

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

Thursday, November 2, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, 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.

David Robertson Receives Governor General Award

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, I'm thrilled to welcome a talented Manitoba writer to the Manitoba Legislature this afternoon and recognize him for winning one of Canada's oldest and most prestigious awards.

It's my pleasure to congratulate Mr. David Alexander Robertson for winning the Governor General's award for Young People's Literature in Illustrated Books.

His book, *When We Were Alone*, educates children about the history of residential schools in a way that's both sensitive and caring and furthers our path towards reconciliation. It's a book that all Manitobans and all Canadians, young or old, should read, Madam Speaker. In order to move forward with reconciliation, we must all continue to educate ourselves about Canada's past.

And when a book as important as Mr. Robertson's wins such a prestigious award, it speaks volumes about the impact that Manitoba writers and publishers have on national and international community here in Manitoba.

Manitoba is so fortunate to be the home of so many talented writers. Our province's writing and publishing community continues to produce literature that matters to Manitobans and also shines

a spotlight on the wonderful literary talent right here at home.

I would also like to recognize his Manitoba publisher, HighWater Press, an imprint of Portage & Main Press, for their contributions to this project.

Madam Speaker, I ask everyone in this House to rise and extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Robertson for winning such a significant and respected award.

Miigwech.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Big congratulations to David Robertson for winning the Governor General's Literary Award this year.

Madam Speaker, Dave is a family man. He has five kids. He's got superstar athlete Emily; Anna, a wonderful dancer; and there's their newest addition, little James.

Now, our families have grown close over the years back when Dave's son Cole and one of my boys played hockey together. And Dave and I actually coached their Timbits hockey team together. It was during that time that I got to know Dave for the wonderful man that he is: very smart, very generous and very family-minded.

Now, he and his amazing wife Jill are constantly juggling schedules between their jobs, their kids' sports and their community commitments. Somehow, Dave has the time to write. He's written 25 books. You know what they say, Dave. Twenty-fifth time's the charm. So, it's great to see him win the GG book award this time around.

For years, educators across the country have been asking for an age-appropriate way to teach residential schools. And that's what Dave has delivered with *When We Were Alone*. He had the launch at McNally Robinson where his young daughter Lauren read along with elder Betsy Ross, and it perfectly encapsulates how a young person might learn about residential schools in a very soft and gentle way.

It's great to see Dave and the artist, Julie Flett, get honoured with this—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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 statement? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Klassen: I'm proud to rise today and to congratulate David Robertson on his Governor General's award. His story about a young girl gardening with her grandmother, learning about her experiences in residential schools and how it affected her life is beautifully written and illustrated. I've ordered a copy personally, and I can't wait to enjoy it with my family.

Teaching all children about our collective history is very important to reconciliation. We can't know where we're going if we don't know where we've come from. Not only does his book teach our children about the history of residential schools and their consequences, but his success is an amazing example for our children and youth of the diverse futures they can achieve.

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, I thank you for your contribution towards reconciliation. Congratulations to David, and Julie Flett, on your much-deserved award.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Colleen Dyck

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today and inform the House of the accomplishments of a successful entrepreneur and local business owner. Colleen Dyck of Niverville, Manitoba is the co-founder, along with her husband Grant, of The Great GORP Project.

Colleen is passionate about active and healthy living. While training for the triathlon, she realized she was unsatisfied with the energy bars available on the market and began developing her own recipe. After a while, her friends and family started asking for more and more of the homemade energy bars and Colleen realized she had an opportunity to bring an excellent product to market. After countless hours of hard work developing the perfect recipe, GORP energy bars were ready for production.

Colleen and Grant built a manufacturing facility in their 1,600-square-foot basement of their home and started providing bars to the local retailers. It wasn't long before word got around. GORP energy

bars are now provided to the Goldeyes, Blue Bombers and Winnipeg Jets.

In 2015, GORP signed their first million-dollar deal and was awarded the company of the year award by the Manitoba Food Processors Association. In 2016, Colleen was named Mompreneur of the year. Just last month, Colleen won the NEXTY Award for outstanding new product.

GORP energy bars have been handed to many of Hollywood's brightest stars, as Colleen was invited to present their product in the celebrity luxury gifting suite at the Academy Awards.

These accolades are well deserved. GORP should be—also be recognized for their efforts to give back to Manitoba. GORP employs four full-time and 15 casual employees and prioritizes locally sourced ingredients for their products. This ensures that many Manitobans can share in the benefits of GORP's success.

