

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

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 3, 2016

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

First Report

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense? Dispense, and so ordered.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

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

- October 15, 2014 (3rd Session – 40th Legislature)
- September 10, 2015 (4th Session – 40th Legislature)
- July 19, 2016 (1st Session – 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2014*

- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2015*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2014*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2015*
- *The Workers Compensation Board 2014-2018 Five Year Plan*
- *The Workers Compensation Board 2015-2019 Five Year Plan*
- *The Workers Compensation Board 2016-2020 Five Year Plan*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the October 15, 2014 meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. BRAUN*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Mr. GAUDREAU*
- *Mr. JHA (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Mr. MARCELINO (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Mr. SMOOK*
- *Mr. WISHART*

Committee Membership for the September 10, 2015 meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. BRAUN*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Hon. Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Mr. JHA (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Ms. MARCELINO*
- *Hon. Mr. SARAN*
- *Mr. SMOOK*
- *Mrs. STEFANSON*
- *Mr. STRUTHERS (Vice-Chairperson)*

- *Mr. WISHART*

Committee Membership for the July 19, 2016 meeting:

- *Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Hon. Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mrs. GUILLEMARD*
- *Mr. JOHNSTON*
- *Mr. KINEW*
- *Ms. LAMOUREUX*
- *Mr. LINDSEY*
- *Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE*
- *Mr. REYES*
- *Hon. Ms. SQUIRES*
- *Mr. YAKIMOSKI*

Your Committee elected Mrs. GUILLEMARD as the Chairperson and Mr. YAKIMOSKI as the Vice-Chairperson at the July 19, 2016 meeting.

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials Speaking on Record at the October 15, 2014 meeting:

- *Michael Werier, Chairperson of the Board*
- *Winston Maharaj, President and CEO*

Officials Speaking on Record at the September 10, 2015 meeting:

- *Michael Werier, Chairperson of the Board*
- *Winston Maharaj, President and CEO*

Officials Speaking on Record at the July 19, 2016 meeting:

- *Michael Werier, Chairperson of the Board*
- *Winston Maharaj, President and CEO*
- *Peter Wiebe, Registrar of the Appeal Commission (by leave)*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2014*
- *Annual Report of The Workers Compensation Board for the year ending December 31, 2015*
- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2014*

- *Annual Report of the Appeal Commission and Medical Review Panel for the year ending December 31, 2015*

- *The Workers Compensation Board 2014-2018 Five Year Plan*

- *The Workers Compensation Board 2015-2019 Five Year Plan*

- *The Workers Compensation Board 2016-2020 Five Year Plan*

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

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Second Report

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions:

- *December 14, 2015 (5th Session, 40th Legislature)*
- *August 17, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. (1st Session, 41st Legislature)*

Matters under Consideration

- **Auditor General's Report – Annual Report to the Legislature – dated March 2014**
 - *Chapter 10 – Waiving of Competitive Bids*
- **Auditor General's Report – Follow-up of Recommendations: Waiving of Competitive Bids, November 2015**
- **Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2016**
 - *Waiving of Competitive Bids*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the December 14, 2015 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Ms. LATHLIN*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. MARTIN*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Vice-Chairperson)*

Substitution received prior to committee proceedings on December 14, 2015:

- *Mr. MARTIN for Mr. SCHULER*

Committee Membership for the August 17, 2016 meeting:

- *Mr. BINDLE*
- *Mr. HELWER (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JOHNSTON*
- *Ms. KLASSEN*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mrs. MAYER*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. YAKIMOSKI*

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on record at the December 14, 2015 meeting:

- *Norm Ricard, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS, Minister of Finance*
- *Jim Hrichishen, Deputy Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship*
- *Ron Weatherburn, Acting Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation*

Officials speaking on record at the August 17, 2016 meeting:

- *Norm Ricard, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Mr. PEDERSEN, Minister of Infrastructure*
- *Lance Vigfusson, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure*

- *Scott Sinclair, Associate Deputy Minister of Finance*

Agreements:

Your Committee agreed to conclude consideration of Chapter 10 – Waiving of Competitive Bids of the Auditor General's Report – Annual Report to the Legislature – dated March 2014 at the August 17, 2016 meeting.

Your Committee agreed to conclude consideration of Waiving of Competitive Bids of the Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2016 at the August 17, 2016 meeting.

Report Considered and Adopted:

Your Committee has considered the following report and has adopted the same as presented:

- *Auditor General's Report – Follow-up of Recommendations: Waiving of Competitive Bids, November 2015*

Reports Considered but not Passed:

Your Committee has considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- *Auditor General's Report – Annual Report to the Legislature – dated March 2014 (Chapter 10 – Waiving of Competitive Bids – concluded consideration of)*
- *Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2016 (Waiving of Competitive Bids – concluded consideration of)*

Mr. Wiebe: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the committee be received.

Madam Speaker, I wish to present the third–

Madam Speaker: Order.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Third Report

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, I wish to present the Third Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following–

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions:

- May 8, 2013 (2nd Session, 40th Legislature)
- June 25, 2013 (2nd Session, 40th Legislature)
- August 8, 2013 (2nd Session, 40th Legislature)
- October 9, 2013 (2nd Session, 40th Legislature)
- October 30, 2013 (2nd Session, 40th Legislature)
- November 26, 2013 (3rd Session, 40th Legislature)
- June 26, 2014 (3rd Session, 40th Legislature)
- September 3, 2014 (3rd Session, 40th Legislature)
- January 28, 2015 (4th Session, 40th Legislature)
- May 21, 2015 (4th Session, 40th Legislature)
- September 29, 2015 (4th Session, 40th Legislature)
- June 30, 2016 (1st Session, 41st Legislature)
- August 17, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. (1st Session, 41st Legislature)

Matters under Consideration

- Auditor General's Report – Annual Report to the Legislature – dated January 2013
 - Chapter 7 – Provincial Nominee Program for Business
- Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2015
 - Section 8 – Special Needs Education
 - Section 14 – Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program
 - Section 17 – Provincial Nominee Program for Business
- Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2016
 - Special Needs Education
 - Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program
 - Provincial Nominee Program for Business
- Auditor General's Report – Improving Educational Outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Students – dated January 2016

Committee Membership

Committee membership for the May 8, 2013 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS

Substitutions received prior to committee proceedings on May 8, 2013:

- Mr. MARCELINO for Mr. WHITEHEAD

Committee membership for the June 25, 2013 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mr. WHITEHEAD

Committee membership for the August 8, 2013 meeting:

- Mr. ALLUM
- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Mr. GAUDREAU
- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS

Substitutions received prior to committee proceedings on August 8, 2013:

- Mr. GAUDREAU for Mr. WHITEHEAD

Committee membership for the October 9, 2013 meeting:

- *Mr. ALLUM*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Mr. WHITEHEAD*

Substitutions received prior to committee proceedings on October 9, 2013:

- *Mr. MARCELINO for Ms. BRAUN*

Committee membership for the October 30, 2013 meeting:

- *Ms. CROTHERS*
- *Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Mr. EWASKO*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Mr. WIEBE*

Substitutions received prior to committee proceedings on October 30, 2013:

- *Mr. MARCELINO for Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. SARAN for Mr. WHITEHEAD*
- *Mr. EWASKO for Mr. CULLEN*

Committee membership for the November 26, 2013 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ALLUM*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Mr. DEWAR (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mrs. DRIEDGER*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. WHITEHEAD*
- *Mr. WIEBE*
- *Ms. WIGHT*

Substitutions received prior to committee proceedings on November 26, 2013:

- *Hon. Mr. ALLUM for Hon. Ms. HOWARD*

Committee Membership for the June 26, 2014 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ALLUM*
- *Mr. BRIESE*
- *Mr. CULLEN*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Ms. WIGHT*

Substitution made prior to committee proceedings on June 26, 2014:

- *Hon. Mr. ALLUM for Hon. Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mr. SARAN for Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. BRIESE for Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Mr. CULLEN for Mr. PEDERSEN*

Committee Membership for the September 3, 2014 meeting:

- *Ms. ALLAN*
- *Mr. DEWAR*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Mrs. STEFANSON*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Ms. WIGHT*

Substitution made prior to committee proceedings on September 3, 2014:

- *Ms. ALLAN for Mr. JHA*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS for Hon. Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mrs. STEFANSON for Mr. FRIESEN*

Committee Membership for the January 28, 2015 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. DEWAR*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JHA*

- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. MARTIN*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. SARAN*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Vice-Chairperson)*

Substitutions received prior to committee proceedings on January 28, 2015:

- *Mr. MARTIN for Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Mr. SARAN for vacancy*

Committee Membership for the May 21, 2015 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. DEWAR*
- *Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Ms. LATHLIN*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Vice-Chairperson)*

Substitution received prior to committee proceedings on May 21, 2015:

- *Mr. GRAYDON for Mr. SCHULER*

Committee Membership for the September 29, 2015 meeting:

- *Mr. FRIESEN*
- *Hon. Mr. GERRARD*
- *Mr. HELWER (Chairperson)*
- *Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. SCHULER*
- *Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Vice-Chairperson)*

Substitution received prior to committee proceedings on September 29, 2015:

- *Mr. STRUTHERS for Ms. LATHLIN*
- *Ms. HOWARD for Hon. Mr. DEWAR*

Committee Membership for the June 30, 2016 meeting:

- *Mr. BINDLE*
- *Mr. HELWER (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JOHNSTON*
- *Ms. KLASSEN*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mrs. MAYER*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. YAKIMOSKI*

Committee Membership for the August 17, 2016 meeting:

- *Mr. BINDLE*
- *Mr. HELWER (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. JOHNSTON*
- *Ms. KLASSEN*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mrs. MAYER*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE*
- *Mr. WIEBE (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. YAKIMOSKI*

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on record at the May 8, 2013 meeting:

- *Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS, Minister of Finance*
- *John Clarkson, Deputy Minister of Finance*

Officials speaking on record at the June 25, 2013 meeting:

- *Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Ms. OSWALD, Minister of Health*
- *Milton Sussman, Deputy Minister of Health*

Officials speaking on record at the August 8, 2013 meeting:

- *Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Doug Harold, Principal*
- *Fraser McLean, Principal*
- *Grant Doak, Deputy Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines*
- *John Clarkson, Deputy Minister of Finance*

Officials speaking on record at the October 9, 2013 meeting:

- *Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba*

- *Hon. Ms. MELNICK, Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism*
- *Hugh Eliasson, Deputy Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism*

Officials speaking on record at the October 30, 2013 meeting:

- *Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Ms. BRAUN, Minister of Labour and Immigration*
- *Jeff Parr, Deputy Minister of Labour and Immigration*
- *Hon. Ms. HOWARD, Minister of Finance*
- *John Clarkson, Deputy Minister of Finance*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS, Minister of Family Services*
- *Joy Cramer, Deputy Minister of Family Services*

Officials speaking on record at the November 26, 2013 meeting:

- *Carol Bellringer, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Sandra Cohen, Assistant Auditor General*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS, Minister of Family Services*
- *Joy Cramer, Deputy Minister of Family Services*

Officials speaking on record at the June 26, 2014 meeting:

- *Brian Wirth, Assistant Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Mr. ASHTON, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation*
- *Doug McNeil, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation*

Officials speaking on record at the September 3, 2014 meeting:

- *Norm Ricard, Acting Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Tyson Shtykalo, Assistant Auditor General*
- *Jim Hrichishen, Deputy Minister of Finance*

Officials Speaking on Record at the January 28, 2015 meeting:

- *Norm Ricard, Acting Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Mr. DEWAR, Minister of Finance*
- *Jim Hrichishen, Deputy Minister of Finance*

Officials speaking on record at the May 21, 2015 meeting:

- *Norm Ricard, Acting Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Mr. CALDWELL, Minister of Municipal Government*
- *Fred Meier, Deputy Minister of Municipal Government*

Officials speaking on record at the September 29, 2015 meeting:

- *Norm Ricard, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Hon. Mr. CHIEF, Minister of Jobs and the Economy*
- *Hugh Eliasson, Deputy Minister of Jobs and the Economy*

Officials speaking on record at the August 17, 2016 meeting:

- *Norm Ricard, Auditor General of Manitoba*
- *Sandra Cohen, Assistant Auditor General*
- *Hon. Mr. WISHART, Minister of Education*
- *Bramwell Strain, Deputy Minister of Education*

Agreements:

Your Committee agreed to conclude consideration of the following chapters of the Auditor General's Report – Annual Report to the Legislature dated January 2013:

- *Chapter 1 – Accounts and Financial Statements: Section 10 Annual Report at the January 28, 2015 meeting.*
- *Chapter 2 – Citizen Concerns - “Part 1 - Business Transformation and Technology (BTT)” at the August 8, 2013 meeting.*
- *Chapter 2 – Citizen Concerns – “Part 2 – Disaster Financial Assistance” at the June 26, 2014 meeting.*
- *Chapter 2 – Citizen Concerns – “Part 3 – Employment and Income Assistance Program” at the September 29, 2015 meeting.*
- *Chapter 2 – Citizen Concerns – “Part 4 – North Portage Development Corporation” at the May 21, 2015 meeting.*
- *Chapter 3 – Information Technology (IT) Security Management at the June 26, 2014 meeting.*
- *Chapter 4 – Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program at the June 26, 2014 meeting.*

- Chapter 5 – Manitoba eHealth Procurement of Contractors at the June 26, 2014 meeting.
- Chapter 6 – Office of the Fire Commissioner at the June 30, 2016 meeting.
- Chapter 7 – Provincial Nominee Program for Business at the August 17, 2016 meeting.
- Chapter 8 – Senior Management Expense Policies June 26, 2014 meeting.

