

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

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Ind.
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	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

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

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

Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 232—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), that Bill 232, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Swan:** I am pleased to introduce Bill 232, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act. This bill ensures that no premium or fee is required for a Manitoba resident to be eligible for health care. Health-care premiums in Manitoba were abolished in the early 1970s, and the passage of this bill would prevent their return.

I do hope that all members of this House will support this bill.

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

Committee reports?

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** I would rise today to table the 2016-17 annual reports for Manitoba Families.

**Madam Speaker:** Further tablings?

**Mr. Fielding:** I rise today to table the 2016-17 Annual Report for ALL Aboard, The Poverty Reduction Committee.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further tabling of reports? No?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister for Sustainable Development, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

#### International Day of the Girl

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Today, we celebrate a momentous occasion for girls across the globe: International Day of the Girl. In 2012, the United Nations declared October 11th as International Day of the Girl, and the purpose of this day is to highlight the role girls play as powerful voices of change in their families, their communities and their nations.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues here today to reflect on the important contributions girls have made to our province, our economy, our communities and to their families. We must consider these contributions in light of the many challenges facing young women and girls today.

Madam Speaker, it is critically important to continue opening doors for girls because we know girls are growing up in environments that can wreak havoc on their self-esteem, mental health and body image. We see girls dropping out of high school sports, not wanting to continue in activities and not wanting to speak up in class. So, while there are some who believe that the glass ceiling has been shattered, the reality is we still have a long way to go.

At lunchtime today, the Manitoba women's advisory chair, Dr. Jeannette Montufar, and I hosted 20 young women from École Marie-Anne-Gaboury for lunch. We discussed with them their hopes for the future and why International Day of the Girl is important to celebrate in our world. I stressed to

these girls that they are incredibly valuable, and I cannot wait to see how they influence our society as they grow.

In addition, later today we are hosting an event in partnership with the University of Winnipeg and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg. This event is an introduction to computer coding sessions with over 25 girls in attendance. They will be learning about computer coding, discovering that girls like themselves could also become programmers, and maybe they will find a new passion and career for themselves.

We know that education is the key for girls securing economic and social security later in life. I look forward to spending my time tonight celebrating girls and their infinite possibilities.

Let us work together to support more female computer coders, CEOs, scientists, House Speakers, elected officials, astronauts, athletes, welders, leading professionals in every sector and every industry.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** For Manitobans, the International Day of the Girl is about celebrating the women and girls who make our province a successful, vibrant place to live. It's also a time to recognize that every day, here and around the globe, girls face marginalization, discrimination and persecution.

Around the world, more than 62 million girls can't go to school because they're faced with unimaginable obstacles. Girls and young women continue to suffer from systemic violence, forced marriages, rape, genital mutilation and discrimination.

In our own country, one in three girls experience an unwanted sexual act, 54 per cent of Canadian girls under 11 have experienced some form of sexual abuse and half of all women over the age of 16 have experienced physical or sexual violence before. On any given night, thousands of young girls and their mothers are sleeping in shelters because of physical and sexual violence at home.

We also reflect upon the hundreds of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls of Manitoba and stand in support of their courage and loving families.

We all have a role to play in removing barriers that prevent girls from reaching their full potential.

This amazing young women who have brought leaders in our province are an example of what happens when we make investments into education, health care, and sports and culture and our environment. One such leader: Natalie Tataryn, who raised funds and awareness this year for girls living in a safe house in Ukraine.

We will continue to work together, with men and boys, to advocate for an equal future and strive to end global gender inequality. When we invest in safety, education and rights of girls, we can break the cycle of discrimination and violence, and instead promote protection to their full enjoyment of human rights.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** Madam Speaker, dare I ask to leave—for leave to respond to the ministerial statement?

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

**Ms. Klassen:** Today on International Day of the Girl, we recognize the incredible contribution that girls make to our world.

\* (13:40)

More importantly, we need to recognize the disadvantages and discrimination women and girls face on a daily basis. There are 3.4 million girls in Canada, most of which will have a tough climb ahead of them. We only have to look around this Chamber to see the disparity at work. Women are more likely to hold a university degree, yet are less likely to participate in the labour market. Even when they do, they are earning 87 cents for every dollar a man would.

While we are fighting for basic equality, this government's cuts to services in Manitoba are alarming and are a disservice to women and girls throughout our province.

We must empower women to help end the violence against women and girls. We are seeing, every day, the great power that girls give to societies around the world when they are only given the chance.

Madam Speaker, girls' rights are human rights. Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, and the required

90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his ministerial statement.

### **Fire Prevention Week**

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Yesterday, I had the pleasure of officially launching Fire Prevention Week at Cecil Rhodes School here in Winnipeg.

Every year, we bring awareness to the seriousness of fire safety and protecting our loved ones from the devastation that can be caused by fires in our homes.

This year's theme for Fire Prevention Week is Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!

One of the most important lessons we need to ensure that all Manitobans are aware of is that one of the best ways to protect our families from a fire is to develop two escape routes from our homes should we ever need to do so.

Having and practising these escape plans will prepare everyone in our homes to escape both during the day and at night.

Smoke alarms are also a great way to help us—let us know that something is not right, and we need to always remember: if a smoke alarm goes off, make sure we get—all get outside and stay outside

Also yesterday afternoon, I was pleased to recognize John Maskerine, fire chief, Thompson Fire and Emergency Services, and Garry Bell, retired deputy fire chief, Brandon Fire and Emergency Services, who were both awarded the Mary Beth Dolin Meritorious Fire Service Award.

These medals are awarded to those who have demonstrated excellence, leadership, outstanding achievement, or to those whose contribution has substantially enhanced the safety of the people of Manitoba.

And, Madam Speaker, I would also like to thank the brave firefighters who come out when the alarms are called to fight these fires and keep our families safe.

Remember, every second counts: plan two ways out.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Fire Prevention Week is about raising awareness and educating families about how to reduce the risk of fires, about knowing what to do if they occur.

This summer, I personally experienced the tragedy that can follow a fire, as my son's house burned in a horrific event that claimed the life of one of his close friends.

In conversation with the fire inspector after the fire, it was his belief that a potential cause of the fire was the use of a six-outlet plug extender that was plugged into a normal dual receptacle. They warned me that, today, these are mainly made offshore where their production can be unregulated and potentially unsafe.

The products that cause these fires as soon—as an outlet extender are used extensively by families or seniors, particularly in older homes. Even though they have the CSA and UL labels on them, there is concern that many of these labels could be forged.

This year's theme for fire prevention week is Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out! In a fire, seconds count. They can mean the difference between escaping fire safely and experiencing a tragedy. This means that being prepared with early detection systems, such as working smoke alarms, can save lives of your family.

This year, there were also concerns over the Kisseynew, Granite Lake and Preston forest fires, and I am proud to know that both our firefighters and our communities responded to keep people safe. We need to work to educate families, students and workers on how to prevent fires and what to do when they occur, both in a building and outside.

And I, too, would like to recognize all the firefighters that fight structural fires as well as forest fires.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the ministerial statement.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** First of all, I would like to thank the many forest-fire fighters that came to the—our rescue this past summer. We had about 6,500 Manitoban evacuees whom had to flee their homes because of

this government's lack of action on emergency management plans for the past year.

In May I had repeatedly asked this government for plans for many of our northern communities. I warned that we were entering the forest fire season and, after the loss in Fort McMurray, we needed resources more than ever. The former minister of Infrastructure stood in this House and told me he would be ready when needed.

Well, Madam Speaker, there was nothing ready in those communities. Without the many heroic actions of my community joining with—joining together with each other, we would've been in serious trouble. We did have losses, and I don't want to cause attention to them, but we carry that pain as mothers.

This government refused to call a state of emergency or support evacuees in any meaningful way. Photo ops and Twitter remarks do not count as support, Premier (Mr. Pallister). Once again, my people are not priorities when it comes to this government.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SCE LifeWorks

**Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert):** Early on a dark, rainy morning—4:30 a.m., to be exact—during the Canada Summer Games recently hosted in the Winnipeg area, I had the pleasure of volunteering my services alongside one of the members of the grounds crew at Southwood Golf & Country Club. This team of 18 people works in the very early hours of each morning to prepare the course before the golfers hit the links soon after the sunrise.

My task was to assist my friend Nolan in his daily tasks, such as removing the markers from the tee boxes before the grass was cut, repairing divots, raking sand traps, clearing out garbage cans at each hole and emptying bags of grass from the lawnmowers. Nolan takes great pride in accomplishing his tasks every day and was very eager to train the new guy, demonstrating techniques, explaining the reasons for some of his tasks and correcting me when I didn't get it quite right.

Nolan is a special member of his work crew, and I had the pleasure of meeting this fine gentleman last year during Take Your MLA to Work Day. Nolan is a client of SCE LifeWorks, an organization whose mission is to support people with intellectual

disabilities to work and participate in the community. They tailor plans for each individual, identify and foster community-based opportunities and they provide reliable, flexible and individualized supports. SCE LifeWorks believes that all people deserve the opportunity to live and work in the community where they are respected and rewarded for their efforts, skills and accomplishments.

Since 2010, Canada has proclaimed October to be Disability Employment Awareness Month. In 2016, and again last week, the Province of Manitoba did the same. Today in the gallery we are honoured to have Mr. Nolan Vincent and family, plus representatives from SCE LifeWorks and Southwood Golf & Country Club.

Please join me in recognizing our guests for demonstrating the importance and the necessity of promoting the abilities of all members of our community.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Norbert.

**Mr. Reyes:** Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names entered into Hansard.

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

*Mr. Nolan Vincent, client, SCE LifeWorks; Mr. Maurice and Mrs. Pauline Knight, uncle and aunt of Nolan; Mr. Oly Backstrom, president and CEO, SCE LifeWorks; Ms. Lana Seniuk, supported employment services manager, SCE LifeWorks; Mr. Jeff Scott, general manager and COO, Southwood Golf & Country Club; Mr. Dustin How, superintendent, Southwood Golf & Country Club*

### St. Michael's Church 100th Anniversary

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture):** This summer I was pleased to attend the 100th anniversary celebration of Meleb's St. Michael's archangels Roman Catholic church, where I presented a plaque on behalf of the Province of Manitoba. It was a century of fellowship and friendship, marking a milestone celebration for the community.

In 1989, the church was transferred to the rural municipality of Armstrong, where it was declared a municipal historic site on October the 10th. A church heritage committee was struck to restore and preserve the building with help of grants, volunteer labour, donations, machinery and materials.

\* (13:50)

On September 30th, 1990, a Thanksgiving mass was celebrated in the newly restored church. The following year, a plaque was erected on the side of the church to mark the memory of the area's Polish settlers.

While a traditional service was held, the annual mass serves as a celebration of community and heritage. Along with my plaque presentation, a plaque was also presented by Mr. James Bezan, Member of Parliament for Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman, as well as congratulatory statements from the Honourable Jeff Wharton and the reeve for the RM of—municipality of Armstrong, Jack Cruise.

Following the proceedings, a short lunch was served at the nearby Meleb-Cummings schools reunion park, where family, friends and neighbours gathered as their ancestors once did over a century ago.

Madam Speaker, I would like to extend my gratitude and appreciation for all those who were involved in marking an historic event in the Meleb community, as well as efforts of the church heritage committee.

Joining us in the gallery today is committee member Anne Yanchyshyn, who just turned 90, chairman Elmer Keryluk, and Jeff Zaluski. I will ask the House to join me in congratulating in their continued efforts in celebrating their community heritage.

**Madam Speaker:** I would just like to remind all members that when referring to a member in this House that they be referred to by their constituency names.

#### **Misericordia Urgent Care Centre**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** On Tuesday, October 3rd, this Pallister government shut down our treasured Misericordia Urgent Care Centre. This is a huge blow to my Wolseley constituents and could have far-reaching negative impacts across our health-care system.

Coupled with the QuickCare clinic closing across the river from the Forks, the only nearby health facilities for my constituents needing urgent care are now the emergency rooms at Health Sciences Centre or St. Boniface. The Pallister government will have only itself to blame if many of the 39,000 patients who used to be able to go to Misericordia will end up in those waiting rooms.

I have challenged this government repeatedly to justify forcing inner-city residents, many of whom do not have their own vehicles, to travel to the suburbs for care that used to be available in the heart of our community. It's not as if injuries only happen during business hours, and the bus doesn't run 24-7. And, come to think of it, the Pallister government cut funding to public transit this year, as well.

Misericordia urgent care had the highest patient satisfaction, the highest staff satisfaction rating and operated without cost overruns, yet it's the first facility to be closed by this government, and the Misericordia CEO was not even notified in advance. Such disrespectful treatment of the people who make health care possible is simply unacceptable.

I am intensely proud of how our community rallied and spoke up against this damaging cut to front-line health care. Hundreds of my constituents signed petitions. They shared their personal stories with me and attended a rally I helped to organize in support of keeping urgent care in our community. We gave the Pallister government every opportunity to back away from a bad decision. It's not our fault they refused to listen.

Our efforts were rewarded with a small silver lining. The government did eventually agree that eye patients needing urgent care will still be seen at Misericordia. On behalf of the several thousand people who will benefit from that and the health-care providers who will provide needed care, I thank the citizen-activists for raising their voice against this government.

Thank you.

#### **Parker Wetlands**

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I rise today to pay tribute to those who have rallied to protect the Parker wetlands in west Fort Garry.

For many years the Parker Wetlands Conservation Committee, a group of local activists, worked tirelessly to preserve this valuable green space. More recently, others have come forward to assert Metis claims to an area once known as Rooster Town. Both groups, along with local residents, dog lovers and naturalists, have fought heroically and courageously to save the Parker wetlands for important ecological, indigenous and recreational reasons.

In its natural state, the Parker wetlands were composed of broad swaths of grasslands and framed

by lush woodlands. There were flora and fauna special to our prairie landscape with well-travelled trails for walking and hiking. In short, it was a beautiful oasis of green space and a much-prized sanctuary away from the travails of modern life.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, about a third of the Parker wetlands were bulldozed this summer, leaving a cold, ugly, crosscut landscape in its wake.

What's more, the situation appears to be going from bad to worse. Recently, the Rooster Town activists were removed by court order from the land, the bulldozers have returned and the fate of what remains of the Parker wetlands hangs in the balance.

And yet many questions still remain. How did an area once designated as ecologically sensitive by the City of Winnipeg become fit for development? How did this designation disappear? And how was it that this once sensitive green space was swapped for a brownfield? And what happened to the RCMP investigation of this land swap? There are many questions, but few answers.