Last but certainly not least, a special congratulations to Colleen and GORP for officially hitting the one million bar mark. Colleen's passion is to fuel your adventures and do some global good at the same time. Her business is more than about food, more than about making a dime. It's about people.

So on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, congratulations, Colleen. Adventure on.

Madam Speaker: I would have to add that as much as everybody might be excited about eating your GORP bars, that there is no food to be consumed in this Chamber.

Sexual Assault Awareness Training for Judges

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker—sorry. Allow me to begin again. I apologize.

Madam Speaker, why didn't she just sink her bottom down into the basin so he could penetrate her? Why couldn't she just keep her knees together?

Madam Speaker, sex and pain sometimes go together, that's not necessarily a bad thing. I'll grant you that the implication for her is that she wasn't enjoying the pain, but did she ever say, I was feeling horrible?

Madam Speaker, sex was in the air because they were dressed in tube tops, no bras and wearing plenty of makeup.

Madam Speaker, she was a bit flattered because it was, perhaps, the first time someone was interested

in her, even though she was a little bit heavy, but she had a pretty face.

Madam Speaker, sexual assault is not the crime of the century.

If these comments make members feel uncomfortable, imagine for a moment what a victim experiences hearing a judge utter those offensive, degrading words in rendering judgment over a woman or girl's rape or sexual assault. It only further adds to the trauma that she's already endured.

This morning the Pallister government stood in this House voting against Bill 227, mandating all newly appointed judges and JJPs to undergo training on sexual assault law, culture of consent, myths and stereotypes, domestic violence, all the while cowering behind a narrative of contravening the constitution.

The Pallister government voted against training.

* (13:40)

Bill 227 did not say government would approve, create or administer the training, but rather, the chief judge would be responsible. It certainly didn't dictate that judges are to rule—how judges are to rule in sexual assault cases. It simply required that all new judges and JJPs take training. That's it.

I know the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, alongside our constitution, protects common sense approaches to protecting women and girls. Shame on this Pallister government voting against common sense and voting against protecting Manitoba women and girls.

Miigwech.

New Iceland Heritage Museum

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): I rise in the House today to honour the New Iceland Heritage Museum.

The museum is one of only seven Manitoba Signature Museums designated as such because they showcase distinct collections and have the potential to significantly enhance heritage tourism attractions.

Icelandic settlers arrived on the shores of Lake Winnipeg on October 21st, 1875, to settle in the Canadian wilderness on the tract of land they called New Iceland. New Iceland stretched from what is now known as Winnipeg Beach north to the—including Hecla Island.

The board of directors and staff pride themselves on presenting permanent exhibits, travelling exhibits and events that are both creative and inclusive, and that span a broad range of historic, relevant topics.

On October 21st of this year, the New Iceland Heritage Museum opened the new exhibit, John Ramsay, life of legacy. Along with the indigenous people, John Ramsay taught the Icelanders how to survive in the harsh winter in unfamiliar conditions.

The new exhibit tells the tragic story of John Ramsay, the Icelandic settlers at Sandy Bar and the smallpox epidemic in 1876 that claimed more than 100 lives, most of them children, including Ramsay's wife Betsey and three of his four children.

This powerful exhibit tells a story of friendship, tragedy and survival through music and video, featuring an original song written and performed by Juno Award-winning artist William Prince of Peguis First Nation.

The Icelandic community has never forgotten Ramsay's kindness in the face of terrible loss and continues to maintain Betsey Ramsay's grave.

Please join me today in congratulating the volunteers, the board of directors, the staff who contribute their time and expertise in new heritage Iceland museum.

Also joining us today, we're represented by Johanne Kristjanson, past president and long-time volunteer of New Iceland Heritage Museum.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Kelly MacKenzie Curling Team— Sports Hall of Fame

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): I rise in the House today to bring awareness to our Manitoba athletes and the upcoming inductions into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame this coming Saturday.

Kelly Scott, formerly MacKenzie, skipped a foursome that included Joanne Trager, formerly Fillion, at third; Carlene Strand, formerly Muth, at second; and Sasha Carter, formerly Bergner, at lead; and with some of the team joining us here today.

In 1994 final of the Manitoba junior championships, they would lose the eventual national champion to Jennifer Jones. True to Manitoba spirit, they did not let that get them down.

In 1995, MacKenzie's Team Manitoba played Jones, which was Team Canada, in the semifinal and

posted a 9-4 victory before defeating Ontario in the final game. MacKenzie was named all-star skip and earned the event's sportsmanship award.