At the October 30, 2013 meeting, your Committee agreed to refer the following agenda items to a future meeting:

- Chapter 4 – Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program of the Auditor General's Report – Annual Report to the Legislature dated January 2013.

At the August 17, 2016 meeting, your committee agreed to conclude consideration of the following sections of the Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2015:

- Section 8 – Special Needs Education,
- Section 14 – Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program
- Section 17 – Provincial Nominee Program for Business

At the August 17, 2016 meeting, your committee agreed to conclude consideration of the following sections of the Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2016:

- Special Needs Education,
- Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program
- Provincial Nominee Program for Business

Report Considered and Adopted:

Your Committee has considered the following report and has adopted the same as presented:

- Auditor General's Report – Annual Report to the Legislature – dated January 2013
- Auditor General's Report – Improving Educational Outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Students – dated January 2016

Reports Considered but not Passed:

Your Committee has considered the following reports but did not pass it:

- Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2015 (Section 8 – Special Needs Education, Section 14 – Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program, Section 17 – Provincial Nominee Program for Business – concluded consideration of)
- Auditor General's Report – Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations – dated May 2016 (Special Needs Education, Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Program, Provincial Nominee Program for Business – concluded consideration of)

Mr. Wiebe: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Fourth Report

Mr. Wiebe : One more time, I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents–

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasion:

- September 15, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

Matters under Consideration

- Auditor General's Report – Management of Provincial Bridges – dated July 2016

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the September 15, 2016 meeting:

- Mr. BINDLE
- Mr. HELWER (Vice-Chairperson)
- Mr. JOHNSTON

- Ms. KLASSEN
- Mr. MALOWAY
- Mr. MARCELINO
- Mrs. MAYER
- Mr. MICHALESKI
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Mr. WIEBE (Chairperson)
- Mr. YAKIMOSKI

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on record at the September 15, 2016 meeting:

- Norm Ricard, Auditor General of Manitoba
- Hon. Mr. PEDERSEN, Minister of Infrastructure
- Lance Vigfusson, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure
- Ruth Eden, Executive Director Structures, Department of Infrastructure (by leave)
- Doug McMahan, Assistant Deputy Minister of Infrastructure (by leave)

Report Considered and Adopted:

Your Committee has considered the following report and has adopted the same as presented:

- Auditor General's Report – Management of Provincial Bridges – dated July 2016

Mr. Wiebe: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, as Manitoba's Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I would like to remind everyone that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month across Canada. During this designated month, Manitobans will hear about the importance of early detection through mammograms and be asked to get involved in supporting research toward better treatment and a future without cancer.

Breast cancer is a complex disease without no known single cause. According to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, last year's statistics suggest that about 25,000 women and 220 men are likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer every year.

Of those numbers, about 5,000 women and 60 men will lose their lives to this disease. The economic costs of this disease are considerable, but the human costs are immeasurable. Breast cancer has already taken too many mothers, grandmothers, wives, daughters, sisters, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

The journey has been harsh, but there is hope on the horizon. Since Breast Cancer Awareness Month was established, the movement has produced many successes. One notable achievement has been the significant improvement in the five-year survival rate among those living with breast cancer. This is great news, of course, but there is still work to be done as we move toward the ultimate goal of eradicating this disease.

I believe that positive change is achievable when we work together for the common good. I urge all Manitobans to heed the words attributed to Gandhi, and be the change that they want to see in the world by supporting breast cancer awareness programs and activities during the month of October.

I thank the over 3,500 Manitobans who participated in yesterday's CIBC Run for the Cure, and I was pleased to participate in the run with my colleagues, the MLAs for Fort Richmond and Seine River. It was with great pleasure that I learned that this event raised more than \$400,000 for breast cancer research.

As Manitobans, we are renowned for our generosity and charitable spirits. By supporting Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we can all help individuals, families, communities and our entire province today, tomorrow and for years to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

* (13:40)

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to recognize the impact of this devastating disease on the lives of women and their families. This month is a time to reflect on how far we've advanced with treatment and detection and the work that is still yet to be done.

Breast cancer affects countless lives here in Manitoba, and this month gives us an opportunity to reflect on the lives lost and to celebrate the lives still

fighting while continuing to support women and families.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer amongst Manitoba women and the third most common cancer overall. An estimated 900 women are diagnosed with cancer each year, with about 200 patients dying from it. The NDP team believes in moving Manitoba forward with a new generation of health care, strengthening supports for patients and their families. We made it easier for women who have undergone mastectomies to access a wide selection of custom breast prosthetics and bras, thanks to a joint program between the Manitoba government and CancerCare Manitoba.

Manitobans who need breast cancer detection and diagnosis now have access to faster, high-quality health-care services, thanks to our investment in state-of-the-art technology. We can now—never offer too much support to those affected by breast cancer, and we acknowledge that all of this month. Miigwech.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, breast cancer month is an important month. This year, about 860 people, women, will be diagnosed with breast cancer in Manitoba. Twenty-five years ago, the number of women in Manitoba diagnosed was lower at 650.

There is good news and there is bad news about breast cancer. The good news is that screening is much more effectively done today, with mammography being used more often so that breast cancer is detected early, which helps because treatment is more effective when the cancer is caught earlier. It's also true that the overall treatment has improved and the cancer fee-free survival has also improved. The bad news is that still too many women in Manitoba die from breast cancer. Across Canada it's about 5,000 each year. We need heart to work hard to fully cure breast cancer, just as we need heart to work to prevent it.

Sunday, many, many people came out to participate in the CIBC run for a cure. I want to recognize all those who have had breast cancer in Manitoba and to recognize the challenges that they've gone through along their journey. I want to recognize and remember all those who have died for breast cancer because we need to need to

acknowledge 'counslets' tragedies that this cancer has inflicted.

I want to thank all those who came out yesterday to support the search for a cure, and all those who are involved in the fundraising and in the research to bring the prevention and the cure that we seek. This movement is growing and growing, and one day we will achieve the prevention and the full cure that we need.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Lions Clubs

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Gimli): Madam Speaker, today I would like to take a few minutes to recognize the excellent work that Lions Clubs across Manitoba do. With over 75 chapters and over 1,500 members in Manitoba, this organization is an important part of our provincial landscape. As a Lions Club member myself, I can personally attest to the hard work and dedication to our community that our groups exhibit. They provide numerous benefits and services to our various communities, including providing guide dogs at no cost to Canadians with disabilities.

Madam Speaker, these clubs also work to help children with hearing disabilities and provide eye tissue for both surgical transplantation and medical research. As well, one of the most important aspects of the work is supporting youth through scholarships, exchanges and youth development programs. The Lions Club International Foundation, which Manitoba Lions Clubs are a part of and support, engage in important causes such as providing disaster relief for communities through grants, assisting in humanitarian needs around the world and working to make eye care accessible to those who need it.

I would like to also take a moment to acknowledge the fact that globally, through the Centennial Service Challenge, which is an initiative that celebrates the Lions' 100 years of service, with service, we have together just reached the milestone of helping 100 million around the world.

Madam Speaker, today we are joined by Lions Clubs' representatives from the following branches in Manitoba: Winnipeg Beach/Dunnottar Lakeside, Riverside, Shoal Lake, Winnipeg West, East Kildonan, Winnipeg South, Ste. Anne, Winnipeg Ma'di, West St. Paul, Stonewall & District, Crystal City, Brandon Wheat City, Beausejour, Rapid City & Area, East St. Paul, Pinawa and Minnedosa.

I'd like to ask my fellow Legislative Assembly members to join me in congratulating them and the club, as a whole, for all their service to this great province.

La Compagnie de La Vérendrye

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): Madame la Présidente, je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner la contribution de la Compagnie de La Vérendrye, et sa promotion de l'histoire et du patrimoine du Manitoba. Le groupe illustre la vie des soldats qui ont accompagné Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye, quand il a exploré le Manitoba au 18^e siècle, dans le but de rendre l'histoire amusante et accessible à tous.

Depuis sa fondation en 1993, le groupe fait partie intégrante des nombreuses festivités comme les Manitobains et les Manitobaines apprécient et connaissent bien, telles que Folklorama et le Festival du Voyageur. Comme toujours, la Compagnie de La Vérendrye était présent au pavillon canadien-français en août dernier. Des centaines de visiteurs et visiteuses se sont rassemblés au CCFM pour célébrer la culture franco-manitobaine. Les membres de la Compagnie étaient sur place pour rencontrer le public et le renseigner sur le patrimoine canadien-français du Manitoba.

De plus, la Compagnie La Vérendrye joue toujours un rôle actif dans les communautés à travers le Manitoba. Ce juin dernier, le groupe a tenu une garde d'honneur au musée Fort la Reine à Portage-la-Prairie pour lancer une nouvelle saison touristique.

Madame la Présidente, permettez-moi de remercier tous les membres de la Compagnie de La Vérendrye pour leur passion et leur dévouement. À l'approche du 150^e anniversaire du Canada, reconnaissons le rôle important des organisations comme la leur, et leur contribution exceptionnelle à l'éducation publique en matière du patrimoine franco-manitobain. Continuez votre bon travail.

Translation

Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the contribution of La Compagnie de La Vérendrye and its promotion of Manitoba's history and heritage. The group provides a glimpse into the life of soldiers who travelled with Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye when he explored Manitoba in the 18th century, and its goal is to make history fun and accessible to all.

Since it was created in 1993, the group has been an integral part of many festivities that Manitobans

appreciate and know well, including Folklorama and the Festival du Voyageur. As always, La Compagnie de La Vérendrye was present at the French-Canadian pavilion last August. Hundreds of visitors gathered at the CCFM to celebrate the Franco-Manitoban culture. The members of La Compagnie were on hand to meet the public and provide information on Manitoba's French-Canadian heritage.

La Compagnie de La Vérendrye also plays an active role in communities throughout Manitoba. Last June, the group held an honour guard at Fort La Reine in Portage la Prairie to launch the new tourist season.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the members of La Compagnie de La Vérendrye for their passion and dedication. As we approach Canada's 150th anniversary, we should acknowledge the important role played by such organizations and their exceptional contribution to public education about the Franco-Manitoban heritage. I encourage the organization to carry on with its good work.

President's Choice Children's Charity

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I'm honoured to rise in the House today and bring awareness for a great cause. As everyone knows, our government is dedicated to working on behalf of all Manitobans for a better Manitoba. We realize the changing culture in our diverse communities, we understand that our youth are our future, and we know that the adults of today must work, volunteer and mentor the adults of tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, these ideals could be no more evident than the events of this past weekend when I was honoured to be a part in my home constituency of Brandon East. The President's Choice Children's Charity is a unique opportunity for store employees to be creative in their fundraising efforts and to bring their co-workers and public together for a great cause. The staff at the Brandon Superstore created a special walkathon and barbecue that brought the community together to raise funds and awareness as they proudly supported their motto, Helping Kids Do Anything.