What's worse, Madam Speaker, is the Pallister government is complicit in this sad state of affairs. In March of 2016 the provincial government appointed a consultant to review the situation and make recommendations toward a better, more productive outcome. This report has never seen the light of day.

Madam Speaker, I call on the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) to release the report today. It's likely too little, too late, but at least we'll know what might have been had the government been open and transparent from the start. Who knows? It might even offer some guidance towards saving what's left of the Parker wetlands.

### **Woodydell Housing Complex Community Garden**

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge hard work and dedication of residents in my community. A group of residents at the Woodydell housing complex came together to accomplish a common goal: developing a community garden on their property. They set their eyes on a piece of land which was slated to be paved over and turned into parking spaces.

After multiple meetings with the residents they had permission to transform the greenspace into a community garden. It wasn't easy work, though. Volunteers spent hours cleaning up the neglected land, carrying bags of garbage to the trash, pulling

out rugs which had been buried under leaves and debris, and creating an environment fit for a garden.

This work took quite some time, which delayed planting. This, combined with a hot, dry summer, were not ideal gardening circumstances.

Despite the challenges the garden members were able to successfully harvest a—sorry—a variety of vegetables from their plots. The opportunity to have freshly grown local vegetables was a delight for many.

In addition to providing fresh vegetables, the community garden also worked to increase social interaction within the community. As residents were walking by, there would be friendly questions about what gardeners were doing or what was being grown. The garden served as an interaction point for the community. Children would always be looking to see if they could spot new vegetables growing and learned a bit about where their food comes from.

The program has been a wonderful success and I want to congratulate the residents and volunteers on their hard work and contributions to the garden.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Introduction of Guests**

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, we did have some students in the gallery.

We did have seated in the public gallery, from Garden City Collegiate 50 grade 9 students under the direction of Brooklyn Linnic and Blake Illchyna, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), but they have obviously had to leave the House.

But we did welcome them here and it was nice to have the students here.

### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **Changes to Health-Care Services Impact on Patient Care**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the Premier can't deny responsibility for his cuts to the health-care system. We know that he is concerned about the money and he is forgetting about the people his cuts affect.

We've heard of the tens of millions of dollars the Premier ordered RHAs and CancerCare to cut from their budgets. We've now also learned that the Premier, with a stroke of the pen at the highest level,



was directing the millions of cuts to our health-care system. Information obtained through a FIPPA request shows all major proposals for cuts were sent to the Priorities and Planning Committee of Cabinet for approval.

The Premier has decided whether urgent-care centres would stay open or closed, whether CancerCare would eliminate positions, whether EMS stations would close.

The Premier needs to tell Manitobans directly: Does he take responsibility for the millions in health-care cuts he ordered across the province?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I'll gladly accept responsibility along with my colleagues on this side of the House for fixing a broken system if the member opposite will take responsibility for breaking it.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, we now know that the Premier and his inner circle was making these cuts. It wasn't health-care professionals; it wasn't management; it wasn't experts. It was the Premier and his senior political staff.

To lay out the case, I'm going to table a series of documents here, though we have the Premier's words on the record today.

\* (14:00)

This document showed that starting in February, tabling it now, that the Province ordered \$83 million in cuts to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. The WRHA was ordered to send these cuts to a task force for review.

Now we've learned, because of this new document, that the task force then sent these cuts to the Priorities and Planning Committee of Cabinet. The Premier is the head of P and P.

So the paper trail is clear: the Premier has directed the cuts of tens of millions of dollars from the health-care system, meaning fewer emergency rooms, fewer health-care aides and fewer services around the province.

We know that the Premier is accepting responsibility for these cuts, but how much did patient care factor into his decision-making process?

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate that the member is now just at a beginning his learning curve,

and educating himself on the processes of government. I appreciate the fact also that he understands that we are investing over \$500 million more in this fiscal year in our health-care system than the previous NDP administration ever invested in the health-care system, and I also appreciate the fact that the same processes that worked to break the system were followed by the previous administration that we are now using to fix it.

Madam Speaker, all that being said, the system was broken. The system was unsustainable. The system had the worst record of any evaluated by the Canadian Institute for Health Information. It was 10th, dead last, under the previous administration, and the disagreement we have fundamentally, the member opposite and I, is this: we think that we should fix it and he thinks it should stay broken.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the disagreement is that we believe that we should invest in keeping Manitobans healthy at home by making further investments in Pharmacare, mental health services in the community and primary prevention so that we could—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —make more investments in acute-care services. What we disagree with the Premier about is that we are not going to cut our way out of the challenges in the health-care system. Face it.

So we've established the chain of command. We have identified who directed these decisions. But what was underlying the rationale for these cuts? From the outside, it appears as though it was a secret KPMG report on health care. Now, we know that the Premier and his political staff are focused on the money, but what about patient care? Premier has been unclear in the House, to date, on this matter.

So can he explain to Manitobans clearly how did he take patient care into account when he made his decision to cut?

**Mr. Pallister:** Perhaps the member'd like to reflect for a moment on how the previous administration took patient care into account when they doubled our provincial debt over a six-year period. Perhaps he'd like to take into account the reality that borrowing \$1 billion to provide—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** –that borrowing \$1 billion and running a deficit, which is what was handed to us the year after that government left–*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** –that borrowing \$1 billion means that someone else has to pay it back plus interest, and that would be our children and grandchildren.

Arguing against sustainability, Madam Speaker, is what the member opposite is doing. We want to make our health-care system work better, we want to make it sustainable and we will by listening to the experts and acting on their advice—something the previous administration failed to do and placed our health-care system bottom of the barrel, dead last, while doubling our provincial debt on the backs of our children and grandchildren.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** So, again, I was asking for an indication of how the Premier took patient care into account, and he responded with talk of debt and deficit and money, which is all that we've heard in his answers in this half of session. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** So we've seen this government's plan for cuts, and the only evidence that we have seen so far is that it is hurting families in Manitoba. Patients are being hurt and will no longer be able to access physiotherapy after surgery. Families are being hurt who will no longer be able to travel with a relative to receive care and it's also hurting women who can no longer—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** –access the Mature Women's Centre for advanced diagnoses of life-threatening ailments.

What evidence did the Premier base his decision making on? Will the Premier show us the evidence on which he bases his cuts and where is the evidence that his plan won't make things worse?

**Mr. Pallister:** I would be forced, Madam Speaker, by the naive preamble of the member opposite to remind him that we pay for health care. Oh, we also borrow money to pay for health care thanks to the mess we were handed by the previous administration. And that money has to be paid back in the form of tax dollars taken from working families, taken from struggling small businesses, taken from Manitobans.

So, Madam Speaker, unless he thinks the money comes from a money tree or is going to be delivered by a fairy godmother or comes from a rainbow someplace or a unicorn, he's missing the reality that people have to pay for health care somehow.

Madam Speaker, the difference between the member, and his colleagues opposite, and us is that we understand that health care needs to be delivered tomorrow too, that it needs to be delivered next year too. And we understand that making it sustainable is a worthy goal, and we will make it sustainable while making the necessary half a billion dollars of additional investment—this year alone—more than the NDP ever did.

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

### **KPMG Health-Care Report Request to Release**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** If the Premier took the time to talk to health-care professionals here in Manitoba, he would hear them say that when we invest in keeping people healthy at home, we save money on health care long term. When we invest in mental health, primary prevention and Pharmacare, we save money long term. When we cut, cut, cut today, that only costs us more in repeat hospitalizations and visits to the emergency room down the line.

Now, the Premier's plan for health-care cuts in the province seems to be directed by this KPMG report on health care. We've asked to see this. The minister in charge said that revealing this report would confuse Manitobans; it would be too much for Manitobans to handle. But we think that they deserve to see what directed this decision-making process.

Will the Premier release the KPMG health report today?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, again, I recognize that the member wants Manitobans to wait; he said so. He wants Manitobans to wait for health-care reform because it scares him and frightens him. And he's using that fear within himself to try to frighten Manitoba health-care workers, Manitoba families, Manitoba patients.

But, Madam Speaker, it is that fear which will stand in the way of progress. I know, because the previous government was afraid to make those changes. They were afraid to make the changes that they were advised to make by experts that they

themselves hired. The price of doing the same old thing, said former-President Bill Clinton—the price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change.

Madam Speaker, we accept the challenges of change. The members opposite clearly do not. That's why we're in government. We'll act to improve the health system.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** To also paraphrase Bill Clinton: to those Manitobans who disagree with this Premier's cuts to health care, I feel your pain.

Now, we know that these cuts are being based on the KPMG health—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —review. Now, the other KPMG report that we have seen, which focused on controlling costs in departments other than health, was all about the money, which suggests to the average Manitoban watching from the outside that the KPMG report on health was also focused on controlling costs too.

We think the quality of care that somebody gets when they go to the hospital should come first. And we also believe that the Premier should show which guides his decision-making process to the average Manitoban.

We don't need to wait; that's what the Premier says. So don't wait. Reveal the report that KPMG authored on health to Manitobans today.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I'll let the member's own personal record demonstrate his compassion, Madam Speaker. He says he feels Manitobans' pain, but that's not what we're here to do. We're here to address their pain, to reduce it, to solve it, not to just feel it.

And so, Madam Speaker, compassion is not simply mouthing the words of sympathy; it's actually—it's acting to make a system work that was broken. It's acting to shorten wait times that were far too long. It's acting to reduce ambulance fees that were far too high. It's acting to give people the test results so the cancer's at stage 1 when they get the answer back, not stage 3.

\* (14:10)

This is action that demonstrates compassion. Those are empty words and platitudes, nothing more.

### **Adults with Disabilities KPMG Funding Recommendations**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** KPMG reports that the number of adults with disabilities receiving support jumped 11 per cent—will jump 11 per cent in five years and the number of adults with disabilities will grow to over 9,000 in less than 10 years.

Does the minister believe funding must increase in order to properly support the growing number of adults with disabilities?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** This government is absolutely committed to supporting vulnerable Manitobans.

We know under the previous NDP administration the costs for CLDS is something that increased by upwards of 34 per cent.

We have a strong plan in place, the Building on Abilities plan to ensure it's a people-centred approach that will ensure people get the right supports in the right time.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Madam Speaker, recommendations are alarming; the KPMG recommendations are alarming. They advise that the minister should implement a sliding income scale to determine which adults with disabilities, I quote, are most in need.

We know that every person, no matter their ability or income level, deserves supports they need to live a full and happy life.

Will this minister increase disability supports?

**Mr. Fielding:** This government has taken strong action in terms of protecting vulnerable citizens. We have a strong plan that's in place called the Building on Abilities, and that will match people's abilities in terms of services and supports that are there.

Under the previous NDP administration, we know, that wasn't there. The costs were escalating yet people weren't getting the resources that they needed.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Madam Speaker, the minister should not be allowed to equivocate on such serious issues. Manitobans deserve to know.

KPMG recommends the minister define the department's goal to let—to help adults live and participate in the community. Adults with disabilities are telling us. They say quality housing, accessible health care, a fulfilling job and a role in their community is living fully.

What supports does this minister think are unnecessary? Manitobans deserve to know now.

Will this minister income test disability services?

**Mr. Fielding:** The KPMG report is advice to government. We get advice all the time. We're going to—good recommendations that we'll work on. We're also going to work on an effective plan we think we have in place. In fact, it was a plan that the administration supported in the—while they were in government in terms of building on ability.

We think this is a people-centred approach that's going to work for people with intellectual disabilities, and work to sustain the program for the long term.

#### **Small Class Size Initiative Government Intention**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Parents across this province have been clear that they want their children to have more one-on-one time with their teachers.

During the last election even the PCs agreed with the NDP small class size initiative. And on April 14th they wrote a letter to Seven Oaks School Division saying that small class sizes are a factor that improves educational opportunities for young students. Yet now for the first time in a generation the ratio of teachers to students is getting worse. Parents want class sizes—small class sizes. The Conservatives in opposition said that it helps students.

So why has this minister walked away from parents by starving our schools of necessary funding?

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

During the last year we have seen phenomenal growth in the population of this province, a very good thing for Manitoba, and we are pleased to be part of that. And we've also given the school divisions the flexibility that they ask for and that they need in terms of managing class size or putting more

teachers in a classroom to deal with the needs of the individual students.

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

#### **K-12 School Closure Inquiry KPMG Report Recommendations**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, the reality is that class sizes are growing as a result of this government's short-sighted cuts, even though the PCs agreed that small class sizes improve educational opportunities for young students. School divisions are being starved of funding, and schools are being forced to cut services. And now the secretive KPMG report is going a step further by calling for the closure of schools across this province.

I ask the minister: Will he commit to keeping our schools open or is he, like the Premier (Mr. Pallister), only concerned about the bottom line?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I can tell you that I am concerned about the outcome for students in Manitoba, and the previous government took us from No. 5 in Canada to dead last in terms of outcomes. Those are the kinds of outcomes that Manitoba parents do not want to see from a government.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** I didn't hear an answer from this minister, so maybe I'll try this again.

The KPMG report has called for the government to develop a process for the closure of schools, and we've seen how this government has handled the KPMG report so far. First, it hid it for months from the public, and then it's been quietly implementing every cut suggested by this document, all the while just characterizing it as just advice. But we know that it's not just advice, Madam Speaker; it's about this minister's own actions.

Will he come clean and tell us whether he's developing a process for closing schools, K to 12, across this province?

**Mr. Wishart:** The member knows full well the previous government also had a process for closing schools. They just didn't have the guts to ever do it.

Madam Speaker, what we're concerned about is good, quality education for Manitoba students, and that's where we'll focus on in the future.

### **Health-Care Funding Levels Impact on Front-Line Services**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Speaker, a letter obtained through freedom of information confirms that the Health Minister's plan has little to do with improving patient care and a lot to do with cutting costs.

The government directed all regional health authorities and provincial health organizations to ensure that no less than two thirds of all the budget cuts foisted upon them must come from allocative efficiencies. Well, allocative efficiencies is actually Conservative code for cutting health-care services that were provided before. I presume that cutting out patient occupational therapy and physiotherapy in five Winnipeg hospitals is an allocative efficiency. Cutting the Mature Women's Centre is an allocative efficiency.

Why is this minister forcing cuts to real services to real Manitobans?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** The plan of which the member speaks is the plan that was developed by the hand-picked consultant of the NDP government. The NDP government hired Dr. Peachey to look at clinical services in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba. They did that because they knew this system was broken. They had broken it over their 17 years of government.

