.

And again, I'm going to go back to, you know, keeping indigenous women safe in this province. You know, this government has an obligation. They have a responsibility. Our women continue to go missing. They continue to be murdered. Women are four times more like—indigenous women and girls are four times more likely in this province to walk out of their front door and never come home again.

You know, that's not fair. That's not equal. That's not, you know—that's something that we should be working on in this province to keep our indigenous sisters safe and that, you know, everyone respects, you know, them as people.

But, unfortunately, with this government and what they've shown and their lack of support for missing and murdered indigenous families, families don't feel supported. They don't feel like there's anything that this government is doing to address these high numbers of women going missing and murdered in our province and the amount of violence.

And they continue to say, you know, we support women, we support women—well, support it through actions. Support it by giving the funding back to Snow Lake. Support it by giving the funding back to North Point Douglas Women's Centre. Support it by giving the money back to North End Women's Centre.

And support it by keeping our health care, our emergency rooms open, because people—and we heard it last night, in committee—people are going there with mental health issues. They need more support now than ever, and this government continues to take that support away that's needed in Manitoba.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Proud to get up into the House once again and put a few words on the record about Bill 24.

I've heard my colleagues talk about the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; proud to say I'm wearing my TRC pin here today, and also very proud to share with the House that I was inducted as an honorary witness for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the Edmonton national event while the truth commission was carrying out their five-year mandate, which was eventually extended to six years.

One of the things that really stood out to me on the day where I was asked to assist the truth commission with this function as an honorary witness was to listen to some of the testimony of residential school survivors at that event in Edmonton.

And, although I am the son of a residential school survivor and many of my older aunts, uncles, cousins, all went to—or were taken to residential schools when they were kids, it was still pretty eye-opening to hear the commentary on that day.

In particular, one grandma, she shared with me: My grandparents were taken to residential school; my parents were taken to residential school. I was taken to residential school, and I am now the first person in living memory in my family to raise my own children.

It's quite a sobering thing to hear and, indeed, a big reminder of the impact of residential schools, underlining the importance of why the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was so important, and a strong piece of rationale for why implementing those calls to action are so important for this country.

We know our province has a large and growing indigenous population, and, indeed, for all Manitobans to be successful, we need to ensure that indigenous Manitobans are part of that success. And so ensuring that the calls to action are fully implemented is an important step. It's not the be-all and end-all, but it is, of course, an important step that needs to be undertaken.

And that is why it does not make a ton of sense to back away from the important work of reconciliation. And having to table a report in the Legislature within three months of, you know, a given year so that you can update on the progress of reconciliation, it's not an onerous burden. It's not a tough task.

Any government department should be able to generate a report within three months, even though we know this government has done a poor job of

tabling those reports to date and are now trying to alleviate themselves of that requirement.

So, on that basis alone, I mean, this Bill 24 certainly highlights some of the shortcomings of the current government and just reiterates the need for them to get on with the business of governing.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 27 minutes remaining.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 9, 2019

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