Whether they are providing to support the children with special needs or ensuring hungry tummies are filled with nutritional food, their fundraising efforts are ensuring that kids everywhere have the opportunity to live to their fullest potential. Through the efforts of these staff and the many citizens of Brandon, more opportunities are provided

through their Breakfast for Learning program, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada and their assistance with special needs programs.

Madam Speaker, this year alone, the Brandon charity provided over \$40,000 to two families, one in Minnedosa, one in Neepawa, who were assisted in the purchase of wheelchair-accessible vans. When employees reach out with their hearts and their spare time to help achieve a better childhood for others, a better opportunity for others and a better Manitoba for everyone, we must recognize their efforts.

With that said, I would like to acknowledge event organizer Mrs. Lisa Hercun, store manager Royce Reid and all Brandon Superstore employees who give so much to our youth in our community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (13:50)

Mental Illness Awareness

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, this week is Mental Illness Awareness Week, a time for raising awareness and taking action. Mental illness is a topic that many people still have trouble opening up about, but this week is an opportunity to reduce stigma so that people can feel safe and accepted when they need to talk about their struggles.

Mental health illness has a huge impact not only to the individual affected, but also to their family, their friends and, indeed, the whole community. Like so many, I have seen the impact first-hand. And, in fact, an astounding one in four Manitobans will experience a mental health illness in their lifetimes.

Today, the Canadian Mental Health Association executive director, Marion Cooper, spoke about the need to build awareness and the importance of seeking help and challenging the discrimination and stigma that's associated with mental illness. This week, the CMHA is promoting their self-help programs like Bounce Back, a supported self-help tool that pairs people with counsellors to identify techniques to deal with depression and anxiety.

The CMHA is also taking this week to educate people on the concept of recovery, which recognizes recovery—recovering from mental illness as an ongoing journey towards wellness and an enhanced quality of life rather than just the absence of mental illness.

Our NDP team has worked hard to promote mental health for Manitobans, and we recognize the importance of preventing mental illness in our province. We launched the Rising to the Challenge campaign to support schools educating their students on the importance of mental health. We also launched Stress Hacks online mental health navigation tool for youth.

Reducing stigma in Manitoba starts with each and every one of us. Starting these conversations at home will help build communities where people can feel free to talk about their mental health and get the supports that they need.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Super-Spike

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Over the summer, on July the 16th, I had the opportunity to attend a very popular event in my constituency: Super-Spike. This year marked MTS Super-Spike's 15th anniversary, and it was a big success.

The two-day event is a music festival, volleyball tournament and concert series venue located at Maple Grove Park. Thousands of individuals attended this non-for-profit charitable event, and the proceeds are allotted to the National Women's Volleyball Team, which is based in Winnipeg.

The event hosted some of Manitoba's best food trucks, local bands and volleyball players. Its headlining band was The Sheepdogs, who are from Saskatoon. The event had dozens of volleyball nets set up for the co-ed teams of six to compete, and it was wonderful to see so many people come together to enjoy the sport of volleyball and a youthful atmosphere.

This captivating event could not have taken place without the numerous volunteers who kept the visitors, performers and approximately over 500 teams on schedule. Super-Spike also had numerous local sponsors who helped to promote and support the event.

Super-Spike has become one of Manitoba's most anticipated weekends, and I am very happy that it brings Manitobans together in my constituency.

I ask that all members join—sorry—members to join me in acknowledging the efforts of the organizers and volunteers who helped make Super-Spike such a success.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I'm very pleased to introduce to all of you some young people that are going to be with us for the next number of months.

I am pleased to introduce to the House the 10 students who have been selected to serve as pages for this session. I would ask members to hold their applause until I have completed the introductions.

Beginning at my extreme right, this year's pages are: Mr. Nathan Dueck, Ms. Soomin Han, Ms. Kaylyn McDonald, Ms. Sarah Miller, Mr. David Nyhof, Ms. Nell Perry, Ms. Sydney Puhach, Ms. Lily Reder, Ms. Denée Ryle and Mr. Karsen Lee Winters, your pages for the next year.

Thank you, and I would just like to indicate that many of their parents are also here in the gallery. We had a short luncheon period, and we all had a chance to get to know each other a little bit. So, on behalf of all of us here, we welcome all the parents here as well.

I would now like to draw the attention of members to the Speaker's Gallery where the six individuals who are serving on the Manitoba Legislative Internship Program for the 2016-2017 year are seated.

In accordance with established practice, three interns were assigned to the government caucus and three to the official opposition caucus. Their term of employment is 10 months. They will be performing a variety of research and other tasks for private members. These interns commence their assignments September 12th, 2016, and will complete them in June. I would again ask you to hold your applause until they are all introduced.

Working with the government caucus: Mr. Nicholas Cherlet of the University of Ottawa; Ms. Imalka Nilmalgoda of the University of Manitoba; and Mr. Tanner Robertson of the University of Manitoba.

Working with the caucus of the official opposition: Ms. Akosua Bonsu of the University of Manitoba; and Ms. Karen De Blonde of the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg; and Ms. Kimvy Ngo of the University of Manitoba.

Professor Kelly Saunders of Brandon University is the academic director for the program. The administration of the program on a day-to-day basis is carried out by our Clerk, Patricia Chaychuk. The

caucus representatives on the internship administration committee are the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) and the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members to congratulate the interns on their appointment to the program and hope that they will have a very interesting and successful year with the Assembly, and welcome to all of you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Northern Manitoba Economic Plan

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, welcome back. Happy Rosh Hashanah, Shanah Tovah to everyone.

Madam Speaker, New Democrats believe their government should build for the future, working for Manitobans. Manitobans deserve a fair wage and good jobs, yet our Premier freezes the minimum wage and picks unnecessary fights with workers. The Premier seems more concerned with settling old political debts and fighting the last election, which he won, than finding solutions.

We are deeply concerned about his approach to northern Manitoba. Services in the North are falling apart on his watch: mounting job losses, poor access to food and supplies, whole communities abandoned.

When will our Premier get on the business of serving all Manitobans, and when will he deliver a plan to preserve services in the North?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Thank you to my colleague.

I'd like to begin, if I might, by welcoming everyone back to the Chamber here, our staff, and to welcome our new people here, our pages, our interns as well, to say to all of you I hope you enjoy your time here. I know that you'll gain much from the experience. You'll see some things that you'll like; you'll see some things you'll wonder about, but at the same time, this is what democracy looks like in action, and we wouldn't have it any other way.

I wanted to also, if I could, offer on behalf of the government, our condolences to the Leader of the Opposition for the loss of her mother, and to say that we know that she was very proud of the member, as she deserved to be because the member is staking new ground for people in our province, and we are also very proud of the member for doing that.

We are, too, staking out new ground. We come in on the heels of a decade of debt, of decay and of disarray, frankly, as well. And I'm pleased to hear the NDP speak about team; though they have failed to demonstrate it to the people of Manitoba, I look forward to them doing so in the future. Certainly, that is what our government is about. We will continue to serve as a team for the best interests of the people of Manitoba in the future.

* (14:00)

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

Ms. Marcelino: First I'd like to thank the Premier and minister for their words of comfort.

Madam Speaker, I quote, the Golden Boy faces north for a reason, and we feel there is a lot of undeveloped potential in our North, and, obviously, rail link is a very important part of achieving the benefits that we want to achieve for Manitoba, unquote.

Those are the words of our Premier during the last election. However, since that time, instead of working to protect this very important asset, we see that the Premier has said no to the North. With no plan, it's just not good enough to say no.

Instead, the Premier goes on the attack as if every problem can be solved by settling old political debts.

Will the Premier put aside his partisanship and start governing for all Manitobans?

Mr. Pallister: Well, I appreciate the member's referencing my words. They are sincere and, I hope, shared by the members opposite. We do believe in the future of the North, and we are inheriting a number of unsettled problems and scores created by a previous administration that failed in its ability to focus on cohesive, long-term economic development strategies for the people of the North and for the people of Manitoba.

We don't propose to continue with that practice. So what we propose to do is what we have been doing, what we did in opposition, what we continue to do now as a government, which is to set aside partisanship and reach out to people regardless of their political leanings and ask for their input and then act on what we hear.

That is precisely what we're doing and what we propose to continue to do in the best interests of the future of the whole province and specifically in the best interests of the people of northern Manitoba as well.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Madam Speaker, the Premier has his excuses, but what is inexcusable is his attitude towards those impacted by his decisions.

To those who lost their jobs, he says they have employment insurance, except that many of the workers are ineligible. The head of KAP says that if ever there was a case for government intervention, this is it. Instead of rising to the challenge, the Premier re-announces old promises and gives the people of Churchill a form to apply for a pittance.

Will the Premier come to the table with a real plan to keep the port open and get the rail line running again like it should?

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, where years of subsidization and bailouts didn't serve the long-term interests of the people of the North in any way, shape or form effectively or well, we are proposing an alternative approach which will actually result in real work and good opportunities for the people of the North and which will not create a perpetuation of the problems that the people of the North are well understanding of, that the previous administration failed to address.

I got into politics because I believed in the power of public service, as do the people of the Lions Club, who, for example, exist for that very purpose. Their motto is: We Serve. We are here to serve as well, all of us.

And I encourage the member, I encourage all members here, including the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), to participate in our prebudget consultation. That's why I've extended an open invitation to the members opposite to participate in a real, genuine consultation, listening to the people of Manitoba.

We encourage the members opposite to avail themselves of this as equal members of this House. This is where we believe the future lies, in working co-operatively with one another, not in trying to score political points on the backs of people who we hope are only temporarily out of work in the North. I—

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

The honourable interim Leader of the Official Opposition, on a second question.

**Forestry Industry
Tolko Mill Closure**

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): Since April, we've seen 6,000 jobs lost under the Premier and thousands more on the chopping block. And for our resource economy, our forest economy, he has absolutely no plan.

He and his ministers wasted the summer glad-handling with Bell, but when it comes time to step up for those impacted at Tolko, he throws up his hands, saying it's not his problem. The Premier could not be more uninvolved from this crisis if he tried. Forestry is a resource that belongs to all Manitobans.

Will the Premier step up and take action to protect this sector of the economy?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Most of the members opposite who never missed a chance to run up to a northern community with a chequebook just before election time promising empty promises after empty promises that they would create economic opportunities when, in fact, all they were doing was vote buying. We are going to northern communities reaching out and having effective dialogue with the leaders of those communities and the citizens of those communities and, in fact, working with them sincerely to find long-term, not patchwork, not piecemeal, but long-term solutions to their communities' challenges.

I entered politics because the two major employers in my home community closed down within six months of each other, and I believe sincerely that the power of the people in this room to achieve positive benefits for the people of the North is real. If we work in partnership, in genuine collaboration, with one another, and the member opposite is encouraged to take that approach, one that her members have failed to take in the past, I encourage them to take it now.

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

Ms. Marcelino: We were very much involved in the North and do care deeply for people of the North.

Madam Speaker, the Premier won't even come clean about what supports he has or will offer. I wrote to the Premier over a month ago asking him what steps he has taken to solve this crisis. Just like his response to the people of the North, he offers no solutions to their problems.

I ask the Premier: Will he answer my letter and, more importantly, will he answer to the people in crisis in the North?

Mr. Pallister: Perhaps the potential for confusion here on the part of the member is in the understanding of what the word caring really means. The members opposite seem to use the word a lot. They seem to like their takeoffs, but they don't follow through with the landing very well. And so if the definition of caring is spinning out over \$500 million over half a decade to the people on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and finishing less than 90 kilometres of road, if that's the definition of caring I would agree with the member that her party cares.

But we don't think that's caring because the result of throwing all that money at that area wasn't jobs for the people in those communities anymore than \$20 million of subsidies paid to Tolko was the—resulted in sustainable economic benefits to the people of that community long term. These approaches were piecemeal and they resulted in millions of dollars being taken from working families, including the very families in those areas for no good except for political advantage to be attempted to be gained by the members opposite, and that is what got us to the situation we're in now.

We're addressing it in a different way. We believe in caring as being sustainable economic development that benefits people in the communities of our province on a long-term basis—

Madam Speaker: Order, the member's time has expired.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Not only roads were built in the North, but also bridges and also employment for people of the North.

Madam Speaker, even Stephen Harper understood the need for government to make investments in the resource economy when times are hard. We worked with the Harper government. They

came to the table and they provided assistance to nearly 1,000 people working in The Pas.