Dr. Peachey reported with a number of different things to improve the system; those are being undertaken now. When Dr. Peachey was checked in with lately, he said, I think across this country people are going to talk about the Manitoba model. I think you are doing things that are original, that are logical and that you can take right down to primary care. That was his consultant who said that, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Madam Speaker, I'll table the government's letter so perhaps the Health Minister can focus. This letter directs health authorities to find at least two thirds of the savings by cutting programs and services which might not be offered by some

other provinces or even in other portions of the province or covered by the Canada Health Act.

\* (14:20)

The Canada Health Act covers only a bare minimum of services. There are plenty of other services which Manitobans need to be healthy and thrive. For example, lactation consultants, which this government's already cut, would not be required under the Canada Health Act, but there's no question as to the health and well-being and long-term benefits of those consultants providing services to Manitoba families.

Why is this government directing cuts to existing services which are crucial to maintaining the quality of life that all Manitobans deserve?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, I remember when the member was in government. When he was in Cabinet, he and his government at one point famously said that flat was the new up. Now it turns out that up is the new down.

There's been an increase of funding, Madam Speaker, when it comes to every health authority in Manitoba. Every health region in Manitoba, in rural and in Winnipeg, are all getting an increase. In fact, not only are they getting an increase, they will all receive record funding from this government.

Now, we know funding isn't the only solution. If that was the only solution, the problem would have been long ago fixed. In fact, it got worse under that government. So we know there are other things that have to be done. We're doing those things to improve patient care, and we will be successful, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Swan:** I would suggest the Minister of Health read the letter that I've tabled, from his deputy minister, directing health-care authorities across this province to cut front-line services—the exact thing this Premier (Mr. Pallister) promised that they would not do.

This minister's race to the bottom is putting the care of Manitoba's families, Manitoba's seniors, at risk. He's slashed millions of dollars from regional health authorities, and now he's given them the impossible task of choosing which health-care services they have to amputate. He's threatening a health-care tax or even more cuts, privatizing home

care, cancelling doctor recruitment programs and closing down EMS stations.

Health care isn't just a service. New Democrats believe that it is a right, a universal right.

When will this minister stop the cuts and commit to providing the services that Manitobans need and Manitobans deserve?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, I would encourage the member to read the budget. If he would read the budget, he would see that there's record funding going to every regional health authority in Manitoba. Perhaps the funding under his government was so low it caused him to rebel from his own government. Maybe that's why he eventually left the Cabinet, because the funding was so low. We have record funding.

When his hand-picked consultant—his hand-picked consultant—had a chance to weigh in on what we're doing in Manitoba he said, Manitoba is in a leadership role, they've got the right pieces, they've got the right people.

We're the right people; they were the wrong people, Madam Speaker.

### **Innovation Superclusters Initiative National Competition**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, yesterday was a sad day for Manitobans and for Manitoba's economy. Manitoba was completely shut out from the supercluster competition. Superclusters are job-creating regions with strong economies like Silicon Valley.

Companies like Sightline and the made-in-Manitoba consortium, EMILI, the Enterprise Machine Intelligence and Learning Initiative, worked hard, but there was not enough support from the Manitoba government, and Manitoba's effort fell short.

I ask the Premier: What are his plans in the wake of Manitoba's disastrous performance in the national supercluster competition, as seen yesterday?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Get a new federal government, Madam Speaker.

We've stood in support of Manitoba applicants under this program; we'll continue to, and certainly, I'd encourage the member to do the same. I think that

if we work co-operatively with the federal government, we'll get the support that we deserve—that we deserve—on the basis of merit—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Clearly, the member or the minion for Minto doesn't want to rise in his place and support us in our efforts to get industry and jobs here in Manitoba out of some peculiar partisan disinterest, Madam Speaker; that is his case.

But I am certainly encouraging all members to join with us and encourage the federal government to support worthwhile projects such as the EMILI project.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, there were four superclusters for western Manitoba, and the Premier performed so poorly that we lost the one that should have been Manitoba's.

Machine learning and high-power computing can improve business and health-care productivity. EMILI was formed with the vision to make Manitoba the most advanced agricultural economy in the world. And yet, this Premier didn't do enough. He wasn't a team player. He didn't recognize that the field is fast-moving. He failed by not investing in critical infrastructure in our universities and not investing in EMILI, provincially, for the last year and a half.

Why did the Premier fail to get a supercluster based in Manitoba for Manitobans?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I recognize the leadership aspirations of the member may be making him overenthusiastic in his accusations, Madam Speaker, but I would hope that he is as full of praise when we win as he is full of disdain when we lose.

I would encourage him to take a more mature and responsible approach to outcomes than this. The fact of the matter is we're not going to win them all, but we're going to try, Madam Speaker. And we tried hard on this, and we'll keep trying.

Now, as far as the federal government's decision-making process, perhaps the member would like to inquire as to their priorities and criteria. We have. And in terms of the member's placing blame, Madam Speaker, I would again encourage the member to stand up to the federal government

against \$2.2 billion of lost revenue for health care in this province rather than just sit on his hands and be quiet about it.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, the Premier has played sports competitively in basketball, baseball, curling, and he understands how competition works. He knows to be super competitive when he really wants to be.

Now, Gary Doer led an all-party task force to Ottawa over initiatives of critical importance to Manitoba. But our current Premier has either lost his competitive spirit or he doesn't know how to build a team to compete. There is so much innovative talent in Manitoba and we need a Premier who will fight to showcase it.

What—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** —will the Premier do now to improve after his woeful failure to get a supercluster centred in our province?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, Madam Speaker, most young athletes, most young boys and girls, learn when they're nine or 10 not to blame their teammates when things go south. But I guess the member didn't get that.

I would just say this: our team on this side of the House is a team, Madam Speaker, ready to focus on the issues that affect Manitobans, ready to achieve progress, ready to work together. And I have encouraged, repeatedly and sincerely, other members of the House regardless of their party to join with us in our efforts. The member has chosen not to.

I'll put my record on building winning teams and being part of winning teams against his any day, Madam Speaker.

#### **Federal Carbon Tax Status of Legal Opinion**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Thank you, Madam Speaker—[interjection]

Madam Speaker, the Trudeau government wants to impose higher taxes on Manitoba business and families without asking for their input. Our province has sought independent, expert legal advice on whether the federal government has the ability to impose their carbon tax on Manitobans instead of our

made-in-Manitoba approach. Unlike members opposite, our government is exploring options to ensure that we're doing what is in the best interests of Manitobans.

Could the Minister of Justice update this House on the status of the expert legal opinion whether the federal government can impose their Trudeau tax on our province?

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

Today, we released an expert legal opinion from the University of Manitoba's Dr. Bryan Schwartz. The legal opinion concludes that the federal government does have the authority to legislate its backstop proposal on carbon taxes. But there are potential limits to this, Madam Speaker. Should they seek to impose their backstop on Manitoba after we implement our own green plan, Dr. Schwartz concludes that we could credibly argue the backstop measures discriminate against Manitoba.

\* (14:20)

Madam Speaker, he also concludes that Manitoba undoubtedly has the authority to adopt its own carbon pricing measures and, to that end, we look forward to presenting Manitobans with our made-in-Manitoba green plan very soon.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

#### **Inuit Art Centre Funding Government Intention**

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** The Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, I think, has directed millions in cuts to Manitoba's arts and culture organizations, and we are still waiting to hear whether her government will pay its fair share of the Inuit Art Centre. The site has been cleared and work has begun.

Will the minister tell us today whether her government will commit to funding the Inuit Art Centre? Yes or no?

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** Thank you to the member opposite. I would like to congratulate him on his new critic responsibility, and I would also like to put on record comments with regard to the Canada Summer Games that we recently hosted here in Manitoba. I am so

proud to be able to say that, in fact, they were the very best Canada Summer Games in history, and I would like to congratulate the athletes. They really worked hard, put their heart and soul into all of the games and, in fact, brought home more medals than ever before.

Also, congratulations to all of the parents and the coaches—

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

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

**Mr. Marcelino:** I remember Wallace + Wallace Fences and Derksen plumbing and Akman Construction and many others are on the job site already. And, Madam Speaker, the Inuit Art Centre is one of a kind. It is important to Winnipeg, and it's supported by both the federal and city governments.

Deferment and delay of this project are inexcusable. Time is up for this government to tell the public: When will they reveal their decision? Or, do we have to wait?

**Mrs. Cox:** Thanks again to the member opposite.

My time was up, so I would, in fact, like to continue my thanks with regard to the Canada Summer Games and just say thank you so much to the parents, to the coaches and especially to the administration, but, most importantly, to all of those 6,000 volunteers who worked so hard and so generously donated of their time. So thank you so much for making them the best Canada Summer Games in history.

Our government recognizes the importance of culture, arts, the artists, the performers and the film and music industry. They enrich our province and also are a huge economic benefit to our province. I am so proud that this government is committed—

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

The honourable member for—*[interjection]*  
Order.

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

**Mr. Marcelino:** It was supposed to be only one question, but this is my third: Will the Inuit Art Centre be funded by this government? Yes or no?  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Cox:** I would like to just say that we are so proud to commit \$67 million in grants and film credits to the industry here in Manitoba. We know that it's so important, a \$1.7-billion contribution—  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Cox:** —to our economy and 22,000 jobs that they provide right here in Manitoba, so, so proud of that.

And I would also just like to say that recently I had the opportunity to bring greetings to the INSURGENCE/RESURGENCE, which is the largest indigenous and Inuit art collection here in Manitoba at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. We're very proud to host that event, and I look forward to having further discussions with those organizations.

#### **Northern Farm Flooding Funding for Drainage**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** Roughly 25 producers farm of about 100,000 acres around The Pas and OCN was affected by flooding. This year, unprecedented flooding and excess moisture caused 95 per cent of the land to lay fallow. Instead of helping northern farmers, this government had decided to cap its funding to pumping stations and force The Pas and the surrounding area to make up that difference.

Can the Minister for Infrastructure please tell the House why they decided to cut corners when northern farmers are hurting?

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

We just got off a wonderful Thanksgiving. I think we should member that we shake—to thank the farmers for where their food comes from.

We know last fall we went into a very wet year and it carried over until this spring. And the member is absolutely right: 5 per cent of the crop was planted this year and, certainly, there is programs in place to assist those farmers in times of need.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** Northern producers feel this government is breaking its promises. Local farmer Gary Herman says, quote: This government wants to cut back on our funding for operating costs that keep



us dry. They are letting us down, bottom line. End quote.

Madam Speaker, limiting drainage funding for any municipality is dangerous.

Will the Minister for Infrastructure commit to making sure that The Pas and any constituency that suffers from flooding will have the necessary resources to combat flooding?

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the member for the question.

We did meet with council and a number of the farmers from that area. We know that this is a serious issue for our farm folks up there.

Managing water is one of our projects that we're 'consultating' on right now as we go forward with our policy ideas. We know that's something the previous government did not do well. We're committed to making sure we do get it right, and we will get it right, Madam Speaker.

We understand the needs for farmers and, of course, we just developed our next policy framework with the federal government, which will help us get the best deals for our farm families.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** A briefing note obtained through Freedom of Information says that cost sharing for pumping stations in The Pas will set a precedent for overall pumping operations in Manitoba.

Can the Minister for Infrastructure tell the House, who did he consult with prior to this decision, and will he reverse this unsustainable decision?

**Mr. Eichler:** We are committed to consulting with our farm families, not only in The Pas, but right across Manitoba.

One of the decisions that we made in our next policy framework discussion was business-risk management, and this is one of the tools that the farmers want to be able to be relied on to be—so they can have that bankable, predictable, sustainable growth that they need for their sector.

We'll continue to work for our farm families.

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

#### MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Yes, Madam, I want to bring forward the matter of a privilege, a

matter of privilege that I am not allowed to represent to my constituents by asking the questions.

And previously I used to ask the eighth question. Now I am allowed to ask the 10th question every two weeks. It was already anyway discriminatory between caucus members and independent member already. But it had gone further. I'm now—now I'm allowed to only ask a 10th question which I won't be able to ask.

\* (14:40)

Why this prejudice is there? All members are elected by the constituents and they should have equal time, equal rights, everything they should have equal. Independent should be independent and not the slave of the two House leaders.

And I will ask, Madam Speaker, to adjust my time accordingly and I would like to have proportionate—proportionately time to represent my constituents. I come from the constituency where it was a group—many immigrants and different cultures. It's very important for me to represent those cultures.

And I am again appalled by having House leaders from one of the—asking a visible minority and I'm being put down, and other visible minorities—I'm let—being put down—not to allow to speak in this House.

I have every right to speak in this House. I demand that I should be given equal proportionate time and I should be allowed to represent my constituents. My constituents—most enthusiastic constituents, who signed 900 members, who gave 87 delegates. They are really politically involved, but they're being shut off through not giving me time, and I ask, Madam Speaker, the House leaders should think thoroughly and they should not have this system of discrimination on the basis of whether you are independent or whether you are a party member or you are caucus member.

So I ask again, all the member of this House, not only the House leaders, think about that. We are elected by the constituents and to represent them and equally, they need time through their MLAs, and please provide some. That had no precedent, and I will say we have to change many precedents that had been discriminatory if that had been precedent. Let we make new precedent. Let we give fair chance to everybody. Let we have fair turns. Let we have fair employees. These other caucus MLAs, they have people to write their speeches. They have people to write their questions. In our case we don't—I don't

have that privilege. That privilege should be there because if I speak out of—just without writing and immediately media will jump on me if I just a little bit—I say a little bit the wrong thing.

So, I need the same kind of opportunity all the other MLAs have. Please think about that.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the—first of all, I would point out to the member that when moving a matter of privilege that there should be a motion and a seconder, and that does need to be sent up in a written motion.

Prior to commenting on this, though, I would recognize other members to speak, but I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, there would be a solution here which has been used in the past, and that would be that if the MLA for Kildonan has the 10th question that he gets to ask, guaranteed—the question and two supplementaries.

Alternatively, he could be moved up in the order and have a question which is in the eighth position, or something like that.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate and I look forward to your ruling on this matter.

I would just like to add a couple of points, though, to the member's suggestions.

First of all, we look forward to debating his resolution next week. He raised a lot of those points that are in that resolution. And, second of all, the rules committee of the House will be reconvening this fall and I think it's incumbent upon each member of the House to make their suggestions to the House leaders in terms of suggestions going forward in terms of how we could make this place work better and improve the rules.

Clearly, we're working through a new set of rules. We're learning what does work and what doesn't work, but we certainly are seeking input from all members of the House in terms of how we can make these rules more effective.

**Madam Speaker:** I think I have probably heard—oh, the honourable member for Assiniboia—or, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** So, just—if I can just put a couple of words in respect of this point of privilege.