The Premier, however, does not think it's his job to make sure there are good jobs for northern Manitobans.

Does the Premier actually have any plans to protect good jobs in the forestry sector, or is he willing to watch this industry suffer and do nothing?

Mr. Pallister: Well, the Auditor General just released a report which did an evaluation of the effectiveness of the members opposite in terms of their approach on wealth creation and job creation on the east side, and it was a scathing criticism of what they did. But it isn't limited to the work of the Auditor General.

*(14:10)

The chiefs in that area have spoken about being bullied and pushed into signing agreements they've not—they did not want to sign. The chief—one chief said that if you call training, 50 chainsaw operator certificates, then we got training. The Auditor General says that there was supposed to be mentoring done, but it wasn't done; says there was supposed to be follow-up on training where training was done. There wasn't follow-up.

So there wasn't a determination of what the goodwill of the members opposite did and depicted in their advertising campaigns and photo ops. There was no measure of the results of that supposed goodwill. I don't call that caring. Weeping openly and professing to care is not the same as actually getting the job done for people in our province. So we proposed to get the job done and help the people of the province by working with them, not just seizing photo opportunities and cutting cheques.

Churchill Manitoba Economic Plan

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, the town of Churchill has been dealt a body blow. Without any warning, OmniTRAX shut down its grain terminal. The closure put more than 10 per cent of the town out of work. Then OmniTRAX slashed rail service to the town of Churchill. There been reports of grocery store shelves that have gone bare. The town of Churchill is facing the most severe crisis of its history.

What plan does the minister have so the town of Churchill can meet its immediate needs?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and welcome back.

You know, clearly we've had an opportunity as a new government to visit the folks in Churchill. We certainly appreciate the job loss in the community there. We also understand the implications of the job loss, and we certainly feel for that. You know, we did hear loud and clear, though, from the residents and the business community of Churchill that we took the right decision in not offering short-term solutions there. Short-term political buyouts have not worked in the past. It's not in the best interests of Manitobans, not in the past and not in the future.

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

Mr. Lindsey: We are pleased to see that the federal government has come to the table just last week to provide needed funds to help the town of Churchill. We were disappointed, however, to not see the Province come to the table.

Will this government sit down and provide real support for the town of Churchill and surrounding communities and make the North a real priority?

Mr. Cullen: Clearly, the North has been ignored by the previous government. We have a different opinion of northern Manitoba. It's clear the short-term political bailouts for northern Manitoba on behalf of the previous government were not in the best interests of northern Manitobans. We are at the table, discussing the situations with northern Manitobans, looking for long-term solutions to issues relative to economic development in northern Manitoba. We will continue with those discussions, and we will have solutions for long-term economic development and diversification for northern Manitoba.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, this government likes to claim that they only want to look for long-term solutions. We know that the privatization of the Wheat Board helped cause this crisis.

Will this government support a long-term solution by calling for the federal government to make the Port of Churchill a port authority?

Mr. Cullen: I appreciate the member's comments. I hope he's on our side, in terms of looking for long-term economic solutions for northern Manitoba.

We look forward to working with the business community, and we look forward to working with northern Manitobans as we move forward. I will remind the member opposite that was his government that got our government into a lawsuit over the OmniTRAX situation. Now, we want to—we've got a lot of messes to clean up, Madam Speaker, and we intend to clean up their mess and do good things for northern Manitoba.

Tolko Mill Closure Government Plan

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Madam Speaker, in my hometown of The Pas, the employees of our paper mill are waiting 'ankishly' to hear details about the potential deal to save our mill and the support needed from government to make that deal go through. Families in The Pas, OCN and the RM of Kelsey are looking for leadership. They're looking for a Premier to step up and demonstrate the commitment to the North that he talked about during the election.

How will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) support the mill's operation while protecting the rights of the workers and our community?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Madam Speaker, I certainly share the member's concern about the potential job loss in her community. And I appreciate her spending some time with us on our last visit to The Pas, talking about the reality in The Pas and that area.

And we also recognize the trickle-down effect, and it also impacts many other Manitobans throughout the province.

That's why we as a government are working diligently to find a long-term solution to the Tolko closure.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, the Premier has been invited to meet with families and stakeholders in The Pas by our mayor. But over a month into this crisis, he still hasn't found the time to travel up to my community.

As the MLA for The Pas, I will reiterate that invitation and encourage him to meet with the workers and their families.

Will the Premier promise today to meet with the tri-council of The Pas, OCN, RM of Kelsey, to

provide some much-needed details on the potential deal to save our mill?

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, you know, obviously, there's a lot of issues at stake in northern Manitoba. We've inherited a lot of issues that we have to clean up.

We've had some very positive discussions, especially a very positive meeting in The Pas with all the key stakeholders in the region, and it was very, very productive. One chief actually said it was a historic meeting. We think that is very important. And we had a number of Cabinet ministers there that day. We as a government are consulting with Manitobans, northern Manitobans, as we go forward.

Obviously our departments are involved with the business and labour in terms of the adjustment committee going forward. We're hoping that isn't required. We're working diligently with other companies and looking at buying that particular asset.

So there is a lot of work going on, a lot of communication going on in this particular file. And we're cautiously optimistic something can be worked out.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Madam Speaker, I've spoken with indigenous leaders from our community like Manitoba Metis Federation, Swampy Cree Tribal Council and OCN, and they are demanding fair and equitable opportunities for the indigenous people who live on our traditional territory.

Everyone involved agrees they don't want a handout, but they want government to make a real commitment to find a long-term, sustainable solution.

What supports will the Premier commit to ensure my community has a future, and how will he work with First Nation and Metis and union leadership to get to that solution?

Mr. Cullen: I think this member also sees that the short-term payouts were not positive for northern Manitoba and I think she's buying into our long-term economic development strategy for northern Manitoba. And, Madam Speaker, that involves communications.

First Nations communities were at the table when we were in The Pas. They are part of the

solution. We are going to work with all the stakeholders to come up with a solution for northern Manitoba and the situation in The Pas.

East-Side Road Construction Timeline for Completion

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure and transportation.

The minister has cancelled community benefits for east-side communities. He's fired all the staff that would do the work. He's cut the road budget by \$48 million, and yet this minister tries to convince the public that he has every intention of building roads on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

How can he be serious about this work when he's fired all the staff, cut up the agreements with the communities? Will he admit that he has no plans for this project on the east side of Lake Winnipeg?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I am certainly more than willing to talk about the failed East Side Road Authority.

The Auditor General actually put out a report in mid-September. I would actually encourage all members to read this report. It's fascinating reading how the NDP actually destroyed so much out of that.

I would also add that with the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen), the Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations (Ms. Clarke)—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

* (14:20)

Mr. Pedersen: —we actually sat down with all 13 councils of the east side. We had very positive discussions with them. They talked about bullying, intimidation from the previous government, and we are set on determining a new relationship with them based on respect and honesty.

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

Mr. Maloway: In my supplementary to the same minister, clearly that this minister and this government interested in settling old political debts, that's what this is all about, rather than finding solutions. He knows full well that up to 30 per cent of the employment in this project was done by east-side residents.

We want to know: When is this road going to be built?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, if the member would actually take the time to read this Auditor General's report, he would see that there is no such thing as community benefit agreements, because in CBAs, there was no community involvement in the CBA. There was no benefits to the community. There was no agreements with the communities. It was the NDP's way of trying to buy votes across—using Manitoba's taxpayer money to try and buy votes, buy popularity to them. And just this treatment of the east-side residents by this former government is shameful.

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

Mr. Maloway: The residents of the east side are waiting for a road. That's what they want. And up to 30 per cent of the employment for the road was going to east-side residents. But instead of involving First Nations communities as partners in economic development, the minister's actually fired all the staff, ripped up the contracts, and the residents of east-side Winnipeg, they don't need a course correction, they actually need a road.

When is this going to—minister going to build this road?

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, I just can't ask the member enough times. Read the report: \$500 million dollars, less than 90 kilometres of road built, money disappearing, training didn't happen, mentoring didn't happen, training, equipment didn't—looking after equipment didn't happen under the East Side Road Authority.

This is the NDP's way of strategic infrastructure: take taxpayers' money and waste it on everything but building a road.

Northern Manitoba Health-Care Plan

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I hope everyone had a great summer. I'd like to welcome everyone back. I must have blinked because these past three months were gone just like that. I'm hoping that was the same for all of us, because we need to know that the next three and a half years will go just like that.

Picking up where we left off, many of our questions during spring session were answered with: go talk to your federal cousins. Well, our caucus did that.

My question for the Minister of Health: When can Manitobans see a Manitoba health plan that includes northern and indigenous populations?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I also want to welcome members back to this great Assembly.

And I want to thank the Liberal caucus, all three of them, for taking the advice of our caucus and to speak to their federal colleagues. And so I hope that when they had that opportunity—I saw the pictures on Twitter; it looked like a wonderful trip that they had. They got to see all sorts of sights in Ottawa. I hope that in between that they had the opportunity to speak to the federal minister about being a real partner in health care, not even a 50 per cent partner, which they really should be, but even a 40 per cent partner, which they're not, but even a 25 per cent partner, we'd appreciate that. I hope they brought that message. I'd love to hear the response from the member, Madam Speaker.

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

Economic Plan

Ms. Klassen: Yes, I did take pictures for all those northern people who will never get to see such sights.

The minister assured me that the transfer has increased. Our North has been hemorrhaging jobs, which greatly impacts us all. People have lost their homes; they have lost their ability to feed their families, and soon, they will lose their belief in this government.

My line of questioning always, in committees, is to see if the indigenous and northern populations are included under the umbrella term Manitoba.

I ask the Minister of Growth: When can we expect to see a detailed economic plan that includes employment for our northern and indigenous populations?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I do appreciate the member's question.

Obviously, there's some challenges in northern Manitoba that we're facing. We believe that it's certainly part of the decade of issues that faced us before in previous government. We obviously want to create a long-term structure in terms of economic development. We want to make sure that we get the

foundation right. And that's part of our strategy going forwards.

So there's a lot of work to do to rebuild the economy, certainly, in northern Manitoba, but we as a government are up to that, and we want to make sure that First Nations communities are part of that discussion.

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

East-Side Road Construction

Ms. Klassen: I have contacted my federal counterparts, and they are still waiting for a plan.

Our time to act is now. We need to make history for all Manitobans. We work for our constituents, not the other way around. Your job is not long term if you continue to do nothing.

Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), we have also met with some of our federal counterparts in that department. As you are well aware, the east-side road is one of my passions.

Tell me, have you submitted a business plan for federal funding so that we can move forward with the development of the east-side road?

Mr. Cullen: I do appreciate the member's question, certainly.

And, again, we go back to the last decade of debt, decay and decline. We as a new government are prepared to fix things that have done in the past, repair the issues that are there and rebuild the economy in Manitoba. We are going to do that by consulting with everyone in northern Manitoba and all Manitobans.

It's a work in progress, Madam Speaker, but we're prepared to do the work to improve the economy in northern Manitoba.

Budget Consultation Process Online Interactive Tool

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, last week, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and Finance Minister announced our government's new approach to prebudget consultations.

Can the Minister of Finance tell Manitobans how they can participate in these prebudget consultations process?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Manitobans understand that our government is facing

some serious financial difficulties, some challenges left to us by our predecessors in the NDP. We know for years the previous government spent beyond their means. We, unlike the NDP, are taking this budget consultation to Manitobans, asking for their input.

The Premier and I were pleased to be joined by the MLA for Radisson at Collège Béliveau last week, where we unveiled our new YourProvinceYourPlan.ca budget consultation. Manitobans will be able to use the budget consultation interactive tool, provide written submissions or register to participate in meetings across Manitoba

Unlike the NDP, who spent \$40,000 on a budget consultation process that didn't result in a budget, we care about the opinions of Manitobans. It will take all of us to solve this. That's the work we're about.

Minimum Wage Increase Government Position

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Minimum wage earners, as we know, are more likely to be women, single parents and working full time. Madam Speaker, every October for the last 17 years, hard-working Manitobans knew they could count on an increase to the minimum wage. This made life a little easier for families across the province.

The Premier has a past record. As part of a government, he froze the minimum wage seven times. He knows that that approach hurt Manitoba families then.

Why does he want to continue to hurt Manitoba families today?

* (14:30)

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I do appreciate the question from the member opposite, recognizing it is an important issue for Manitobans. I know the minimum wage directly impacts about 5 per cent of the working force.

Clearly, as a new government, we're interested in consulting with Manitobans before we make some decisions, some major decisions. As a result, I've sent this to the Labour Management Review Committee for their input and certainly look forward to their input as well. And I think that's very positive.

And it also allows me to talk about affordability. And it really is about affordability, too, to Manitobans. And we've taken some very important measures in terms of reducing taxation, certainly focused on a lot of the minimum wage earners. So

we think—we talk—we should talk—focus this discussion around affordability for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Chief: Madam Speaker, this year, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, the Yukon, Nunavut, all increased the minimum wage.

Over 60 unions and even more community organizations all throughout this province are standing with hard-working Manitobans.

Why won't this government do the same?

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, despite what the other province has done, Manitoba is still third in terms of the highest minimum wage across Canada—terms of provinces.

Madam Speaker, talking about affordability, with our recent tax changes to low-income families, we've taken nearly 3,000 income earners off the tax roll all together. We think that's a step in the right direction.

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

Mr. Chief: At the end of last session, I raised the story of Shayna [*phonetic*] and her one-year-old son Joseph [*phonetic*]. She worked hard on a minimum wage job all summer in Winnipeg's North End, providing sport rec and cultural activities for low-income children, making a better life for herself, for Joseph [*phonetic*] and other families in the neighbourhood.

I ask this minister: Why won't this minister stand with so many single parents like Shayna [*phonetic*] and support little children like Joseph [*phonetic*], who's one year old, and increase the minimum wage?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, I was remiss in the last session, I had the opportunity, but I want to now congratulate the member on the birth of his third child.

And to say that for Manitobans like Shayna [*phonetic*] and Joseph [*phonetic*], it is critical that we protect Shayna's [*phonetic*] right to vote in secret. And we will, in this session, introduce legislation, and we, I hope with the support of the members opposite, will pass legislation which will protect all Manitoba workers, including all female workers, in

the sanctity of their own workplace, to have their right to vote in secret in their own workplace protected.

Something that the NDP administration took away from Shayna [*phonetic*], took away from her and her family, we will restore in this session.

Minimum Wage Increase Impact for Women and Children

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, October 1st has come and gone without the much-needed increase to Manitoba's minimum wage.

According to the Manitoba Federation of Labour, women are 38 per cent more likely to earn minimum wage than men. Industries that typically pay minimum wage, like the service industry, have a disproportionately higher number of female workers. And many of these are women of colour.

There is a direct correlation between the wage gap between women and men and the economic marginalization of women and their children.

Why does the Premier feel that women's labour and the economic stability of her children does not matter or warrant a minimum wage increase?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Again, I appreciate that question from the member opposite.

Even despite other provinces increasing their minimum wage—some of them do indexing—we are still the third highest minimum wage across provinces in Canada.

And we actually asked the Labour Management Review Committee to look at the concept of indexing and what that might mean for Manitobans as well. That might be an important opportunity and I think a really good discussion for Manitobans to have.

In terms of affordability, we have taken nearly 3,000 Manitobans off the tax roll all together. We look—are looking at—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: —indexing the basic personal exemption, and we think that, again, is a step in the right direction for low-income Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The Premier has refused to raise the minimum wage for the first time in nearly 20 years, but saw absolutely nothing wrong with topping up his own salary. The Premier claims to be on the side of women, but his decision not to raise the minimum wage clearly demonstrates an unadulterated disinterest in it advancing the rights of female workers.

The Premier's decision cost Manitoba women \$900 a year, which fundamentally impacts on their children's lives. The Premier owes an explanation to women of Manitoba and to their children why he chose not to raise the minimum wage.

Mr. Cullen: As I indicated earlier, we've asked the Labour Management Review Committee to review this with some options in terms of indexing, as well. We've also been trying to engage all Manitobans. We just recently announced YourProvinceYourPlan, a website where all Manitobans can engage in the discussion, and I think this is a very important topic that they should be engaging in. So we're certainly asking Manitobans to engage in the dialogue about our finances here in Manitoba and certainly the minimum wage issue in Manitoba as well.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Manitoba's women need and spend every dollar they earn as minimum wage earners. Women typically spend almost all of their income in Manitoba creating jobs and directly supporting the local economy.

The Premier is—so proudly touts his increase to the personal—the basic personal tax exemption, yet Manitoba women living on part-time wages don't even benefit, owing to their tax bracket being too low.

Will the Premier just do what's right and get on the side of Manitoba women and their children and immediately raise the minimum wage?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The government, the previous government, Madam Speaker, cared so little about the rights of women that they promised women that they would not raise their PST and then went ahead and did it. They cared so little about the rights of Manitoba women that they actually went to court and took away the right of Manitoba women to vote on the proposal when they brought it in. They cared so little about the rights of Manitoba working women they failed to consult with any of the women, a growing number in our province who have small businesses, when they jacked up the minimum wage

year after year. They actually went against the recommendations of the female representatives of the employers' board when they recommended this not be done arbitrarily each year.

So we are listening to workers. We are listening to small business people. We are listening to Manitoba's men and women, and we're asking them to consider supporting the idea, both at the labour and at the employer level, of indexing our minimum wage going forward, so it keeps up to inflation, just as we've done with the income taxes of our province, something the previous government never did and hurt women in the process of not doing it.

Madam Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

* (14:40)

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

Following the daily prayer on the morning of Tuesday, June 28th, 2016, the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) raised a matter of privilege regarding his privileges as a member of the House due to the issue of accessibility in the Chamber. He noted that the current physical layout of the Chamber prevented him from accessing the floor of the Chamber and thereby preventing him from performing his duties as a member. He equated this lack of access as akin to obstruction and cited a number of rulings from House of Commons Speakers from 1970, 1973, 1989, 1996, 1999 and 2004 in support of his arguments.

He noted that a proposed solution of a platform lift would not be acceptable due to noise, the potential for mechanical problems and the challenges of using such a lift in a dignified and discreet manner. He proposed that a ramp could be installed or that the floor could be raised. He asked that a solution be put in place for the fall and concluded his remarks by moving, and I quote: that my privilege as a parliamentarian has been breached and that an acceptable remedy be found before the fall session and fully implemented by the end of the calendar year. End quote.

The honourable Minister of Health, who was Government House Leader at that time, and the honourable Opposition House Leader offered comments to the Chair. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House?

On the first condition of timeliness, given that this issue is an ongoing one that has been under consideration for over a year and will continue to be under consideration into the future, I will accept the honourable member's contention about timeliness of the issue, as he was concerned about the matter receiving consideration prior to the summer recess.

On the second condition of whether a prima facie case of privilege has been presented, I want to make it clear to the House that I am only dealing strictly with the technical aspects of whether there is a prima facie case of a matter of privilege, which is not the same as ruling on accessibility in the Chamber. My remarks will primarily focus on the prima facie privilege aspect, and after that has been dealt with, I will separately address the issue of accessibility in the Chamber.

The honourable member spent a considerable amount of time discussing the definition of privilege in order to make the case that he feels his privileges are being violated due to obstruction and a lack of free and unimpeded access to Parliament. To help set the context for members, privilege has two key components consisting of the privileges of the House as a collective and of members individually. The rights and powers of the House as a collective include: the right to regulate its own internal affairs, the power to discipline, the right to provide for its proper constitution, including the authority to maintain the attendance and service of members, the right to institute inquiries and to call witnesses and demand papers, the right to administer oaths to witnesses appearing before it and the right to publish papers with recourse to the courts relating to the content.

The individual rights and immunities of members are considered to consist of: freedom of speech, freedom from arrest in civil actions, exemption from jury duty, exemptions from being subpoenaed to attend court as a witness and freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation. It is the latter category of freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation I will focus on as it is more directly

related to the heart of this matter of privilege. I will also explore what constitutes proceedings in Parliament.

Regarding the question of what constitutes intimidation in the context of parliamentary privilege, on page 230 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, Joseph Maingot states that, and I quote: Members are entitled to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed. The assaulting, menacing or insulting of any member on the floor of the House or while he is coming or going to or from the House or on account of his behaviour during a proceeding in Parliament, is a violation of the rights of Parliament. End quote.

Maingot goes on to say on page 35 that, and I quote: What constitutes an improper means of interfering with members' parliamentary work is always a question depending on the facts of each case. There must be some connection between the material alleged to contain the interference and the parliamentary proceedings. End quote.

O'Brien and Bosc, in the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, cite examples on page 108 of items raised in the past as intimidation which have included bribery, the acceptance of fees and corrupt electoral practices. They go on to explain on page 109 that in order to find a *prima facie* case of privilege, the Speaker must be satisfied that there is evidence to support the member's claim that he or she has been impeded in the performance of his or her parliamentary functions and that the matter is directly related to a proceeding in Parliament.

They also state that while frequently noting members raising such matters have legitimate grievances, Speakers have consistently concluded that members have not been prevented from carrying out their parliamentary duties. So, although a member may have a legitimate complaint and feel he or she is facing some level of obstruction, it does not always necessarily follow that a *prima facie* case of privilege exists.

I'm now going to turn my focus on several rulings from House of Commons Speakers that the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) cited in raising his matter of privilege, as it is important to know the background context underlining rulings that have been given by Speakers. The honourable member for Assiniboia noted a 1973 ruling from Speaker Lucien Lamoureux, where that Speaker stated that he had, and I quote, no

hesitation in reaffirming the principle that parliamentary privilege includes the right of a member to discharge his or her responsibilities as a member. End quote.

While the sentiment appears to be on point, the circumstances of the case behind this ruling are not relevant to our current situation, as the situation from 1973 involved an employee of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation telephoning a Member of Parliament to tell the member to stop asking questions about television coverage of the Olympic Games or it would be alleged that the member had a CTV contract and was in a conflict-of-interest situation. This is not on point with the situation we are currently facing.

The honourable member also cited a May 1st, 1996 ruling from Speaker Bosley where it was referenced that if an honourable member is impeded or obstructed in the performance of his or her parliamentary duties, such a case would fall within the limits of parliamentary privilege. While on the surface, such a sentiment appears to be true, the circumstances leading to this commentary from Speaker Bosley do not fit within our current situation as this case involved a Member of Parliament complaining that the office of the Deputy Prime Minister had improperly monitored communications between members and the assistant deputy registrar general, which is not comparable.

Similarly, the honourable member also referenced another Speaker Bosley ruling from May 16th, 1996, where Speaker Bosley stated the threat or intimidation must not be hypothetical and had to be real or have occurred, and while this is true, the circumstances behind that ruling are also not comparable to the current situation either, as in this case it was alleged that the then-Deputy Prime Minister was attempting to intimidate a Member of Parliament by proposing an inquiry into conflict-of-interest allegations against the member.

The honourable member also cited rulings from Speaker Lamoureux in 1970, Speaker Fraser in 1989, Speaker Parent in 1999 and Speaker Milliken in 2004 where *prima facie* cases of privilege were found due to members being unable to enter Centre Block due to picket lines due to an RCMP roadblock and limitations on the entry into Centre Block due to security arrangements in place for a visit from the then-president of the United States.

What these four cases had in common was a physical obstruction preventing members from

entering the building. However, in our situation, the member is not impeded for entering either the Legislative Building or the Legislative Assembly Chamber. So there is not a direct, relevant connection, as the member is able to freely enter both the building and the Chamber.

* (14:50)

The crux of the matter appears to be whether the present configuration of the Chamber prevents the honourable member from performing his parliamentary duties. Maingot advises on page 80 that, and I quote: As a technical parliamentary term, proceedings are the events and the steps leading up to some formal action, including a decision taken by the House in its collective capacity. All of these steps and events, the whole process by which the House reaches a decision, the principal part of which is called debate, are proceedings. End quote.

He goes on to identify the definition as provided in the 21st edition of Erskine May as one where, and I quote, an individual member takes part in a proceeding, usually by speech but also by giving various recognized kinds of formal actions such as voting, giving notice of a motion or presenting a petition or a report from a committee, most of such actions being time-saving substitutes for speaking. End quote. Maingot goes on to say that the speaking or doing must be inextricably tied to parliamentary business in which the member is taking part while moving a motion, voting, reducing a motion to writing, handling—pardon me, handing a petition or a motion or a notice to the Clerk, presenting a report from a committee or simply speaking in the House or a committee.