So first off, I would say that I'm not sure if this is the earliest opportunity to have presented this to the House today.

The other thing that I would share with the member is that, as was discussed in your office, Madam Speaker, several weeks back, we are in a very different position right now, having dealt—having to deal with a scenario that we've actually never had to deal with in respect of the amount of independents that we do have.

And while I appreciate that the member seems to think that it's something personal against him, indeed it was not. And, in fact, what I'd like to just kind of share was that this was the exact same scenario—as you are well aware, Madam Speaker—that we had in December of 2016, prior to when we had the former member for Point Douglas. And so we just reverted back to what we originally had in respect of questions one to five and eight to 10.

And so we were trying to make allowances for all the independents, as was discussed and agreed upon yourself, the Government House Leader and the member for River Heights in respect of allowing equitable time for both the member for Assiniboia and the member who's just raised a 'poist'—a point of privilege. So it was, I think, at that time agreed that it was the best scenario to ensure that there was equity to be able to ensure that there was a question.

So I agree with the Government House Leader in respect of also the rules committee. We do have something that's going to be coming up as well, that there'll be opportunities for input in that.

So miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I think I have heard sufficient argument.

If the honourable member for Assiniboia's rising because he feels that there is some point that has not been touched upon, I will hear him very briefly. But I think we should move on.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** Madam Speaker, the point I am going to raise is a reflection on the point—a rebuttal of what has been made.

I was not involved in any of these discussions. Why was one independent MLA involved in making the rules and not the other independent MLAs? We just heard the House leader for the opposition explain to us what has happened over the summer. So it appears that the two House leaders got together, found an independent MLA and decided to make the rules.

We also heard the Opposition House Leader state that they were using the old rules. We heard the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) say they're using the new rules. Which is it?

Now, if they're using the new rules, okay. Each one of us are here not as members of parties but as individuals. First among equals. Madam Speaker, if you go to—into the literature of parliamentary practice and procedure, you will find that the rights of individual MLAs are just as important as the privilege of this institution.

Madam Speaker, on one hand, they're saying that it was consulted, and then on the next, they are saying that they excluded us, myself and the member for Maples. And, I will add, this is the first time I've become aware of this situation. So I suppose in order to meet the 'prisha facia' criteria—prima facie, this would be my first opportunity as a matter of privilege myself.

So in my questions, I guess I'll raising a matter of privilege, as well, because whatever affects this member—

\* (14:50)

**Madam Speaker:** I will just remind the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) that he does not have the option of raising a matter of privilege while we are still discussing the matter of privilege by the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran).

So if the member for Assiniboia has further comments, we would hear them. But I would urge him to please reflect on whether or not he wants to add anything new to this discussion. Otherwise, we will move on with my ruling.

**Mr. Fletcher:** Madam Speaker, of course you're correct; can't have a matter of privilege within a response of a matter of privilege, but there may be another matter of privilege coming up.

Madam Speaker, the fact is that the rule—to say that people were consulted is false. I didn't even

know what my status was as an MLA until—well, I still haven't received anything from the House leader—

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

I would ask the member of Assiniboia to please deal directly with the matter of privilege that is before us, raised by the honourable member for The Maples, and not drift off into some other topics that are irrelevant to his point of order.

**Mr. Fletcher:** Madam Speaker, the House leaders, the Leader of the Opposition, were representing their respective groups in these discussions. In my case, it was unclear to me and everyone involved knows what group I was actually in. So, I've still not yet received any—I know it's relevant, Madam Speaker, because how can I be represented if I'm not in a caucus, and was I in a caucus or wasn't I? I haven't got anything in writing from the caucus.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I have just indicated to the member that he is drifting from the topic of the matter of privilege that is on the floor, and I would ask him to please directly get to his comments, because I believe I have heard sufficiently enough to rule on this, unless he has something new and different to add to the comments that have already been raised by other members.

**Mr. Fletcher:** The point is this: the member from The Maples was clearly not consulted, nor was I. We need to work together in this place. The number of independents is irrelevant. That's not our fault, that's others'. It's the people who need to be represented, not the parties.

**Madam Speaker:** On the matter of privilege, raised by the honourable member for The Maples, I would like to inform the House that a matter concerning the methods by which the House proceeds in the conduct of business is a matter of order, not a matter of privilege.

Joseph Maingot, in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, states on page 14 that allegations of breach of privilege by a member in the House that amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are, by their very nature, matters of order. He also states on page 223 of the same edition, a breach of the standing orders or a failure to follow an established practice would invoke a point of order rather than a question of privilege.

On this basis, I would therefore rule that the honourable member does not have a prima facie case of matter of privilege, but I would also indicate that when we are discussing how the House proceeds and our practices in the House, I would urge the members to have a discussion with the House leaders and that is where that discussion needs to take place, as I have just indicated, and it is not a matter of privilege to be discussed on the floor of this House.

Petitions—

#### Point of Order

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

**Mr. Fletcher:** Madam Speaker, you may be surprised to learn—or, others—pardon me.

Madam Speaker, it turns out that the member from The Maples, myself and perhaps other independents or future independents are deprived of their equal rights under the rules, and this is counter to the principles of this place, the spirit in which we come to exchange ideas and questions—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I have just indicated to the member and it has been long-time practice in this House that when we are discussing these types of issues, these are negotiations that take place behind the scenes, by the House leaders, and they are not to be discussed on the floor of this Chamber.

That has been a long long-standing practice of this House, and I am going to uphold that practice. And those discussions need to take place with the House leaders. And I would encourage those meetings to take place. We probably do have to have a look at the different order that needs to perhaps proceed in question period, but I have ruled now that these discussions will not take place on the floor. No other Speaker has allowed that and I am not going to allow it either—that these discussions need to take place, with the House leaders, at a different time and place, and that we will now proceed with petitions.

**An Honourable Member:** On a point of order.

#### Point of Order

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

**Mr. Fletcher:** Madam Speaker, what you've just described about the House leaders meeting, that has never been shared with me. I've never been asked to

be part of these negotiations, never been a part of these negotiations in a formal manner, or informal. Not one word was said to me before this session started.

So, to say—with all due respect, it is impossible for someone to know what is—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I would indicate that the member appears to be challenging the ruling that I have just made and he is reflecting on my ruling and those are not acceptable practices in this House. I would urge the member, as I have just indicated, that these discussions need to occur at a different time and place—and the member has already on a couple of instances this afternoon, and I have allowed it. But I am not allowing it anymore.

I have made a ruling, and he is reflecting on that ruling. And, if he's indicating that he's challenging this ruling, which is a long-standing practice in Manitoba, that would—[interjection]—and it's just been pointed out to me that he cannot challenge my ruling on a point of order. And I have just ruled that he is out of order.

### PETITIONS

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to petitions.

#### Taxi Industry Regulation

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\* (15:00)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of 'mani' as follows—we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed, many concerned citizens.

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

#### **Seven Oaks General Hospital Emergency Room**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government has announced the closures of three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in the city of Winnipeg, including closing down the emergency room at Seven Oaks General Hospital.

(2) The closures come on the heels of the closing of a nearby QuickCare clinic, as well as cancelled plans for ACCESS centres and personal-care homes, such as Park Manor, that would have provided important services for families and seniors in the area.

(3) The closures have left families and seniors in north Winnipeg without any point of contact with front-line health-care services and will result in them

having to travel 20 minutes or more to St. Boniface Hospital's emergency room or Health Sciences Centre's emergency room for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in north Winnipeg and visit the emergency room frequently, especially for those who are unable to drive or are low income.

(5) The provincial government failed to consult with families and seniors in north Winnipeg regarding the closing of their emergency rooms—or, sorry—room or to consult with health officials and health-care workers at Seven Oaks to discuss how this closure would impact patient care in advance of the announcement.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the decision to close Seven Oaks General Hospital's emergency room so that families and seniors in north Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

This petition was signed by Jaspal Singh, Satwinder Singh and Parminder Kaur and many more Manitobans.

#### **Northern Patient Transfer Program**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize that everyone deserves quality accessible health care.

(2) The people of northern Manitoba face unique challenges when accessing health care, including inclement weather, remote communities and seasonal roads.

(3) The provincial government has already unwisely cancelled northern health investments, including clinics in The Pas and Thompson.

(4) Furthermore, the provincial government has taken a course that will discourage doctors from practising in the North, namely, their decision to cut a grant program designed to bring more doctors to rural Manitoba.

(5) The provincial government has also substantially cut investments in roads and highways, which will make it more difficult for northerners to access health care.

(6) The provincial government's 'austerity' approach is now threatening to cut funding for essential programs such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program, which was designed to help most—was designed to help some of the most vulnerable people in our province.

(7) The provincial government has recently announced it would cancel the airfare subsidy for patient escorts who fly to Winnipeg for medical treatment, which will be devastating for patients with mobility issues, dementia or are elderly and need assistance getting to the city.

(8) The challenges that northerners face will only be overcome if the provincial government respects, improves and adequately funds quality programs that were designed to help northerners, such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the absolute necessity of maintaining and improving the Northern Patient Transportation Program by continuing to respect Northern Patient Transfer agreements and funding these services in accordance with the needs of northern Manitobans.

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize that everyone deserves quality accessible health care.

(2) The people of northern Manitoba face unique challenges when accessing health care, including inclement weather, remote communities and seasonal roads.

(3) The provincial government has already unwisely cancelled northern health investments, including clinics in The Pas and Thompson.

(4) Furthermore, the provincial government has taken a course that will discourage doctors from practising in the North, namely, their decision to cut a grant program designed to bring more doctors to rural Manitoba.

(5) The provincial government has also substantially cut investments in roads and highways,

which will make it more difficult for northerners to access health care.

(6) The provincial government's austerity approach is now threatening to cut funding for essential programs such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program, which was designed to help some of the most vulnerable people in the province.

(7) The provincial government has recently announced it would cancel the airfare subsidy for patient escorts who fly to Winnipeg for medical treatment, which will be devastating for patients with mobility issues, dementia or who are elderly and need assistance getting to the city.

(8) The challenges that northerners face will only be overcome if the provincial government respects, improves and adequately funds quality programs that were designed to help northerners, such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the absolute necessity of maintaining and improving the Northern Patient Transportation Program by continuing to respect Northern Patient Transfer agreements and funding these services in accordance with the needs of northern Manitobans.

And this petition has been signed by so many Manitobans.

### **Taxi Industry Regulation**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

\* (15:10)

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

The background of the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS GOVERNMENT MOTION

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):** On first order of business, I want to discuss the government motion.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the first item of business will be the government motion.

**Mr. Cullen:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Sarah Guillemard, member for—

**An Honourable Member:** Justice.

**Mr. Cullen:** What did I say? My apologies, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), that Sarah Guillemard, member for the electoral division of Fort Richmond, be Deputy Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House.

*Motion agreed to.*

\* \* \*

**Mr. Cullen:** On additional House business, would you call Bill 39, 40 and potentially 35. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the

House will consider the following this afternoon: Bill 39, Bill 40 and Bill 35.

Moving, then, to the first one, Bill 39, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act, labour mobility act and regulated health professions amendment act.

## SECOND READINGS

### **Bill 39—The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended)**

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 39, The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Profession Act Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Pedersen:** As of July 1st, 2017, the Canadian Free Trade Agreement came into force, replacing the previous Agreement on Internal Trade. This new agreement is much more comprehensive than the agreement on the internal trade by covering almost all areas of the Canadian economy.

Under the agreement, Manitoba has an obligation to have taken all measures necessary to give effect to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Our government has worked to ensure and maintain access to markets across Canada for our goods, services, investment and workers. Bill 39 allows for any further domestic trade agreement that Manitoba joins to be added by regulation rather than having to open up the act as it was under the Agreement on Internal Trade.

These amendments ensure that labour mobility obligations of all domestic trade agreements are covered under these acts, including both the CFTA—the Canadian Free Trade Agreement act—and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, which we signed earlier this year. The existing labour mobility obligations in the Agreement on Internal Trade were directly incorporated into the Canadian Free Trade Agreement without any 'substanchive' changes.

This legislation streamlines the process for Manitoba to adhere to new domestic trade agreements without requiring further legislative amendments. Bill 39 is consistent with key priorities for red tape reduction while ensuring our government

fulfills its labour mobility obligations under the domestic trade agreements. It is estimated that Manitoba's gross domestic product, or GDP, will increase by \$2 billion as a result of the signing of the CFTA. We are doing our part to comply with trade agreement obligations and expect all other parties across Canada to do the same.

With the introduction of Bill 39, Manitoba's demonstrating further leadership on internal trade by being amongst the first jurisdictions in Canada to act on these obligations under the CFTA. I should note that Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta have already passed enabling legislation, so we will be the third across Canada to implement these new regulations in the CFTA.

Madam Speaker, we take trade very seriously in this province. For our manufacturing sector, our agriculture sector, our high-tech sector and aerospace—for all these, trade is so important, and we need free trade across Canada and around the world.

We've—as I mentioned, we've already signed the—and implemented the New West Partnership Agreement. We have—with the federal government, we are now under CETA.

\* (15:20)

Canada is—has signed on with the European Union on CETA—C-A-T-A—and that brings, again, great trade opportunities for Manitoba with our diversified economy and we now, with this Canadian Free Trade Agreement, it just once again enhances trade.

It has been, in the past, particularly with the old agreement on internal trade, sometimes it was harder to trade between provinces than it was to trade internationally, and this is a long step towards breaking down those barriers between provinces, because there is so much where trade goes inter-provincially, rather than exporting around the world.

So, with both of this, both being able to trade across Canada and around the world, it only enhances our manufacturing, our agricultural industries, our secondary agricultural processing industries, which I would be remiss standing beside the Minister of Agriculture if I didn't mention Roquette's announcement in Portage la Prairie—\$400-million investment into pea processing, its pea proteins. Proteins are one of the fastest growing markets in the food-processing industries around the world, and Manitoba is a leader in—will be a leader



with Roquette's coming here, and this is just the start of more—many more good things to happen.

And, of course, in our agricultural sector, too, we also have HyLife Foods and Maple Leaf Foods, which are exporting around the world our quality pork products and this helps—it builds the agricultural economy; it builds the secondary processing industry—lots of jobs. Just go to Brandon or to Neepawa and look at the—how the growth of a town like Neepawa has grown with the growth of HyLife, and they're just doing another expansion again at their plant, and it only further enhances Manitoba's trade.

Of course we have the—our aerospace industry here, mainly in Winnipeg, which continues to grow. We expect great things to continue to happen in the aerospace and in our manufacturing of all goods across our economy here in Manitoba, and we continue to look forward to more trade.