The essential question is: Can a member participate in the proceedings of the House, that is, speak in debate, vote, move motions, raise points of order or matters of privilege, present petitions and file motions?

I conclude that in a technical sense, the answer is yes in that the member does have a desk where he can speak and be recognized from, and he has been provided with a touchscreen monitor which he can use to signal the Speaker to participate in debate or seek the attention of the Speaker, and the monitor can also be used to attract the attention of the table officers, pages and Sergeant-at-Arms. The member has been recognized to speak in debate, to ask questions and has been able to file motions on notice and move motions. So, from a purely technical

aspect, the member is able to participate in the proceedings of the Assembly.

He cites the desire to consult freely with others, and while he may not be able to do this from the floor of the Chamber at the present time, there is an ability to consult with others from his seat and from other points in the Chamber. Do his parliamentary duties require him to be on the floor of the Chamber? No, as he is able to participate in parliamentary proceedings from his seat, though it will be a laudable goal to someday provide that access. Have reasonable attempts been made to accommodate the member? Yes. Is the Assembly finished in providing accommodation to the member? No, there is more work to do. The matter would likely be a prima facie case if no reasonable attempts were made to accommodate the member, but accommodation has been provided which does give the member the ability to participate in the proceedings from his assigned seat in the House, so I would therefore find there is no prima facie case of a matter of privilege.

That having been said, I do not want anyone to take from this ruling that as the Speaker I am satisfied with the current physical layout of the Chamber, as it does not provide complete accessibility to a member, a staff member or a member of the public who use motorized devices. This is simply not acceptable in 2016. Ongoing efforts have taken place to address this while also taking into account heritage concerns, what can be done according to building codes and what is physically possible given the constraints of the layout of the Chamber.

Efforts have been under way since 2015 to provide accessibility to the floor of the Chamber. A number of options have been investigated with the assistance of a committee of experts including representatives from the city of Winnipeg accessibility advisory committee, the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities, the Canadian Paraplegic Association, the Manitoba Disabilities Issues Office, the Accommodation Services division within the Department of Finance, representatives from Assembly offices, accessibility consultants and construction managers, all experts in their fields with considerable knowledge and experience to share. Given the age of the building and the physical layout of the Chamber, various options are actively being investigated. Initial steps have been taken to provide accessibility by converting the layout of the third floor of Chamber desks into accessibility desks. Ramping has been investigated as an option to

provide access to the Chamber floor, but due to the amount of slope required according to building codes, it was deemed as an impractical solution for the Chamber. Other options such as installation of a platform lift or of raising the floor to one level are under active consideration, but unfortunately it does take time to assess physical requirements for change and to assess whether any such changes can be done given the shape of the Chamber and the weight-bearing load of the foundation.

I would also like to state that no one else in the Chamber can truly understand the challenges the honourable member for Assiniboia faces on a daily basis as he serves as an elected member of this House and all—and that although the challenges he faces may not fit within the traditional definition of intimidation in the parliamentary context, they are no doubt intimidating.

I cannot even imagine for one minute how any of us would be able to perform our duties with as much dignity and courage as demonstrated by the honourable member for Assiniboia. He truly is a champion for the rights of many and is living proof that anything is possible.

It is not a satisfactory state of affairs that he and others using motorized devices cannot access the floor of the Chamber. I give the honourable member for Assiniboia and all honourable members and members of the public my word that work will continue on this matter, and together we will find a solution that allows all persons to access the floor of the Chamber in a dignified and discreet manner.

The honourable member for Assiniboia has been an admirable champion of this cause, and I welcome and invite his participation as we find that solution together.

I thank all honourable members of the House for their kind attention to this ruling.

Madam Speaker: Petitions? *[interjection]* Oh.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, I'd like to—

Madam Speaker: Oh, I'm sorry. I must interrupt and advise the honourable member that it is out of order to attempt to debate or question the ruling of the Speaker.

If the member disagrees with the ruling, we can attempt to—he can attempt to challenge the ruling

given that it is on a matter of privilege. But in the case of rulings on points of order, it is not permitted to challenge the ruling of the Speaker.

Does the honourable member have—does the honourable member indicate that he is challenging the ruling?

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, I am.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member have the support of three other members?

Mr. Fletcher: I believe I do.

Madam Speaker: Those—if the member has the support of three other members they would need to stand. I just need to consult with the Clerk.

The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

I ask the House again, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

* (15:00)

The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

Recorded Vote

An Honourable Member: Can I call for a division?

Madam Speaker: The member is calling for a recorded vote. Does the member have the support of three members to call for a recorded vote?

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

* (16:00)

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

Division

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

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Allum, Altemeyer, Chief, Fletcher, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Klassen, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Selinger, Swan, Wiebe.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 36, Nays 18.

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

PETITIONS**Bell's Purchase of MTS**

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

The background of the petition is as follows:

The Manitoba telephone system is currently a fourth cellular carrier used by Manitobans along with the big national three carriers: Telus, Rogers and Bell.

In Toronto, with only the big three national companies controlling the market, the average five-gigabyte unlimited monthly cellular package is \$117, compared to Winnipeg where MTS charges \$66 for the same package.

Losing MTS will mean less competition and will result in higher costs for all cellphone packages in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to do that all is possible to prevent the Bell takeover of MTS and preserve a more competitive cellphone market so that cellular bills for Manitobans do not increase unnecessarily.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

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

Grievances? The honourable member for Assiniboia?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): No.

Madam Speaker: Pardon me.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, please would you call second reading on Bill 10, and, if we finish that, we'll pursue the debate and second reading for Bill 2.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the Government House Leader that this House will consider Bill 10 this afternoon, and we will do second reading of Bill 10, The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Repeal and Consequential Amendments Act.

SECOND READINGS

**Bill 10—The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management
and Taxpayer Accountability Repeal and
Consequential Amendments Act**

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister for Justice, that Bill 10, The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Repeal and Consequential Amendments Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: I'm pleased this afternoon to have the opportunity to stand and put some brief comments on the record in respect of Bill 10, the bill that our government has brought to The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Repeal and Consequential Amendments Act.

Madam Speaker, this is a bill that essentially paves the way for the new government of Manitoba to bring back—to restore to this province greater measures of accountability when it comes to governments and their performance against their own targets.

Madam Speaker, we used to have this in the province of Manitoba. As a matter of fact, back in 1995 when this bill was first introduced and passed as The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Accountability Act, the main points of that legislation included the—first of all, the requirement that major taxes including income tax, sales tax and payroll taxes could not be increased without the

approval of Manitobans through a referendum. It also included a provision that balanced budgets would begin with the 1995-96 fiscal year, and it included a provision as well for a realistic plan to repay the debt without increasing taxes.

*(16:10)

Madam Speaker, at the time that it was passed, this was the strongest such legislation throughout Canada in any jurisdiction. Of course, at that time, that legislation included provisions—exceptions to the balanced budget clause that would in essence waive the requirement of balancing the budget in the event of a natural disaster in—with a threat of war or with a revenue decline of 5 per cent or more. So, in essence, that legislation acknowledged that there could be exceptional circumstances that would unduly prevent a government from reaching those kinds of targets. But absent those exceptional circumstances, absent the threat of war, absent a natural disaster, absent a revenue decline of 5 per cent or more, what the bill signified is, a government should be able to make the target that it sets out. The legislation also suggested very strongly that there should be penalties in the event that that government, in the event that those ministers of the Crown did not reach the targets that they set out to reach.

The intent was to give Manitobans a voice, to create accountability in the operation of government at a time when so many people hold in low estimation the work that legislators do in order to bring good financial management to the operation of government. This was intended to shore up the confidence of Manitobans in their government. It was legislation that was proudly brought by a PC government and was, as I mentioned, one of the strongest balanced budget legislations at the time.

Madam Speaker, I wish that today I could stand in this Chamber and say that since the time it was introduced that this legislation functioned as it was intended to function. I wish that I could say for the record today that we have all been well served and that as a result of this legislation that was brought in 1995, that now we would see deficits declining, we would see the debt of the Province in net decline. We would have seen strong investments in our fiscal stabilization account that could have been withdrawn in those years when we did in this province endure flood and other environmental threats.

But, Madam Speaker, I cannot deliver that message today because in this province, in this context, after 1999, the—our predecessors, the NDP

government, over time worked and worked to erode the intention of that original legislation. We understand—we all know in this place that the legislation as it was first passed included some significant penalties to ministers of the Crown, who, if they did not within their departmental appropriations meet their targets, they would have to take a salary penalty. Well, it's the sad legacy of that party that they took that penalty maybe once, and then what they did is they brought an amendment, and the amendment enshrined their salaries at that level to make sure that they would not continue to endure the penalty of overspending in their budgetary areas. They essentially gave themselves a pass on one of the major provisions. They passed it as an amendment and they were hoping that no one would notice as they did it.

And I would reflect, Madam Speaker, that right now the Opposition party has quarrelled in the spring and somehow tried to bring this false assumption that this government has given themselves a raise. Well, nothing could be more further from the truth if they had bothered to read the legislation. Because the legislation clearly spells out provisions for a government that would come into power and basically have to deal with a mess faced by their predecessors. Such a mess was the one we inherited this spring. When we came across the line, we did that discovery, we did that financial analysis of the books, the Public Accounts, present now the fact that the previous government doubled their deficit in just the last year, so the opposition party would somehow like the current members to take on the penalties that they themselves passed legislation so they would not have to endure. Let me give this comfort to members opposite: we will, in this province, reintroduced this kind of legislation that will have teeth. It will have meaningful consequences.

And we invite, we encourage the members opposite, that when we, as a new government, if there are threats, and it looks like we're not going in the right direction, they will hold us to account on the legislation we introduce. It will be stronger before. Why will we bring such legislation? Because we believe fundamentally that Manitobans are owed these protections.

Why are Manitobans owed these protections? Because if you do not introduce them, then that government, if it does not want to focus on its expenditure problem, will simply turn towards a revenue solution, as this government did in 2012 when they first widened the retail sales tax to include

whole new areas of the operation of our economy that were never subject to tax.

I'm thinking about everything from haircuts and personal services, where things were—birth certificates, where there were new charges; death certificates, where there were new charges assessed. The government, in its zeal to realize new forms of revenue, went out and widened that tax.

And, of course, taxpayers had no recourse. But that wasn't the end of it. Of course, the next year, after saying they would not raise the tax, they raised the tax, in contradiction to the legislation that was on the books.

Now, I know that the opposition would—will want to talk about court challenges and the fact that they spent taxpayers' money to go to court to try to insist that Manitobans shouldn't have their say. But, at the end of the day, what the opposition is not acknowledging is, if you read the judge's decision, it's very clear, governments have options and governments can make decisions—absolutely. And we, of course, stand in complete support of that statement.

But what the government's prerogative, of course, was, one that they didn't want to take up, was that prerogative to bring amendments to kill the balanced budget legislation, death by a thousand cuts had already taken place, but maybe one more amendment through the heart of the legislation, and then nothing would have prevented the government from proceeding with a bill to raise the PST.

In their haste, in their zeal, they ran roughshod over the rights of all Manitobans, took away the right to vote, passed legislation—I think there were two fundamental commitments that I believe Gary Doer used to say in this place about taxation. He used to say, you do not raise the tax on beer and you do not raise the provincial sales tax. And I think that within a few months they managed to do both all at once. So they went on a course that was not strongly recommended by the former premier of this province, one of their own persuasion.

But, Madam Speaker, basically, this is now before us a bill that is necessary to pave the way for the legislation that we will bring.

I look back in history, I look back—if I had more time what I would do is start to unpack the various amendments that were brought by our predecessors, all of which had the effect of watering down this legislation: amendments they brought that would

suspend the mandatory payments to the Fiscal Stabilization Account, amendments that they brought to water down and to dilute the penalties to ministers when they overspent in their appropriations, amendments that they brought to—well, various other ones as well in respect of what they outlined as a fiscal recovery period.

But all of it comes to this. The public is owed a debt of accountability. We believe that as a party. We believe that as the new government of Manitoba. And that is why we will proceed. Where they failed, we will proceed.

We will reintroduce in this House stronger legislation, and legislation that will give back to Manitobans that accountability that they deserve. If there is going to be a major tax, let government explain the rationale. Let them demonstrate by their actions that they respect Manitobans enough that they will take the question to Manitobans.