So, with this Canadian Free Trade Agreement, the difference between—when the AIT, or Agreement on Internal Trade was signed, it listed the products that could be traded, and in that old agreement.

With the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement, the only thing it lists is the things that you cannot trade in, and so everything is wide open in the trading unless it's specifically named in there, so it's much less restrictive than the old agreement, which is great news for Manitoba. It's great news for Canada because when Canada does well, Manitoba also does well, and so we look forward to further debate on this bill. We look forward to the opposition's support of this because trade is what makes Manitoba strong, and this trade agreement is just another step that this government has taken to enhance our trade both here in Manitoba, across Canada, and around the world.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### 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: 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):** Could the minister tell the House this afternoon what areas of Manitoba's economy does the CFTA actually protect?

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** I think the member is a little confused on this. This isn't about protection; this is about trading, and it's about building products, building—manufacturing industries being able to trade. We're not talking about restricting trade; this opens up trade for all Manitoba industries across Canada and it breaks down the barriers that were in existence before, under the Agreement on Internal Trade.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Madam Speaker, could the minister tell us what consultations occurred to determine which aspects of the economy should or should not be protected?

**Mr. Pedersen:** All right, I realize that trade's a foreign concept to the NDP, but—industry is a foreign concept to them.

The purpose of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement is to allow trade across Canada. So you don't talk about restricting trade, you talk about opening up trade, and where there was barriers before, there will not be barriers now to trade, which helps Manitoba manufacturers, Manitoba exporters move their product much easier across Canada.

**Mr. Allum:** In fact, trade is not a foreign concept to the NDP at all, but I'm thinking that the text of the agreement is a foreign concept to the minister, because he doesn't seem to have a handle on what's actually in the agreement to begin with.

So, we want to ask him: Did other provinces protect areas of their economy or not? Yes or no?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, as the member would be aware of from the briefing he received, one of the areas that is not included under the CFTA is alcoholic beverages. That is under further negotiation between the provinces, which is the reason for this bill, Bill 39, which sets up the parameters for the free trade agreement across Canada, so that when there is further negotiations and when there is agreement on alcoholic beverages moving between provinces, you can bring that amendment in under the free trade agreement without having to open up the legislation as a—an amendment.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Did the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or the minister or anybody from the government have any

discussions with Manitoba Hydro on the issue of any kind of protection?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, of course, the Premier (Mr. Pallister)—actually, the Premier led the discussions on the CFTA and when the discussions began on the CFTA, many of the other provinces were still thinking in terms of the old AIT, where trade restrictions would be how the act is put together—or agreement's put together. But through the Premier, Manitoba's leadership, we now have the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and it enhances trade and it allows us to trade in all goods across our great country.

**Mr. Allum:** You know, I'm going to rephrase how I ask questions to the minister. It's not only going to be yes or no, we're going to yes or no or I don't know, because it seems that he's got the latter every single time.

Can he outline for the House which areas of Manitoba's economy should be protected?

**Mr. Pedersen:** The member is—likes yes or no answers. Yes, we trade across the country.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Could the minister explain why the Premier or this government consider the CFTA a free trade agreement for Manitoba when the province is accepting all competitors while not being accepted in other provinces themselves?

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Pedersen:** The Canadian Free Trade Agreement is about trading and it's about opening up opportunities for Manitoba products across the country, and when you trade that means that products may come into Manitoba also. But it's not about restricting trade, it's about opening trade, and I don't know why that's such a difficult concept for the NDP to understand. Trading means moving products back and forth, and under the Free Trade Agreement that means they move easier than what they did before.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, it's quite clear in the agreement that other provinces have protected certain areas of their economies, which is as they should. And so I want to ask the minister now: How does Manitoba—or why didn't Manitoba protect certain areas of our economy like other provinces did?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, that's very simple. It's because Manitoba can compete with every other province in Canada.

You know, despite the tax increases and the PST increases that the previous government imposed on Manitobans, we're still very competitive with all provinces across Canada and we will become even more competitive with our strong business growth here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Could the minister give us his thoughts on what damage the small local businesses might incur when the new competitors from throughout the rest of the country start undercutting them and putting them out of business?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, Madam Speaker, one of the real advantages of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement is that labour is mobile. We have workers in Manitoba that can now move into other provinces and be able to work in those other provinces and be competitive with all other provinces.

I don't know why the NDP wants to shut down Manitoba, close Manitoba to trade from the rest of the country, from the rest of the world. That's not how you build a strong economy here.

**Mr. Allum:** Could the minister tell the House, today, just if he has any evidence, any reports, anything at all that can tell this House and the people of Manitoba what the expected outcomes of the agreement will be?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Absolutely, Madam Speaker, 11,000 new private sector jobs in Manitoba so far this year and we're still building on it. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** We've heard this minister talk a lot about his belief in free trade. Does he believe it's important that Manitoba have a port so that we could actually access trade routes? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, it's absolutely critical that Manitoba have a federal port in the Port of Churchill operated by the federal government and they need to take on their responsibility. The NDP party needs to help us lobby the federal government to open up that port under federal jurisdiction.

**Mr. Allum:** We'd appreciate it if the minister would actually do something to help the people of Churchill, because their inaction is killing that community.

The heart of the matter is simply this, Madam Speaker, is that Crown corporations remain protected across the country, including in Quebec,

New Brunswick, Alberta and Newfoundland. Even Conservative governments included exemptions for their energy Crowns, like in Saskatchewan and BC.

Why didn't this minister do the same thing?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I guess I missed an opportunity. I should've invited the member to join us on June 30th when we were in Churchill so he could see first-hand how that community will continue to survive. It will continue to build. Instead of their negative reports about how bad Churchill-Churchill is doing well in spite of the federal government not stepping in to fix the rail line and get the port open.

We believe in Churchill. It's too bad this NDP party doesn't believe in Churchill.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Simply an amazing answer to the people of Churchill, that they actually believe in Churchill and think Churchill is doing very well? We're focusing on trade agreements, so I won't go on a rant about this government's lack of attention, so—to Churchill.

So, can the minister explain—he talked about—in his opening statement about there being \$2 billion of economic benefit to, I'm guessing, corporations. Can he give us any answer as to what they expect the economic benefit, in dollar figures, for workers in this province will be?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, the last time I checked, when a company made money, they hired employees, and when those employees were hired, they earned wages. And that's what we will do in this province. We'll continue to build the strong economic growth.

**Mr. Allum:** The minister is not answering very important questions—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Allum:** —about the absence of procurement protections here in Manitoba, when there are procurement protections in other provinces across the country. Why didn't he include procurement protections for Manitoba? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Pedersen:** I don't know how I can explain it differently. It's about free trade. You don't trade—you cannot trade if you restrict products. This free trade agreement is about opening up markets, and this free trade agreement opens up products for Manitoba's business and our manufacturing sector in order to

grow this province and create good, full-time, good-paying jobs.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Earlier, when I was at the briefing on this bill, we—they talked about workers in every jurisdiction in Canada. If they're certified in one jurisdiction, they'll be granted certification in every jurisdiction.

Can the minister tell us, will they be certified to the highest standard, the lowest standard or some other standard in between?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Equivalent.

**Mr. Allum:** At the risk of beating a dead horse here, this is actually a serious matter that involves Manitoba's interests—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Allum:** —both now and in the future.

The agreement contemplates procurement protections in other jurisdictions for the benefit of those jurisdictions, and yet Manitoba has no procurement protections. Can the ex-minister please explain why he's sold Manitoba out?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Again, the member is all about protectionist, and that is not how you build an economy, by being protectionist. And we saw that before in the previous government, where they would not enter in—the member actually said during the last campaign that the New West Partnership Agreement didn't even exist. I hate to break this to him, but it really does exist, and better yet, we're a full partner of the New West Partnership Agreement.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Earlier, the member from Fort Garry-Riverview asked a question about any exclusions that were included in this. We never did really get an answer. Are there exclusions in this agreement, or is everything included so that there are no protections whatsoever by the Province of Manitoba?

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Pedersen:** It's a matter of repetition, Madam Speaker. I already said that alcoholic beverages are not part of the Free Trade Agreement, that it's being worked on between the provinces right now.

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

The floor is open for debate.

### Debate

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I'm pleased to represent our caucus to speak to the bill today. I know that other members in my caucus are going to want to speak to this bill because this is an important matter. It is an important matter for the future of Manitoba today and tomorrow and into the future, and it's important matter for Canada for today and tomorrow and into the future. And the question-and-answer period that we just had suggests that the minister's actually not conversant with the text of the agreement. And that suggests that Manitoba is going to be behind the eight ball in relation to every other province and possibly some territories in this country, because while they have worked hard to ensure that certain parts of their economies are protected, he's actually sat on his hands and done nothing in that regard. And for us, that represents a very, very critical omission in an agreement that could have profound consequences for Manitobans, as I said, today, for tomorrow, for Manitoba families—for today and tomorrow.

Now, there's nothing in the NDP—history of the NDP or the CCF that suggests that we are somehow anti-trade. That's a fiction that's been concocted by governments, Tory and Liberal, since Confederation, and it is absolutely not true. In fact, in social democratic tradition, Madam Speaker, we are an internationalist in the way that we join hands with workers not only across Canada but across the world to ensure that there's a quality of life, that every person, every family, every community, every neighbourhood has the opportunity to embrace. And what we've seen historically is that through free trade agreements that have happened in Canada, either previously or internationally in the past, typically—typically—workers and their families have been sold out to, quite simply, to the capitalists, and the business interests of this country have been put ahead, put front and centre, ahead of the needs and aspirations of working families in this country.

And so, when I hear the minister get up today and be unable to talk in an authoritative—or in a—in any kind of substantive sense about procurement protections, which are absolutely essential to any economy, certainly to Manitoba's economy in relation to larger economies across the country and in relation to worker rights across this country and workers' ability to move across the country; these are things that are central to what New Democrats are about.

Members of this House have heard me say before, we come to this House each and every day to fight for a more just, more equitable, more fair, more inclusive society for every single Manitoba. And what we get from across the floor every single day is this notion that the elites should be privileged in our province, and everybody else should get on board or they're going to pay the 'pice'—price through austerity and cuts to programs that Manitoba families rely on. That's why we want to have a good and informed debate about the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

We would have appreciated if the minister had been more conversant with the actual substance of the agreement instead of reading a briefing note 30 seconds before he came into the House and then not being able to discuss these issues, which are critically important in Fort Garry-Riverview and in every single constituency represented in this House. And, if members on the government side aren't asking hard questions of the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen), we, on this side, will certainly do so to ensure that while we are proud Canadians, we will always ensure that Manitoba's interests are protected and the interests of Manitoba workers are protected.

We expect a higher standard from this minister, and we're going to be holding him to account for his failure to really understand the substance of the text of the agreement that he puts forward today.

Now, I have to say, Madam Speaker, that we're not here, really, to talk about the bill, and that's part of the difficulty of this particular debate today, because the bill, as we understand it, is simply an enabling bill that says, you know, let's go ahead and let's do it, and the substance of it is in the agreement itself.

And I note, nowhere has this agreement been appended to any of the reading material that we've been provided. We went into a briefing, and I appreciate the briefing we got in the minister's office this morning, but the agreement itself was nowhere to be found. And to talk simply about the enabling bill without talking about the agreement itself kind of defeats the purpose because it's the agreement itself that profoundly affects Manitobans and Manitoba families.

And that's the kind of thing that we want to talk about during the course of this debate today and tomorrow, or for as long as it takes, because we want to make sure that at the end of the day Manitoba's

interests are protected and the interests of Manitoba families are protected.

Now, Madam Speaker, I think it's fair to say that Manitoba is a very, very proud partner in Confederation and that our province was built in large part by trading relationships all 'agrott'—cross this great country, but I would say that those trading relationships precede Confederation. There have always been historic trading relationships; in the first instance between indigenous communities, long before colonists arrived, and then, of course, we understand that this province, in large part, developed in relation to the free—to the fur trade, which was not always a free exchange of goods, but it typically could benefit both parties if it was done properly and if it ensured the equitable treatment of both parties.

And so we understand the history of trading relationships, we recognize how important they can be in promoting a sound quality of life for Manitobans and we know how important trading relationships can be in ensuring the well-being of communities and we know that trading relationships are important to promoting prosperity. None of those things are in question today. These are things which are understood and accepted by the NDP, as they are by economists and other academics as well—and by the business community, who, of course, is central to those trading relationships.

But what we object to is when there isn't sufficient information supplied by the minister on the substance of the agreement and when he is unable to articulate what's actually in the agreement that can both help Manitobans, help Canadians, but, most importantly—most importantly—ensure an equitable quality of life for every Manitoban.

And we suspect that this agreement will not meet that very important objective, at least for Manitobans, because while other provinces worked hard to protect critically important areas of their economy, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), who apparently, according to the minister during question-and-answer session, was leading the negotiations, failed to include any provisions for procurement protections for Manitoba, meaning that other companies and other—will be able to come in to Manitoba and take advantage of our economy and the good, solid foundation that was created by our government in—for the economy, but Manitoba won't have that same ability to go into their jurisdictions and compete.

So any notions of competition are, in fact, not accurate. In fact, it's already an unlevel playing field, precisely because while other provinces protected certain areas of their economy because they understood it to be the correct thing to do for them—and no argument there—at the same time, Manitoba didn't do that kind of protection, leaving our economy, our workers, our businesses exposed, which could have devastating consequences on the Manitoba economy going forward.

\* (15:50)

So we wanted to make sure that there was a good and solid debate in the House today—and in future days, if it comes to that—to ensure that we get all of the information out on the table and to ensure that, while we are not opposed to free trade in principle, we nevertheless stand for fair trade and for equitable trade that ensures that everybody has a place in those agreements, and not just the rich business community that this government is increasingly representing at the expense of every other Manitoban.

Now, there's no doubt that Manitoba has, as I said, a rich tradition of trading relationships going back into time immemorial. We also know that we have been an equitable trade partner all across this country. We trade equally to the west as we do to the east. It's almost—not exactly, not precisely—but almost fifty-fifty. It stands to reason, I suppose given our geographic location, that we would reach out one way equally and reach out to the other way in Canada.

But has—*[interjection]*—yes, believe it or not, we do actually already trade. You wouldn't know it from listening to the minister; it sounded like it was his invention or something. And as I tried to say, that—rose—relationships go back a long, long time.