I believe that if our predecessors had wanted to, if they believed that their cause was just, they should not have feared that. They should not have feared the course that would have them go to Manitobans. If they felt that they were in the right, if they felt they were on a strong foundation in terms of the rationale, then they should have gone to Manitobans, believing that the right would prevail, that Manitobans would accept the rationale they were giving for why they needed to have that additional third of a billion dollars of revenue in their pockets each and every year.

* (16:20)

But the government did not go that course. They basically disrespected Manitobans. They basically went around existing legislation, and then even quarrelled about the fact that Manitobans shouldn't have the right after all.

Madam Speaker, we were hired to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy. A major part of what we have to do is restore trust in Manitobans in how this—in how the government oversees spending, manages the economy and is rebuilding our financial plan. This is the work that we will do through Bill 10 and the path beyond. This is the work that Bill 10 allows us to go down.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed

to the minister by any member in the following sequence: The first question by the official opposition critic or designate, subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties, subsequent questions asked by each independent member and remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): It's been a fascinating day in the House, and it was a fascinating speech just given by the Minister of Finance. So let me just ask him to begin with, Madam Speaker, he tabled this budget in the spring. Who did he talk to before he tabled this budget?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I want to help the member for Fort Garry-Riverview focus on the legislation that is currently under debate in this part of today's proceedings. I'm happy to talk about Bill 10 and its implications. I'm not sure if he shares my same concern on that, but I did want to provide this clarification for him. It was when the government started to run very significant deficits in 2009 that it suspended sections of the law and cut in half the salary reduction for Cabinet ministers, essentially getting a better deal for all Cabinet ministers when they failed to make their own targets.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'd like to ask the minister whether he believes that it's fair, by repealing this bill, that the Cabinet is hiking its own salaries, at the same time refusing to raise the minimum wage for the first time in nearly 20 years.

Mr. Friesen: The member is incorrect in his assertion. I do not accept the premise of the question. He will understand, if he's read the original legislation, that clearly, the penalties were for the ministers of a sitting government who had incurred that level of deficit. There is a transitional period that is specifically spelled out in the legislation. I would point him to that legislation and ask him to refresh his memory on these things.

Mr. Allum: Since the Minister of Finance wasn't able to answer my question to begin with, I would invite him to do so again. He tabled this bill in the spring. Could he tell us who he spoke to before he tabled this bill?

Mr. Friesen: In response to the member's question, I can tell him that Manitobans were not in support of the tax hike in the province of Manitoba, and I can tell him in the broad consultations that our party has had since 2013, when his party brought that

additional tax hike, raising the PST to 8 per cent, I can tell him that is the opinion of the Manitobans that we have talked to over those many, many days and those many, many months, that they stand opposed to that government's PST hike and they stand in favour of greater accountability of government to the citizens who elect them.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My question to the Minister of Finance: In this legislation, the government is changing some clause which deals with how pensions are booked in the budget. I wonder if the Minister of Finance would explain why he's making those changes to how the government is going to deal with the money going to pensions.

Mr. Friesen: I thank the member for River Heights for that question, and I'll be happy to have a longer discussion with him. This is a concern that he can, perhaps, outline more when we get into the debate stage of this bill. There are certain things—as we looked at the legislation, we asked ourselves questions about whether it was possible to save the legislation in its current form. We decided that it was not feasible in its current form and, of course, then, choosing to go a different path and bring a stronger set of rules around this. There were certain logistic considerations that had to be also addressed, and I believe the concerns that he's expressing formed part of those concerns.

Mr. Maloway: Regarding Bill 10, I'd like to ask the minister if he agrees that this government is responsible for the budget that they themselves brought in. Does the minister agree that it was irresponsible for this government to mislead Manitobans about the state of the current deficit?

Mr. Friesen: I would like to point out to the member that it was tremendously irresponsible for the former NDP government to indicate as their budget deficit in 2015 \$422 million, and, at the second quarter report, indicate that budget deficit projection revised to \$500 million and give no sense to Manitobans as to the rate of deterioration that they would arrive at a \$846-million deficit, a record for this province, and not give any fair warning to the economy, to business, to individuals, to families. That was unfortunate.

Mr. Allum: Well, it's a sad commentary, Madam Speaker, when the Minister of Finance won't concede the point that he was caught red-handed torquing the deficit to the detriment of the people of Manitoba.

In his opening statement on the bill, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance talked about meeting targets. Could he please tell the House—name one target he set to date.

Mr. Friesen: This is a very interesting development being lectured by the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) on the subject of meeting targets.

I only concede that I do not have the time allotted to me that is sufficient to answer that question fully. But, if the member would like, sometime when I'm allowed unlimited time I would be happy to embark on a more fulsome explanation of the necessity of the duty of a government to meet its own targets. But I think we can agree on this; that's what this bill will help us do.

Mr. Maloway: Transparency and accountability in government reporting is crucial to democracy and good decision making.

Do you agree that this government deliberately inflated the size of the deficit to score political points on the NDP?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, it is the concern that I have and that my colleagues share, that the former NDP government deliberately understated their deficit in order to win an election. But I believe, at the end of the day, the referendum that Manitobans had in April was very decisive, and it indicated, I hope, to them that Manitobans expect more.

Mr. Allum: You know, the member—the minister didn't answer the question about targets because the truth is he doesn't have any.

The member opposite, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), tabled a budget in this House with no year-over-year projection.

So I want to ask him now: What targets does he have in mind for the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Friesen: I thank the member for the question, because it gives me the opportunity again to indicate further erosions that were first contemplated and then brought in by our predecessors. I'm thinking about the flip-flop of the NDP when they indicated that they were going to then focus on a reporting of core from a summary focus and, of course, this coming after the former premier who had been the Finance minister had, in about 2009, talk about the importance of summary reporting and that how it offered the most comprehensive, most valid form of

reporting, all of it was just an attempt to move things on the table to hide from Manitobans.

I'm pleased that this bill will do much more for the sake of Manitobans.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the minister whether this government believes it's best practice to put forward a budget that does not chart out a long-term plan for investments in infrastructure.

* (16:30)

Mr. Friesen: We've had this quarrel in the House before, Madam Speaker. And I don't think that this will be the last time we have this quarrel. But I think that, even if these members will not acknowledge it, I can inform them that, by and large, the Manitoba community, and I can indicate as well those outside these borders thought it was significant that the new government brought a budget within only three weeks of taking office or a month of taking office.

It was right to do it. And I would say it served them well, because what it did is it allowed the Estimates process to continue now. It allowed bill debate in the fall, and I believe all of them might begrudgingly admit that this is the way this House should function: budget in the spring, Estimates in the fall.

Mr. Allum: Maybe the Minister of Finance can qualify for House leader next or maybe a professor in the political science department somewhere, Madam Speaker, because he's not answering the questions that's being put to him about this legislation.

Now, this legislation simply repeals a bill: When can we expect the new bill to come forward?

Mr. Friesen: I appreciate the question from the member and, basically, this is a two-part process.

We first have to repeal, and then we'll introduce—here's the comfort that the member can take—the legislation that we introduce will be one that focuses again on Manitobans' right to have a say when it comes to tax hikes.

It will also focus on meaningful penalties, and I have said this publicly and I'll say it again here, you have to contemplate these penalties being of two types. There would have to be meaningful penalties on a path toward balance. Then there would have to be meaningful penalties that would proceed from the point of balance to prevent government from soon lapsing again into an overspend tendency.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the minister: Will an updated balanced budget legislation that he plans to bring in include a carbon tax?

And I'd like to also know: Will this tax go to a referendum?

Mr. Friesen: I believe that the—you know, when we're looking at this issue of balanced budgets and fiscal management, I see that as being quite different from the initiative to which the member is referring.

I can tell him that under way in this province is a very significant initiative to get that discussion right, to make sure that it reflects the aims of Manitobans. It needs to be a plan that is good for Manitoba.

I would remind that member, though, that if this was such a significant issue to him, why was it that his government focused so much on takeoffs with respect to carbon pricing but didn't do a single landing?

Mr. Allum: It's interesting, Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) talks about balancing the budget and balancing the budget, but he did not outline a plan for balancing the budget in his budget. In fact, he didn't include any projections, year over year, at all.

So can he tell this House what his plan is for balancing the budget? And what cuts does he have in mind to hurt the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Friesen: Now, that's a really interesting comment that the member makes. And, of course, it's the broken-record path he wants to take because he wants to somehow convey this idea that it's very scary.

I'm quoting from his own second quarter update from 2015, where it says: funding pressures will be closely monitored as government continues to carefully review expenditures to reduce costs where possible.

We'll proceed the same way, the only difference being they only promised it, we'll get it done.

Mr. Maloway: We know that the Manitoba Telephone System was privatized without a referendum, even though the government promised it that it wouldn't.

Will this minister commit to that any new balanced budget legislation requiring the sale of any Crown corporation be put to a referendum prior to privatization?

Mr. Friesen: This is an interesting question coming from the member, because now all of a sudden there's a turn in the conversation and these members of the opposition would see themselves as the protectors of the balanced budget legislation. Now they're working to bring further assurances. Well, this is a drastic departure from any position they've taken in the past.

Madam Speaker, I spent some minutes here in debate outlining the various amendments that that government brought when they were in power: reducing, reducing, watering down, narrowing the focus until the legislation was basically ineffective and prevented nothing.

If the member had a fidelity to this kind of legislation, why did he not express it to his own caucus years ago?

Mr. Allum: Madam Speaker, we're quickly running out of time. Just to set the record straight, on this side of the House, we're the defenders of Crown corporations in Manitoba, not these guys.

So let me ask the Finance Minister one last question: When he goes on his ruthless austerity binge in his next budget, will he be putting those cuts to a referendum?

Mr. Friesen: Once again, I would like to take the opportunity to return that member to the path of accuracy. The Property Registry unit was a division of this government that that former administration privatized. They privatized it. Happened about two years ago. I remember being on this side of the House. And they provided a rationale which I will be happy to share with that member, the rationale that that government provided for the business case for that. Now, I'm not presupposing that that's the path to continue, but it's interesting to hear that member say that they were the defenders of those core services. They privatized them.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period has ended.

Debate

Madam Speaker: The floor is now open for further debate on Bill 10.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Of course, I want to welcome everyone back to the House: you, of course, and our fantastic table officers, our extraordinary number of fantastic pages, the wonderful interns that you introduced earlier. All of these folks and many, many more make for

democracy here in Manitoba, and we're very pleased to work with all of them.

I have the great opportunity to stand up and just put a few words on the record regarding the repeal of the balanced budget legislation. And it's interesting that we should start with a piece of legislation that really—it dates back to the 1990s. It's a reminder to this side of the House that that side of the House, the government side of the House, is stuck in the 1990s, and they ain't never, ever, going to progress faster and go forward on it. And that's a sad commentary. We know that the balanced budget legislation was a discredited piece of legislation. Most progressive economists recard—regard it as not only bad economics but also bad public policy. And the reason for that, Madam Speaker, is that governments are elected to govern, which is something that the new government fails to recognize. I don't know that they govern at all, frankly. They're the most hands-in-the-pocket, shrug-their-shoulders government that ever existed. I mean, it's really quite remarkable that they manage to spend so much time in office and accomplish so little, all at the devastation of the province of Manitoba, and it's unfortunate in that regard.

I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) didn't seem to accomplish much during the course of the summer. I hope he at least improved his golf game during the summer because he wasn't—or didn't seem to be doing much else. We do know, Madam Speaker, that he left a colossal divot in Churchill. He left a colossal divot in Tolko. And, unlike good golfers who fix their ball marks, he's not prepared to fix it at all. In fact, he's just sitting there with his hands in his pockets, shrugging his shoulders, not accomplishing anything for the people of Manitoba and putting families and workers here in Manitoba at risk. And, on this side of the House, we're going to stand with those families. We're going to stand with those workers. And we're going to ensure that Manitoba continues to grow, continues to develop and that every Manitoban has a place in our community and our province.

Now, let's be clear, Madam Speaker, about this particular piece of legislation, that all it does is repeal a poor piece of legislation that was drafted in the 1990s and has since undergone a number of amendments, amendments that were required because a government has to be flexible; it has to have the opportunity and the ability to be there for people when circumstances require it.