But the point of it is that Manitoba already has been engaged in trading relationships for quite some time, and that we share equitability across the country. And so we know—New Democrats know how important trading relationships are, how important they are to our quality of life and, if it comes to that, our prosperity. But we do not just ideologically put the words free and trade together and magically come up with the idea that this is automatically a good thing.

And that's what's particularly troubling about the answers given to the questions today. It wasn't a minister who was conversant with the text of the

agreement, it wasn't a minister prepared to undertake a discussion about the substantive elements of the agreement. Instead, what we have was a minister who is ideologically predisposed toward putting these things called free and trade together, which automatically in his mind makes it a good thing. He says barriers are coming down, we'll be able to compete. But from what we understand from actually analyzing and assessing the text—the substance of the agreement, what's true for 'Manichoba' is not necessarily true for every other province in Canada. And it's disturbing to think that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the minister were asleep at the switch at the very time they should have been working to promote the collective interests of all Manitobans.

But I think, instead, what overwhelmed them was their ideological predisposition towards notions of pre-free trade, which not—without understanding that free trade often can be managed trade and that free trade, ultimately, ought to be about fair trade. And there's nothing—not one word came out of this mouth today about fair trade. Never mentioned it. Never said it. All he was interested in was putting the ideological position of free trade out there and then hoping that he could skate the rest of the way without having to answer for the substance of the agreement.

And, by gosh, Madam Speaker, he will answer for the substance of this agreement going forward, because we intend during the course of this debate and in other areas to hold him to account and to expose the fact that he is not conversant with the text, that he has simply signed onto it blindly without understanding what the implications for Manitoba may well be.

Now, we don't argue about wanting to see an increase in expansion of free trade. But what we really want to see is an expanse in expansion of fair trade that benefits Manitoba families, benefits Manitoba seniors, benefits Manitoba's young people so they have sufficient opportunity in a rapidly changing world to get off the Ferris wheel of precarious label-labour and find jobs that are lasting, and enduring, and that make a contribution to creating a fair and equitable Manitoba.

We've worked, during our time in government, as—on the Agreement on Internal Trade. We took that very seriously. We recognize that there is a 50-50 split across trade across the country. We are Manitobans, of course, but we are all Canadians, so

we have no objection in particular to a pan-Canadian approach to trading relationships.

People who know me will know I'm a very proud Canadian. I don't have a maple leaf tattooed on my heart, but you don't want to watch a Canadian hockey game with me. That's how much I—my family, if they're listening to this, will be shaking their heads and saying, that's true; don't watch a Team Canada game with him. But we're not opposed, in the NDP, to pan-Canadian relationships—*[interjection]*

I'm not sure what the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) just said there. Maybe he'll share it with me later. I hope he's as proud a Canadian as I am. I really, honestly, earnestly hope that.

But, while we have no problem with pan-Canadian approaches to trade, as was evidenced by the work that we had done on the Agreement on Internal Trade, what we had specifically and always argued for, advocated for, fought for, was fair trade. And yet, the minister is not even able to articulate that particular term. And when we say fair trade, what we mean is we want to ensure the workers are not unduly sacrificed on the altar of trading relationships that will benefit big business but may not trickle down to workers.

What we're concerned about is the deregulation of environmental protections that will ensure that clean air, clean water and a healthy landscape are continually put at risk by the voracious appetite of trading relationships to take advantage of those natural resources and then leave nothing left for future generations.

We want to make sure that there's trade that actually creates jobs, as I said just before, not part-time, half-paid jobs, but full-time jobs with full benefits, good wages, to ensure that my children, and, for what it's worth, for my grandchild, have the opportunity to live a quality and a standard of life that all of us—all of us—it seems to me, want for one another. That's the—it's the maxim of the NDP. What we want for ourselves, we want for everyone.

But when we get a trade relation—an agreement like this, and answers to legitimate questions that the minister couldn't answer today, we become concerned that increasingly, behind the neon lights of Canada Free Trade Agreement, there's a sellout going on of Manitoba's interests. And that sellout, it seems to us, is that—is in relationship to the very procurement protections that I mentioned in—that we

mentioned in our question-and-answer period that my friend from Flin Flon asked the minister about. And yet, we couldn't get an answer about that, even though other jurisdictions have done that.

As I said in the question-and-answer period, Madam Speaker, energy Crown corporations remain protected across the country, including in Quebec, in New Brunswick, in Alberta and in Newfoundland. Even Conservative governments, even their favourite guy, Brad Wall, their hero in Saskatchewan, ensured that SaskPower would be protected. In British Columbia—and she's no longer the Premier of British Columbia because she was beaten and replaced by my friend, John Horgan, and the BC NDP—it's worth it just to sell, by the by, that John Horgan and I went to Trent University together. We met each other in September 1979, and I've never been prouder of an individual than I am of him today.

But even Christy Clark, before Horgan—before John Horgan became the new and exciting Premier of British Columbia—even Christy Clark recognized that companies from her province need to be protected.

\* (16:00)

How is it that we can stand here today, and those same procurement provisions don't exist for Manitoba, and they don't exist in particular for our energy sector and Manitoba Hydro?

My friend from Flin Flon asked the minister, who did the Premier (Mr. Pallister) talk to in Hydro about the importance of those protections before he went holus-bolus to sign the agreement with his blinders on, as he typically does. And, of course, as was typical of that painful 15 minutes, we didn't get an answer on if the Premier had held discussion with Manitoba Hydro about the kinds we—things we need to add into the CFTA in order to ensure that Manitoba Hydro is protected in a way that allows them to do the public policy job that they were created to do. And then, on top of that, to create the good jobs that are required to ensure that we have clean, green sustainable energy into the future and to ensure that there are partnerships with indigenous communities across the North so that there are—is an equal benefit of the benefits of a Crown corporation.

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

And yet, what we found is that when we asked the minister those very questions, he was unable to answer it. And I suspect he was unable to answer it because he hasn't read the agreement. And I suspect

that he didn't know the answers because he is ideologically predisposed to free trade as opposed to our position on fair trade. And I suspect, at the end of the day, that he—Mr. Deputy Speaker, welcome to the Chair—that he was unable to answer those questions because he simply does not believe in many of the foundational enterprises—public enterprises in Manitoba upon which all other elements of our economy grow and involve.

'Manichosa'—Manitoba, for some unknown reason, chose to include virtually no procurement exemptions. The result of that is that Manitoba companies can be shut out of procurement opportunities across the country, but may be forced into aggressive competition right here at home. So I wanted to draw that to the attention of idea—all the ideologues on the Conservative benches—

**An Honourable Member:** That's all of them.

**Mr. Allum:** —so that they can—yes, it is all of them, says my friend from Minto, and he's quite correct in that.

But let me just say that again: Manitoba chose to include virtually no procurement exemptions in the CFTA, unlike every other province that's a party to the agreement. And the result of that is that Manitoba companies can, and likely will, be shut out of procurement opportunities across the country because they are protected in other jurisdictions, but at the same time our important, critical areas of our country may be forced into more aggressive competition right here at home that may well result in economic dislocation for those particular sectors and, certainly, will have profound consequences on the very workers who are the lifeblood of those industries in the first place.

So to say that this is, in part, a significant disappointment to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would, in fact, be an understatement. This is a catastrophic omission in this agreement. And it happened because the Premier and this Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen)—and whoever was in that position before that—were asleep at the switch. Or worse, they are so profoundly ideological that they don't give a hoot for Manitoba businesses, Manitoba companies.

We're pretty sure they don't give a hoot for Manitoba workers. They've demonstrated it over and over and over again. We're pretty sure they don't give a hoot for Manitoba's environment. They've demonstrated it over and over and over again.

And they are—they will not offer any protections for entrepreneurial ideas and—that need some support. And start-ups, they'll also be handicapped by this particular agreement.

And so we have objections, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to what's been put forward in this agreement. This is not to say that we're opposed to trade and to breaking down trade barriers across this country. As I said, we are proud Canadians. I've said often in this House we in the NDP are not only province builders, but we're nation builders. But we'll only be province builders and we'll only be nation builders if we depend on trade that is both stable and fair and we are concerned that the juxtaposition between fair and free is too much for this particular government.

They opt for free, they don't advocate for fair, and as a result many, many, many Manitobans may find themselves at loose ends, and out of work, and out of a job as a result of this agreement. And it may well be that certain critical sectors of our economy will be compromised by an agreement that I think has broad support across the country. Why wouldn't it have it in other jurisdictions where critical areas of their economy are protected? It's only in Manitoba where those provisions don't exist. It's only in Manitoba where procurement isn't protected. It's only in Manitoba where critical energy sector is vulnerable to aggressive competition that, as I say, could have very significant consequences for Manitoba in the future.

We'll certainly be looking for ways to provide amendments to the agreement to protect the very sectors that I've tried to describe. I don't know how that's possible and I'm almost thinking that it's not, because the enabling bill that we're actually debating here this afternoon, as I said, simply enables the implementation of the agreement, but it's the substance of the agreement that we want to talk about. It's the substance of the agreement that we'll be talking about to Manitobans across the east and the west, and the north and the south, and it's the substance of the agreement that ought to be at debate—on debate here today.

Now, one of the things that we're very concerned about as this—as these—as this agreement works its way through and there are not sufficient protections for procurement and other critical sectors of our economy, is that as always with Conservative governments, it won't be an uplifting of every citizen, but will be a race to the bottom, the lowest common denominator when it comes to wages, when

it comes to benefits, when it comes to pensions, when it comes to the very things that ensure that my family and their families and the members of their community all have a quality of life that's worth pursuing and developing for each and every one of us. And our concern is that the government has actually signed that away without paying due attention to the nuances of trade relationships and the nuances of Manitoba's economy that need to be understood, addressed, and accepted in order for us to have fair trade.

It's discouraging that the minister cannot get up and say to the House that as a result of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, there will be increased participation in the economy—as a result of this agreement. He's not able to say that. He's not able to get up and say, in the text you'll find increased environmental protection for the very resources upon which the economy is based. He's not able to get up and say wages will be protected at certain levels all across this country. He's not able to get up and say as a result of this agreement, benefits will be improved and enhanced as a result of this agreement.

All he's able to get up and say—is to talk about his ideological commitment to something called free trade and breaking down trade barriers, whereas with us we're more interested in fair trade, so that every Manitoban has an equal opportunity, so that every Manitoban has a—every Manitoban is included in the economy, and at the end of the day we live in a fair, more just, more equitable, more inclusive Manitoba.

\* (16:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what I want when I ran for—to have a seat in this House. That's what every member of our caucus wants. They should want the same.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill 39, and I listened intently to the speech from the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview. And I didn't hear much the real significance other than they are opposed to trade. They like barriers and they are—they were very good at building barriers when they were government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They built a wall around Manitoba that restricted trade except for their friends who they did enable for undisclosed and untendered contracts for such things like Tiger Dams. They were very good to their friends, and these things are hidden from Manitobans. So that is the type of trade that they enabled.



And we are a trading province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a trading nation, and these are the things that this legislation will enable to be improved. We are going to allow free trade. We see changes to the environment all along—all across Canada and in the world that we want to be part of the business of trading.

And trading enables companies. We see in Manitoba and around Canada that the business community is evolving. The business community is developing, and we want to make sure that the business community thrives not only in Manitoba, but is able to trade with the world, and that is some of the things that this legislation will enable.

You know, when we look at the business community we talked, Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday about the attacks on that business community that the proposed tax regulations from the federal government will attack small business, will attack business. And we heard from many of the other members in this Chamber talking about those.

In fact, I—when it—the issue of the income sharing came up, I know the MLA for River Heights supported getting rid—doing away from income sharing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because what I see income sharing is it enables a family in a business to share income from the working spouse to the non-working spouse. Now, we have male and female spouses that stay at home and that allows that family to grow and thrive. But predominantly, unfortunately, it is still the woman that does tend to stay home and help look after the children or predominantly look after the children, and that was one thing that income sharing allowed to happen because there is the value of work that that spouse provides.

So the tax laws that we see coming from the federal government is attack on the value of that work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is exactly what we want to make sure that businesses thrive in Manitoba so that they're able to share the income with their families, able to build their businesses, employ more people and that is something that we will certainly see with more free trade.

So we hear the attacks from the NDP on this and we know that they want to protect their friends, and that is something that may be at risk in this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Yes, some of their friends in the labour movement may fear that they won't have the same power as they used to have, because we want to see free trade evolve, develop and make sure

that all of our companies in Manitoba that are able to participate can participate and can access those markets in the rest of the world, not just in Manitoba, not just in Canada, but worldwide. Because we have very able companies here that compete at the world level, and we want to make sure that they are able to have access around the world to other countries in order to make sure that their businesses develop, thrive, develop their trade throughout the world. So that is some of what this enabling legislation speaks to.

We know that some of the opposition to it is that they were worried about their own particular piece of the pie, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We want to grow that pie bigger and that is what this will enable us to do. We saw that with the agreement with the other provinces, the New West Partnership that the former government fought against and declined and would not join. It enables our companies in Manitoba to compete on an equal playing ground throughout western Canada.

I have friends, indeed, that had businesses that could not bid on government contracts in Saskatchewan. Even if they had a business component in Saskatchewan they were restricted from bidding on Crown corporate contracts in Saskatchewan, and now they're able to do so and compete on that equal playing field with their assets they have in Manitoba to make sure that they can leverage the value of those assets to provide a good or a service for other provinces, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those are the things that that enables. And it enables those companies to employ more Manitobans. And that is what we have seen over the past while, more employment from the private sector in Manitoba. And they're looking at how they can enhance that, where they can develop next.

And that is where one of my concerns is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I spoke yesterday, the attack on business from the federal government that will impact those businesses and have a detrimental effect on their expansion ability. They have the capital contained in their business that they loan back to the company, that is the capital that they use to build up to the point where they will buy another business, they will expand their business, they will add employees to compete at another level.

And those are the detrimental impacts that the federal tax legislation could have. So it's very dangerous to see those attacks on the business sector.

Not only that, when you're in business, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things you do with some of that income that you save in your business, you might invest it in something outside your business, perhaps a condo that you rent out or an apartment building or a small block; that's deemed as passive income. The federal government wants to attack that with a 75 per cent tax. That's the money that you save and you invest in order to build up, as I said, where you can expand your business when you have enough. And that's the type of thing that we see the federal government attacking.

So we want to make sure, through such things as trade agreements, that those businesses in Manitoba are supportive, that they're able to thrive in a fully competitive environment out there, worldwide. As I've said, we have world-class business, companies in Manitoba—that this will enable them to compete at an equal playing ground, a level playing ground, throughout the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Thank you.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** It's a pleasure to follow my new seatmate, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), which future avid scholars of Hansard will then have to try to figure out, but so be it. It is also a pleasure to be able to debate the bill, which we haven't been able to do too much of. We know there's been many pieces of government legislation this government has chosen to simply ram through without anything more than 10 minutes for debate. That's a shame. But it is a good opportunity to talk a little bit about a bill that I think deserves some debate and some good discussion.

And, you know, starting with the positive, as I think every speech should, it is a very positive move that finally this government has realized that when we kept telling them, stop focusing on the New West Partnership and the western provinces because what we need is a national trade deal, perhaps saying that for a great deal of time actually sunk in and this government appears to have spent at least a little bit of effort on trying to reach a pan-Canadian trade deal which will build on the Agreement on Internal Trade, and we hope—we hope—will be able to enhance trade in a way that will benefit Manitobans and all Canadians.

As my friend, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) put on the record, we do have some concerns over the lack of attention this government paid when it was time to sit down and negotiate the provisions of that deal and the actual

exceptions that they were prepared to get their elbows up and fight for on behalf of certain Manitobans who we do have concerns about.

We do want to ask more questions. As I understand it, the question-and-answer period today may have not left us with anything resembling an answer from the minister, but there will be more opportunities through debate, I would hope; there'll be more opportunities at committee to hear from perhaps other interested individuals and perhaps dial in a little bit more on some of the main concerns with this bill.

This bill makes administrative amendments to The Labour Mobility Act. An act, in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was very proud to bring into this House, that was supported unanimously—as well as The Regulated Health Professions Act, to reflect that the government of Manitoba and the governments of Canada and the other provinces and territories have agreed to a new domestic trade agreement, the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Again, not a regional trade agreement only between certain provinces, but a national free trade agreement.

\* (16:20)

And the CFTA replaces the agreement of internal trade and it does it almost by way of negative option billing, if I can call it that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The existing agreement, the AIT, required provinces and territories to list their various goods and services which they allowed to be traded freely and, as I will explain in a few minutes, that was often a process that was frustrating, and that was a process that I think any Canadian would not have been overly impressed with. We understood there were certain provinces—might from time to time raise an artificial barrier to trade to try and keep out goods from another province.

But the agreement to internal trade was a process to deal with that, and the natural evolution, then, is into the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. But, as I said, the difference is that now it's up to individual provinces who are signatories to this agreement to list what they want excluded from the deal in order to protect vulnerable or undeveloped areas of the economy.

And, as I understand it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, most provinces, when they came to the table to sit down and deal with this, actually had their citizens in mind and actually came prepared to protect perhaps certain underdeveloped or undeveloped areas of their

economy or areas of the province to allow those provinces to retain some ability—some ability—to protect, to enhance and grow economies in certain parts of their provinces that might not otherwise have the chance.

Now, I do take exception with what the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) has said to suggest that New Democrats don't support trade. In fact, New Democrats, in government and out, have been great supporters of fair trade. Whether it's between jurisdictions in Canada or whether it's between different countries, we have always spoken out about the need to make sure that there are fair arrangements between areas, between countries. And that's why, frankly, I was very proud to be part of some of the work done in the Agreement on Internal Trade.

In fact, when I was the minister responsible for that process, I was very pleased that Manitoba, as well as other provinces, entered into arrangements for labour mobility, and that was about a decade ago. Many Canadians will be surprised to know that before that time, someone who may have been practising as a professional or a regulated tradesperson or even something like the manager of a daycare might not have been able to transport those skills across a provincial border. And, for a province like Manitoba, that, actually, was a major problem.

The member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), just the other day, of course, brought in a very good private member's bill dealing with treating people in our military, serving in the reserves, in an appropriate way. One of the things I was able to say, when the labour mobility provisions came in, is that it would be much easier for the husbands or wives of military personnel transferred into Manitoba to be able to practise their profession or their regulated occupation in a much easier way.

What was frustrating under the old rules is that someone who perhaps had managed a daycare in another province was told when they got here that if they wanted to work in daycare, they would have to start all over again and take a course at Red River College or Assiniboine Community College, which, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did not make any sense.

So we moved ahead on that agreement, and the Agreement on Internal Trade took on a number of other items, which I suppose at some times were important to provinces—although we may look back at it now and laugh, were very serious at the time.

As you may know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Quebec was fiercely resistant to the idea of this new-fangled product called margarine, and Quebec and, to a lesser extent, Ontario had a number of different rules about how margarine could be packaged, how it could be coloured, and how it could be sold and how it could be regulated which, I 'suspect', was intended to protect their dairy industries, but, in fact, created a fair amount of difficulty and hassle across the country.

As an aside, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it wasn't that long ago that any restaurant in Manitoba that wanted to use margarine actually had to post a sign in their window saying that they were using margarine products. You know, that was one piece of red tape that we did agree with getting rid of, and that's why our government moved to remove that provision.

I recall in my time as minister responsible for internal trade, we had serious debates about synthetic dairy products. I believe it was Quebec who was doing its best to keep out synthetic oil-based creamers that people like to put in their coffee and had imposed an entire series of arcane rules to try and prevent those products from coming in from other parts of the country.

I do recall that Ontario had a great deal of difficulty with the way various provinces classified their accountants.

So all this to say that there was a lot of work to be done, and the Agreement on Internal Trade carried that work forward. And now we are on the brink of a new agreement, a Canadian Free Trade Agreement, which is going to build on the work that was done by provinces under the Canadian—under the Agreement on Internal Trade.

We are a proud partner in Confederation. We have very different views on things, but I think every member in this House is very proud of our country, or at least most of the things in our country, and our province's built-in trading relationships all across the country. We know that good trade agreements are important to our prosperity and to the well-being of all Canadians.

And despite what the member for Brandon West may think, our New Democratic Party has always recognized that Manitoba is a trading province. It's no surprise, after 17 years of investment in business in this province and investment in the workforce in this province, that Manitoba has the highest proportion of trade within Canadian jurisdictions, of

all the provinces, not just the provinces to the west, which seem to be the sole focus of this Progressive Conservative government for a great deal of time but, in fact, across the country. The Trans-Canada Highway goes both ways through Manitoba. Of course, Winnipeg, as we develop CentrePort, continues to be a very, very important—and we hope more important in the future—place for people in Canada to do business, for us to sell our products, for us to be able to compete.

And, certainly, the CFTA negotiations were an important opportunity to do a couple of things: first of all, to make sure that our own interprovincial trade agreements make sense in an increasingly trade-dependent world but, at the same time, protect certain industries and certain areas of the province that may not have an equal opportunity at being able to trade, whether it's with other regions of the province, with other regions of the country or internationally. In no way are we opposed to *[inaudible]* trade arrangements, and that's—that has always been the case. But we do have concerns and we do have questions about trade expanding in a manner that has the very, very real possibility of hurting working Manitoban families.

So we need to protect workers, as the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) had to say, and we need trade that will truly support Manitoba jobs and protect our environment.

Now, I believe I heard the minister, when he stood up, say that the Canadian Free Trade Agreement was going to have an impact of \$2 billion on the Manitoba economy. And I remember hearing that and scratching my head, so I went and did a little bit of research, even a modicum of research, which I hope members in the government caucus might do once in a while when their ministers are getting up and apparently making things up on the spot. But the Bank of Canada, actually, had done a study and said that the total impact of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement would be two-tenths of 1 per cent of GDP.

Now, that's positive, that's a good thing. I mean, any increase in GDP, I guess, could be taken as a positive, but nowhere near the amount that the minister has stood up and has apparently picked out of the air to put onto the pages of Hansard for the remainder of time.

So we believe that there is a possible gain, but we need to see the other side of it and what is the impact of entering into the agreement without any

protections for workers, without any protections for the environment, without any protections for Manitoba jobs, Manitoba municipalities and Manitoba small businesses.

Now, Manitobans expect their government to support trade. We accept that wholeheartedly. That's why as a government we reached out across the country and across the world to make sure that people knew Manitoba's advantages and we assisted Manitoba businesses to be able to compete on the world stage. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know, there are some great manufacturers right in your own community and your own constituency that we have assisted in the past to trade. And we hope, we truly hope, that under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement they'll have more opportunities. But we are concerned that the terms of what we've been given, what we've been able to see, shows that this government has settled on a very, very quick and undisciplined approach to getting this done, which does not take a balanced and pragmatic approach, that it appears virtually every other province, regardless of their political stripe, has taken.

\* (16:30)

Now, the Trade Minister, I guess then the Trade Minister, stated that the agreement would improve access to government procurement opportunities across the country. Fact, he said that to the CBC back on April 7 of this year. But when we actually look through what's contained in the agreement, it appears that Manitoba has not taken a pragmatic approach to protect Manitoba's interests. In fact, it appears that they haven't really taken any approach at all.

And as we take a look at what different provinces have protected in this agreement, we see that energy Crown corporations have been highlighted by different provinces with different governments of different political stripes, including Quebec, New Brunswick, Alberta and Newfoundland, with very, very different governments and very, very different ideas on many things, but all of those jurisdictions have said, you know, the ability to generate hydro power is a true gift. Renewable resources, renewable energy is so important as we all work together to try to minimize our carbon footprint, as we work to try and minimize the amount of carbon dioxide being released and as hydro-producing provinces seize an opportunity to sell more clean power across the border to our American friends, who are faced either with the

fiction of clean coal or truly clean hydro coming down from the north.

And, added to that list of Quebec, New Brunswick, Alberta and Newfoundland are two perhaps surprising choices of governments which actually stepped up when they were negotiating this agreement to protect their utilities. One of them, of course, is Saskatchewan, and you know we've heard an awful lot from members about why they had to enter into the New West Partnership and the only valid reason they could come up with for entering into the New West Partnership was that their close friend and their neighbour Brad Wall is actually one of the biggest protectionists you will ever meet. Even as he goes abroad and tells people about how open he is to trade, Brad Wall actually proved, unfortunately for businesses in Manitoba, that he was one of the biggest protectionists around, and it was actually shutting out businesses in Arthur-Virden, in Brandon West, in Brandon East, in every corner of this province from being able to have reasonable access to Saskatchewan's procurement for government and for Crown corporations.

And yet, even as we move ahead with this free-trade agreement, it's Brad Wall who's stood up again and said, well, I'm going to protect SaskPower, I'm going to protect Crowns in Saskatchewan from open procurement. We are going to retain that ability because we think that's what's best for the people of Saskatchewan. Well, I don't agree with Brad Wall on many things. Brad Wall and I actually agreed on abolishing the Senate, I mean, I'll give him that. I mean, that was a good moment, but, of course, we had our own government who usually fall down at the feet of Brad Wall whenever they have an opportunity, not even put up their hands and say, okay, well, if you're going to protect SaskPower, we are going to protect the procurement of Manitoba Hydro.

Manitoba Hydro, which is a jewel, a Crown corporation that provides among the lowest cost hydroelectricity in all of North America, perhaps in the world, which is a—now a true partner with First Nations, a true partner to expand economic development into areas that we know are very challenged to provide those opportunities. We know that with hydro development, we've been able to give young indigenous people the opportunity to start learning apprentice trades. Maybe they're starting as labourers, but maybe they're working as apprentice electricians, as plumbers, as welders, all kinds of tradespeople involved in building hydro.

And, unfortunately, by this government's negligence in even doing as little as Brad Wall did, they are quite prepared to put all for that up for grabs in the free-trade agreement, and I don't understand why. I don't understand whether the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his trade Minister decided that they were going to make an example of Manitoba while everybody else who has hydro takes a different approach, or, more likely, this was just the last thing on the Premier's to-do list as he hurried out the door to Costa Rica with a briefcase filled with books from the '50s and '60s, maybe a couple of Ayn Rand novels that he can read around the pool.

It was utter negligence on the part of the Premier and his Cabinet and this government not to even step up, not even to have the temerity to raise their hand and say, you know, we think that we are going to carve out the same kind of protections as other provinces. And we really—we don't understand why, and perhaps—I know the Premier will be listening to this and he'll be in a bad mood yet again. I would like to think it's not because he was overdue for his spa session down in Tamarindo, but I would like to hear from a member of the government side some good explanation as to how this could have possibly been.

And of course, even British Columbia—Christy Clark—dear, departed Christy Clark ensured that only companies from provinces whose procurement was equally open would be allowed to compete for BC's procurement. Even Christy Clark stepped up on behalf of her province before her province suggested she go and do something else with her life—at least got her elbows up for the people of British Columbia and said, we favour open trade in British Columbia, but, you know, we are not going to enter into this agreement and have a Saskatchewan or another province shut their doors to BC businesses and not expect reciprocation.

But, again, for reasons that we can't comprehend, and which I hope we will learn in the course of debate, which I hope we will learn at committee, which I hope we will learn if the bill goes to third reading, I hope someone in the government will explain it.

We listened to the minister. We listened to his speech. We listened to his answers. We didn't hear anything approximating an answer. I'm not hopeful, but we would certainly like to find out exactly why this would be the case.

To sum up this portion of what I'm saying, the members opposite need to understand that every

other province, even provinces with a conservative-minded government, have a long list of exemptions for their public procurement. Why did every other government get it except this one? I just don't know.

There's no reason for the Premier (Mr. Pallister) to fail to protect important sectors of the Manitoba economy while other provinces are protecting their interests. And leaving our own interests out to dry while other provinces step up to protect theirs is not fair trade. It's an oddly ideological approach by the Premier that is truly out of touch with Manitobans and their needs.

There are some other areas where this government could have easily stepped up. No one would have accused them of being protectionist. No one would have accused them of being unreasonable, and they sat on their hands.

Many other provinces such as Ontario, such as Prince Edward Island, protected small procurement initiatives. Those initiatives actually target poverty reduction, or they protect local food. They give more opportunities for small producers to be able to supply a local market without the need to expand procurement over provincial boundaries. And that's a good thing.

But for reasons that we again do not understand, Manitoba did not follow the lead of those other provinces, and they again left that out of the agreement.

Another area that was left out of the agreement were protections that would promote indigenous jobs. And in many ways, of course, as we know, as the original inhabitants of Manitoba, our indigenous people have tremendous local knowledge—tremendous local knowledge—whether it's guiding Hydro in terms of making decisions on where to place dams and how to put—and where to put lines and how to develop things, but even beyond that, with respect to advice on highways, advice for sustainable development, for parks, for conservation.