* (16:40)

Now, the Minister of Finance, who's tabled—we'll get to the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) in a moment, but the Minister of Finance tabled a budget in which he had spent a lot of time talking about meeting his targets, and then what did he do? He doesn't have one target. He doesn't include one year-over-year projection so that Manitobans can see where he's going.

And, when asked about his plan for the deficit, he said, well, gee, we'll get to it sometime over eight years. I don't know, sometime or another. But he has no plan; he never has. He didn't have one in the campaign; he didn't have one when we first came into session; he doesn't have one now. And, as a result, Madam Speaker, he's doing a dramatic disservice to the people of Manitoba when he gets up and claims about meeting his targets, targets that he doesn't have, he has not set.

And so it's left the rest of us to wonder just when the other shoe is going to drop and how heavy that shoe's going to be when it does drop. And, given the language that he's utilized to date, talking tough down in room 68, talking tough again in the House today, it sounds like that he's preparing to deliver Harper-style austerity here in Manitoba. And one thing we know, he's already brought Harper-style hyper-partisanship to this House and to this province. At every turn, this new government is more concerned about settling old political scores and old political debts than they are about governing the province of Manitoba.

And that has been a real, real disappointment, because while the Premier (Mr. Pallister) talked about there being this great blue sky the day they were elected, all we can see are big, grey, dark clouds coming over the province of Manitoba as the Finance Minister prepares to do significant damage to the infrastructure of Manitoba, to the well-being of Manitoba. Communities are going to suffer. Families are going to suffer. But, on this side of the House, we're going to stand with those communities; we're going to stand with those families to make sure, to ensure that there's a place for everyone here in our province.

Now, the minister talks about all the things he's preparing to do. We don't have any evidence of that when it comes to this particular bill which simply repeals an act that they created 20 years ago. They talk a big game about introducing a referendum back into the mix when it comes to new taxation. But, you

know, Madam Speaker, it was the Premier of this province, former leader of the opposition, when he was the member for—simply for Fort White and leader of the opposition who took this matter to court.

An Honourable Member: And what did he get?

Mr. Allum: And what did he get, says my sister from Logan. He basically got kicked out of court. He found out right away that the ruling that the referendum that he said was so indispensable was, in fact, illegal. They were running on an illegal law. It was unconstitutional, Madam Speaker. At best, a referendum could be for an advisory role. It cannot be binding on this Legislature. That belongs to the Legislature who are—the legislative people here who are elected by the people of Manitoba in order to make those difficult decisions. So, while it's important for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) to contract out decisions to his value-for-money audit friends, contract out decision on waiting times. We're still waiting, in fact, for their task force on wait times. He now wants to contract out a decision he needs to make on behalf of the people of Manitoba and leave it in some nebulous place where there—it's actually not binding on this legislator—Legislature.

So, while he can fool some of the people some of the time, he ain't fooling this side at all when it comes to his tough talk for a referendum that we know carries little to no weight here in this Legislature.

The last thing I just want to simply put on the record is that we know it's been an extraordinarily difficult time for the Minister of Finance in that new job. His credibility has taken a beating. This is the minister who—self-inflicted, by the way—a minister who went out and said he'd found \$128 million in savings. Turns out, Madam Speaker, he'd found \$108 million in cuts, cuts that hurt the people of Manitoba. And then last week we had the spectacle of the Minister of Finance being caught red-handed for torqueing the deficit, all for hyper-partisan political reasons, and, as a result, doing an enormous disservice to the people of Manitoba.

You know, on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, we built roads, we built bridges, we built hospitals, we built schools, we built community centres, we built child-care centres, we built the infrastructure that families and people in our province rely on. And all of those things are at risk by this Minister of Finance, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and this new government of Manitoba.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, there is great irony in that one of the first bills of the current Conservative government is a bill to eliminate balanced budget legislation. This was, of course, a signature bill when it was brought in by the Conservative Party in Manitoba in 1995. Manitoba's current Premier was involved in the effort to bring in this legislation. Indeed, in 1995, the Premier, then, said the following about this bill. He said it was most necessary. And now his government is repealing and eliminating this most necessary legislation, as he's called it.

The Premier said, in 1995, that, and I quote, a sense of responsibility is important for politicians to have, and that this sense of responsibility was an important reason to support balanced budget legislation. And now his government has apparently abdicated this sense of responsibility in bringing in legislation which will completely eliminate the balanced budget requirement, will eliminate the accountability, will eliminate the targets or objectives of the government. It is ironic that this is the government which stood for something back then and now is going to repeal this bill, which they have said was very important for accountability.

The Premier, in 1995, said that one aspect of the balanced budget legislation, as brought in in 1995, that voters supported it, as it was a campaign promise of—in the 1995 election. Well, I looked and listened during the recent campaign, and I never saw that the Conservatives campaigned on eliminating the balanced budget legislation, on eliminating the accountability, on eliminating the aspects which they had called and termed so positively back in 1995. And I, you know, maybe they did make this commitment somewhere that was hidden in the fine print somewhere. I'm still looking for it and I haven't found it. And I challenge the Minister of Finance to bring forward the fine print if, indeed, there is any.

It is important, I think, and maybe it's not entirely a surprise that the Premier would axe his own balanced budget legislation. And certainly, as the minister has said, that part of the reason could be that the NDP made a series of changes to the legislation which resulted in its effectiveness being considerably reduced.

Nevertheless, it's rather ironic for a government which campaigned on greater accountability to come in and, as one of their first acts, remove accountability. Eliminating the act removes the semblance of accountability. It also removes any

objectives or targets. It's interesting that the minister was asked several times what his targets are, and he evaded the question rather than answer it, so it seems to be that he doesn't have any. We don't know whether the government is going to try and balance the budget and, if so, when. And so we wait for more. And the minister has promised that he's going to bring in new legislation, but we haven't seen it. At this point, that's an empty promise. And, since we haven't seen it, we have no idea what is going to be in that legislation.

* (16:50)

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) says that he will fail—he will succeed where the NDP failed. But, you know, the—he's obviously referring to eliminating the balanced budget legislation, because the NDP critic was talking about this bill being very bad legislation, but, of course, in 17 years they never eliminated it or repealed it, even though they thought it was bad legislation. So now we are seeing a Finance Minister who is going to succeed in eliminating this legislation where the NDP had failed to do that.

You know, where is this legislation that the Minister of Finance has promised? We are now many months into the mandate of the government. If they really believe in accountability, we should have had that bill now so that we know what the government's objectives and targets and how they plan to hold people accountable.

You know, eliminating this act removes a rather important accountability measure. That is, it eliminates the reduction in ministers' salaries if they don't perform their job well. In the balanced budget legislation, the ministers' salaries were to be reduced, were reduced, if the government didn't perform well and meet its objectives. It appears, from the fact that the government is not only (1) eliminating setting objectives, the need to balance the budget and eliminating all accountability for achieving the government's objectives by eliminating any reduction in the ministers' salaries, that there will be a vacuum in accountability. We don't know how long this vacuum will exist, and maybe the minister will never actually bring in another bill. He should have presented it here in this Legislature so that we could see where the minister is going instead of just removing the accountability and removing, you know, the framework that was there.

In 1995, our current Premier (Mr. Pallister) talked then of the balanced budget legislation which

required, as I've said, not only the tabling of the balanced budget legislation, but also the obtainment of the balanced budget. As the Premier said in 1995 in his speech at that time, and I quote, the balanced budget legislation requires the attainment of it or a penalty will be paid. That penalty, in essence, will affect only a member of the Executive Council and be a loss of their income for that role they perform of 20 per cent the first time and 40 per cent if it happens again. Today, in this Bill 10, the government of the Premier who talked about this in 1995 is completely getting rid of the accountability that the Premier himself praised back in 1995.

It is also a concern in this legislation that one of the clauses which will be eliminated, not from the balanced budget legislation, but from the fiscal administration act talks, and I quote, about the amount, if any, transferred out of the Debt Retirement Fund under The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Accountability Act, for the purpose of reductions—the pension, government's pension liability, it appears will not be credited. You know, there will be a change in how this is presented in the budget. And I am concerned that what this means is that there could be some changes in the pension plan funding, that the government may not allocate adequate dollars for the pension liabilities, and we could, as happened in the past, fall behind in the pension liabilities being accounted for. And, of course, that was a problem after the Tories were in power in the 1990s, that many of the pension liabilities weren't actually booked adequately. And so we don't want to go back to that situation now.

I want to close with just a few words basically saying that the nature of this bill which eliminates putting an objective of the government in legislation in terms of whether or not they're going to balance a budget and when, it eliminates the accountability provisions in terms of the reduction of ministers' salary.

We don't support the elimination of objectives. We don't support the elimination of accountability. If we had the other legislation, which is promised but is not here, we might look on this differently. But right now we believe the government should've brought in that other legislation now so that we can see it instead of creating a vacuum by just removing and eliminating the targets and the accountability.

So, in its current form and without the other legislation being presented, we can't support this legislation.

Madam Speaker: Is there any further debate on Bill 10?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would like to call debate on second reading for Bill 2.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the Government House Leader that this House will now consider second reading of Bill 2, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, and it's standing in the name of the minister for—the member for Wolseley.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): It's always interesting to have a piece of legislation brought forward by the political party that has refused to acknowledge that corporate and union donations is something that needs to be done away with, brought forward by a party who, when they were in office orchestrated the biggest vote-rigging scandal in Manitoba's history labelled as a judge, their former premier, former chiefs of staff has never—judge said he'd never seen as many liars come before his court ever before, so we obviously keep a very close eye on anything legislative that the Conservative government might bring forward. At this particular point in time we have no further comments to add.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act is specific to section 27 of Bill 2. It amends the time in which a by-election must occur. As of right now, by-elections must occur

within a year of the member of the Manitoba Legislature leaving one's position for whatever reason that may be.

This amendment changes the time allowance from one year to six months unless a vacancy occurs less than one year before the general election. It is important for the residents of Manitoba to have a representative inside of the Manitoba Legislature and a year is too long to go without one.

Every politician will have a different experience, but one thing that we all have in common is the honour of representing our constituents. It is our responsibility to ensure that the government hears what Manitobans are saying.

We are here to better all of the communities of Manitoba by proposing, supporting and creating laws and policies. How can this be done effectively if there's no elected representative in a particular community? This is completely reasonable and our party will be in support of this amendment.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is there any further debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Mr. Micklefield: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock?

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 3, 2016

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS		Oral Questions	
Committee Reports		Northern Manitoba	
Standing Committee on Crown Corporations		F. Marcelino	1781
		Pallister	1781
First Report		Forestry Industry	
Guillemard	1769	F. Marcelino	1783
		Pallister	1783
Standing Committee on Public Accounts		Churchill Manitoba	
Second Report		Lindsey	1784
Wiebe	1770	Cullen	1784
Standing Committee on Public Accounts		Tolko Mill Closure	
Third Report		Lathlin	1785
Wiebe	1771	Cullen	1785
Standing Committee on Public Accounts		East-Side Road Construction	
Fourth Report		Maloway	1786
Wiebe	1776	Pedersen	1786
Ministerial Statements		Northern Manitoba	
Breast Cancer Awareness Month		Klassen	1786
Squires	1777	Goertzen	1787
Fontaine	1777	Cullen	1787
Gerrard	1778	Budget Consultation Process	
		Martin	1787
		Friesen	1787
Members' Statements		Minimum Wage Increase	
Lions Clubs		Chief	1788
Wharton	1778	Cullen	1788
		Pallister	1788
La Compagnie de La Vérendrye		Minimum Wage Increase	
Selinger	1779	Fontaine	1789
		Cullen	1789
President's Choice Children's Charity		Pallister	1789
Isleifson	1779	Speaker's Ruling	
		Driedger	1790
Mental Illness Awareness		Petitions	
Wiebe	1780	Bell's Purchase of MTS	
Super-Spike		Maloway	1794
Morley-Lecomte	1780		

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Second Readings

Bill 10–The Balanced Budget, Fiscal Management and Taxpayer Accountability Repeal and Consequential Amendments Act	
Friesen	1794
Questions	
Allum	1797
Friesen	1797
Maloway	1797
Gerrard	1797
Debate	
Allum	1799
Gerrard	1801

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 2–The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act	
Altemeyer	1803
Lamoureux	1803

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

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