For reasons we don't understand, this government left out any protections for indigenous jobs, for local knowledge and community benefit agreements. And, again, this would not have been a tremendous leap for this government to make, because I would point out again that other provinces chose to do so. Other provinces equally supportive of free trade in Canada, of all different political stripes, stood up and said, you know, when we look at our country, we know that indigenous people have been left out of

being full economic partners for far too long, and we think by excluding those various types of procurement under this agreement, we are going to be able to continue to do things as a province to lift up our indigenous people, to assist them in developing their own economies, so that they can truly become full members of our provincial economy. And for reasons we don't understand, Manitoba stayed silent.

There are some other areas, and I expect that the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), when he gets up, is going to talk about this in more detail. We are concerned that the government may think that this is a race to the bottom when it comes to supervising apprentices, and we know that's been a push from those connected to this government for some time. Manitoba has been cautious with good reason.

If somebody is a level 1 apprentice working for an electrician, we want that individual to be properly supervised because, if they make a mistake, it could very well cost them their life. There are many other trades where low apprenticeship ratios are absolutely necessary for safety and health.

\* (16:40)

In the past, there have been other provinces that have been quite prepared to loosen those restrictions because they aren't as concerned with workers as, certainly, this government has been for our 17 years in office, ending in 2016. And we are concerned that this agreement is going to mean that jurisdictions with higher apprenticeship ratios are going to be given a competitive advantage against Manitoba firms. And it would have been easy enough to step up and say, all we want in Manitoba is a level playing field. All we want is safety for apprentices working in Manitoba—wherever they may be from—to make sure that those ratios are not a bargaining chip in a mighty race to the bottom—a race to the bottom that can actually take workers' lives.

Now, the Premier called the CFTA the biggest step forward in removing barriers to internal trade in our country in the history of Canada. Well, this is a Premier who is—who just has a way of overstating just about anything once we know that he's getting stressed or feeling upset. This is the Premier, of course, who said that his caucus was the most diverse caucus in the history of Canada, which is perhaps the most incredible remark ever uttered in this Legislature. And if anybody wants to check Hansard and prove me wrong, I will remain open to that. But the Premier, when he made that statement,

then went out and completely forgot to put Manitoba's interests first.

And all we're looking for as we debate this bill is some kind of explanation, some kind of justification, some kind of answer. I know the poor backbenchers sitting there are listening and thinking: How could this be? How could all these other provinces, including our Conservative friends across the country, have put up these protections for their own citizens, and how is it that we're now finding out from an opposition member speaking that our dear leader and our Trade Minister failed to protect the interests of our own citizens?

And it can't be very comfortable for those members. And they're pro-business; there's no question about that. But even other pro-business governments stepped up for their citizens, for their small businesses, for their economic development in small communities across their provinces and didn't even have to go and have a parade. They didn't have to go and convince anybody. They just actually had to put up their hand and say, you know, we're going to stand up for people in our province. We favour free trade; we favour great trade among provinces. But, you know, we're not going to do that in a way that is going to put our own people at risk.

And by the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) failure to deal with any of these issues, he's failed Manitobans. He's failed Manitobans by somehow managing to agree to terms that are worse than any other province in the country. You know, just as, of course, he was the defender of health care and he was going to take on the federal government and he wasn't going to sign any agreement, he finally—tail between his legs—signed an agreement and got Manitoba no more than when he began his histrionics against the federal government.

You know, he said that he was going to go and—boy, he was going to take on that federal government over the carbon tax. And we learned today that the private lawyer they hired—who, I indeed have a lot of respect for—has come back and has told the minister and the government something that everybody knows, which is that the federal government actually has the right to impose a carbon tax. So I expect now the Premier will have to put his tail between his legs and, once again, admit that he could not put the puck in the net. He couldn't get it done and, as with the Free Trade Agreement, is again going to have to show that he is the worst-performing Premier in the

entire country that is not aiming higher, that is aiming lower and lower every day that we go by.

The Premier's refused to serve the interests of Manitoba families and Manitoba workers who are deeply affected by the decisions that he makes. And our New Democratic caucus calls in the Premier for the benefit of people in every community. Whatever party they may have elected to this Legislature—or, some of them, of course, are now independents as we go—we urge the Premier to begin to advocate for everybody in our province and take necessary, pragmatic, thoughtful, meaningful steps to ensure that fair trade happens just like every other province in Canada. I really don't think it's too much to ask for.

We urge the Premier to stand up and advocate for our province and take those steps to ensure trade just like every other province in Canada, and I'm not sure why that should be so difficult to do.

So we—in conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba businesses depend on trade that is stable and trade that is fair. As a trading province, we call upon our government and our Premier and our Trade Minister to defend our interests—and when we say our interests, we don't just mean our business friends that the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) was on about in his speech—everybody, and that means protections for workers, so that workers who go to work in the morning can get home safely at the end of the day; protection for indigenous communities, so they truly have the ability to develop, to harness the energy and the excitement of young indigenous people to be able to lift up those communities and truly begin to share in our economy; we want protections for newcomers, so that it's not a race to the bottom, the lowest wages will always win out; and also for students, so that students, whether they may go to school in Manitoba and want to stay here or leave Manitoba and come back after they've got their degree, will know they've got a good place to work, a good place to live, a good place to raise their families. That's really not that much to ask for.

But it's clear the Premier favours unfair trade that has no regard for Manitoba workers, that has no regard for Manitoba's small business and has no regard for Manitoba students. We see, from the lack of any ability of this government to protect any of these things in this agreement, a Premier that is more and more out of touch with Manitoba families, a Premier who focuses on improving trade with only

large companies' interests in mind, without thinking about everybody else.

And I guess that's just the way it always is with this Premier (Mr. Pallister), as we see him day in and day out. This is just another way that the Premier is moving ahead to make things harder for Manitobans—not easier, harder—but especially for those who are vulnerable or in need or who may live in a remote community or who may need the assistance of a sane, sensible procurement policy to help get their business going and build wealth and bring wealth to their communities.

So we look forward to a debate. We look forward to some kind of explanation. Any explanation at all will be very, very welcome. We support free trade. We'd like to support this agreement.

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

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** Our government, through the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), is taking significant steps to ensure that Canada and the world knows that Manitoba is open for business. We're not an island, as the members opposite would like to think, that we should just build walls around Manitoba. No, we want to build relationships, we want to build partnerships and we want to grow the province.

Promoting trade falls within Canada and internationally as part of our government's 10-point economic plan to generate new opportunities for growth and attract investment to Manitoba. For Manitoba businesses, it means immediate access to more markets in which to sell goods and services. The agreement aligns with the national and international trade agreements such as Canada-European and—Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the New West Partnership Agreement.

Our government has made significant trade agreements, including the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, estimated to increase the Manitoba GDP by \$2 billion. Two billion dollars is a lot of money in a small province like Manitoba. The New West Partnership Agreement, the inclusion of Manitoba, creates an open common market of more than 11 million people which will create unlimited number of jobs. Canadian-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement

creates 2,900 jobs in Manitoba and adds \$2 million to the Manitoba GDP.

We also know that the existing labour mobility obligations in the agreement on international trade are directly incorporated into the Canadian Free Trade Agreement without any substantive changes, so that should take care of the concern that came from the negative nabob that represents the Flin Flon riding.

Opposition record, Leap manifestos—the Leader of the Opposition signed the Leap Manifesto, calling for radical restructuring of the Canadian economy and to rip up trade deals. If the NDP leader had his way, he would remove Manitoba from all trade deals, resulting in a GDP loss of \$2.2 billion and 2,900 jobs. Just like the previous NDP government, the Leader of the Opposition wants to take more money from taxpayers.

So I just have to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that even though there is a new leader in the party, the mentality hasn't changed: negativity, negativity, negativity. My goodness.

\* (16:50)

When we talk to the stakeholders in the province, like Dan Mazier, the president of Keystone Agricultural Producers, he said Canada—the interprovincial trade barriers have too often made it easier for processors and retailers to import food from other countries than it is from another province. This clears up that—that's—clears up that barrier, but, unfortunately, the negative nabobs are afraid of competition.

Jonathan Alward, director of provincial affairs for Manitoba—Canadian Federation of Independent Business: CFTA delivers on many of the things that small-business owners have been asking for, for years, years that the NDP were in power that they ignored how we could have grown a province. We could be much, much better off today had they listened.

We can talk to Terry Shaw, and we have, the executive director of Manitoba Trucking Association, and he said the MTA welcomes this opportunity to pursue further progress towards the mitigation of regulatory barriers.

Ron Koslowsky, vice-president, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, CME Manitoba: Manufacturing is the backbone of Manitoba's



economy—unknown to the NDP party, but it is the backbone of our economy.

Don Leitch, president and CEO of Business Council of Manitoba: As an exporting province, Manitoba businesses stand to benefit under this agreement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on and on, but I hope that they were able to hear and listen and thank the minister—the Minister of GET—the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), for having the fortitude to bring this forward and move Manitoba for now and for into the future.

Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. A few comments on this bill, but first of all I want to bring up something that my colleague has raised, and this is with regard to the remarks from the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer). For those who were listening, it appeared that the member from Brandon West was trying to argue that women should be barefoot, pregnant and in the kitchen and—

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** I seem to have drawn people out and got a reaction. My colleague, the MLA for Kewatinook, drives her kids everywhere; she does all the shopping, cooking, cleaning; she's a member of her kids' parent advisory council; and she is here daily working for her income. She works tirelessly on behalf of the people of Kewatinook.

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

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** And she works tirelessly to ensure that more women can achieve what she's achieved. Congratulations.

I want to talk briefly about our Liberal Party support of free trade. I think it's reasonable that the kind of free trade that we have with groups like the European Union—that we have internally as well, and that really is what this is primarily about.

What we do need to know is that when, for instance, Manitoba Hydro contracts, it is not just about having priced, it's certainly about having quality too, and we saw that in the recent purchases of power poles, which then collapsed. And I think there were four that went down, and it's really important that we're making sure that wherever we get products from, not only is it a good price but it's

good quality, and that's something that's really important to remember, and I can say that Manitoba companies can certainly compete on quality. There you go.

I think it's also clear that if we've got activities that are being done in Manitoba, that Manitoba companies have a comparative geographic advantage in having people who are in their companies who are living here in Manitoba; they don't have to bring them a long distance or make sure that they're paying. I give you an example of a First Nations community. The cost of bringing in labour from outside for St. Theresa Point is extraordinarily high because people have to be flown in. They have to be housed in the community at considerable cost and then flown out. And if they're there for some time, there's a lot of transportation back and forth.

So we need to make sure that we are aware and using geographic advantage for our own communities, and part of what we have to do is to make sure that we have the education system that provides Manitobans with a skill base to start companies and do all sorts of things in St. Theresa Point or other communities around the province. That's where this government needs to be investing and making sure that we have a very strong education system, and I am concerned about some of the decreases in investments in post-secondary and other areas of education that this government is making.

Certainly, there are other areas where we can invest that give our companies, our businesses, the competitive advantage. One of those is making sure that we're supporting adequately the research and development here.

Another is making sure that when we have an opportunity to develop a supercluster here that we jump at it, that we have the people here in Manitoba learning and developing and involved in machine learning, as an example, and providing examples to our—advantages to our companies, advantages to our health-care system, advantages to our education system in having that expertise here.

And, as I said earlier on today, it's rather sad that there was an initiative which we could've had here, with a little bit of effort from this government, but they didn't take it, and we lost that effort. Hopefully, they will learn from it, but I'm not so sure.

So, Mr. Speaker, my comments are relatively brief. They are of the importance of participating in

free trade, make sure that we have a playing field within Canada, an internal trade, free trade agreement, which at least makes what companies have access to in Canada, competitive what companies have access to around the world who are global free trade agreements, for example, with the European Union. So we will be supporting this bill and believe that is a positive step forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** No, the honourable member for Flin Flon.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** It is a sad day that I have to stand and speak about this bill, that the government of Manitoba is really and truly the government of business for Manitoba not the government—

**An Honourable Member:** Big business.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —for the people of Manitoba. Yes, as the member from Minto points out, it's the government of big business.

We're really clear now after listening to the member from Emerson talk about who they consulted with. It's unfortunate that when we were in the question-and-answer portion, the minister didn't really know who they consulted with. Of course, he didn't really know what was in the bill either. So it's very unfortunate that instead of actually listening to debate and listening to points that are raised, the government merely shouts you down with, you're against free trade, instead of listening while we in the opposition present what should be fair trade not just carte blanche free trade.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** When this matter is before the House, the honourable member for Flin Flon has approximately 28 minutes remaining.

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, October 11, 2017**

**CONTENTS**

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>			
Bill 232—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act		Small Class Size Initiative	
Swan	2893	Wiebe	2902
		Wishart	2902
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>			
Fielding	2893	K-12 School Closure Inquiry	
		Wiebe	2902
		Wishart	2902
<b>Ministerial Statements</b>			
International Day of the Girl		Health-Care Funding Levels	
Squires	2893	Swan	2903
B. Smith	2894	Goertzen	2903
Klassen	2894		
Fire Prevention Week		Innovation Superclusters Initiative	
Pedersen	2895	Gerrard	2904
Lindsey	2895	Pallister	2904
Klassen	2895		
<b>Members' Statements</b>			
SCE LifeWorks		Federal Carbon Tax	
Reyes	2896	Martin	2905
St. Michael's Church 100th Anniversary		Stefanson	2905
Eichler	2896	Inuit Art Centre Funding	
Misericordia Urgent Care Centre		T. Marcelino	2905
Altemeyer	2897	Cox	2905
Parker Wetlands		Northern Farm Flooding	
Allum	2897	Lathlin	2906
Woodydell Housing Complex Community Garden		Eichler	2906
Morley-Lecomte	2898		
<b>Oral Questions</b>		<b>Matter of Privilege</b>	
Changes to Health-Care Services		Saran	2907
Kinew	2898	Gerrard	2908
Pallister	2899	Cullen	2908
KPMG Health-Care Report		Fontaine	2908
Kinew	2900	Fletcher	2908
Pallister	2900		
Adults with Disabilities		<b>Petitions</b>	
B. Smith	2901	Taxi Industry Regulation	
Fielding	2901	Saran	2910
		Seven Oaks General Hospital Emergency Room	
		T. Marcelino	2911
		Northern Patient Transfer Program	
		Lathlin	2911
		Lindsey	2912
		Taxi Industry Regulation	
		F. Marcelino	2912
		Maloway	2913

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**  
**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Government Motion**

Cullen 2913

**Second Readings**

Bill 39—The Canadian Free Trade Agreement  
Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and  
Regulated Health Professions Act Amended)

Pedersen 2914

**Questions**

Allum 2915

Pedersen 2915

Lindsey 2915

**Debate**

Allum 2918

Helwer 2922

Swan 2924

Graydon 2930

Gerrard 2931

Lindsey 2932

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