Carrying on to the World Juniors in Perth, Scotland, Team MacKenzie posted a 7-2 round robin record, losing games to Scotland and Sweden. But in the playoff round, they avenged both losses with an 8-6 semifinal win over Scotland and a final game victory, 6-5, over Sweden. Joanne Fillion was named the world championship all-star third.

So I'm sure everybody knows how it is in small towns, and when people ask me who my father-in-law is, I mention Buddy Bergner, and they say, oh, you're married to the curler, which to my response is, yes, but not the famous one. My wife, Tara Bergner, also a great curler, I will put that on record, is a sister to Sasha.

So I would like to congratulate the entire team. Here today is Carlene and my sister-in-law, the more famous curler, Sasha Bergner.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba's Carbon Pricing Plan

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said Keyask and bipole were never needed, citing the expense and debt of building dams. Yet, on page 14 of his climate change plan, his government boasts of building Keyask and bipole, and their contributions to reducing greenhouse gas.

Does the government's right hand know what its left hand is doing? Does the left side of the Premier's mouth know what his right side is saying? Does the Premier believe that Keyask and bipole were unnecessary, as he said on Tuesday—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —or that Manitobans deserve credit for massive public investments made in building these dams, as he said last Friday? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: The PC government's climate change plan is unclear as to who will end up paying the PC carbon tax. The government says their tax will cost the average family \$240 a year. Does this mean a low-income family will pay as much as a high-income family? Will any families get any of the money back, as happens in British Columbia?

The plan also sets up a double standard of side deals for the province's biggest emitters and for agricultural emissions, which represent 30 per cent of all emissions. Is the government once again dumping the overwhelming burden of costs on those who can least afford it: families and small businesses?

On page 52 of its climate change plan, the government says spending money must lead to measurable results, and yet the government is again leaving the choice of what results should be to the Internet. Once again, the poll is open to multiple entries from anywhere around the world, and therefore open to fraud and abuse.

Will the Premier end his practice of wasting public money on manipulative polls of questionable value?

Thank you. Merci.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery.

Seated in the public gallery, from Manitoba Parents for Ukrainian Education, we have 58 grade 5 students from East Selkirk Middle School, Springfield Heights School, R.F. Morrison School, Oakbank Elementary and Ralph Brown School, and these are the guests of the honourable Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler).

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today five students and three staff from the Toyohashi School for the Deaf in Japan who are on an exchange with their sister school, the Manitoba School for the Deaf, and they are the guests of the honourable Minister of Education.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to Health Services Impact on Patient Care

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Front-line workers and health-care professionals are speaking out against the Premier's cuts to health care. Their message is clear: the Premier's plans are hurting the care front-line workers provide and patient care will suffer.

One nurse at the Grace Hospital described the scene at the clinical teaching medical unit as chaotic.

She's afraid to go to work, Madam Speaker, because the Premier's changes means it's harder and harder for her to do her job. She is afraid that the patients she cares for will suffer. We also know about the cuts to nurses at Deer Lodge Centre. Overloading nurses at Grace Hospital will mean less time at the bedside there too.

The Premier's plans for cuts to our health-care system will mean patient care suffers. Will the Premier stop his plan for cuts and listen to the front-line workers?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, if change was easy, the previous government would have done it. But they didn't, and they drove the system into a state of disrepair that was unequalled across the country of Canada—10th out of 10 in every major measurable comparative.

So the member disrespects the views of front-line workers who have told us that the system needs healing. And we are about accepting the challenge, Madam Speaker, of making sure that it is made better.

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

Reprisal Against Staff Concerns

Mr. Kinew: The Premier may not care about the consequences of his cuts, but patients and the front-line workers who see it up close definitely do.

Now, many of them are afraid to speak out against the changes to health care because of possible retaliation by the government, but we need to have the courage to hear their voices, and the Premier should have the courage to listen to them too.

* (13:50)

Now, this is what one nurse at the Grace Hospital is saying, and I quote here: The morale is really low. People are stressed out. You don't want to go into work because you know it's just going to be a stressful day. The Premier's cuts—end quote, by the way.

The Premier's cuts are making it harder for front-line workers to deliver the excellent health care that we want them to be able to deliver. Instead, they are demoralized. They feel pushed around by these chaotic changes ushered in by the Premier and they feel as though they're not being listened to.

Will the Premier guarantee that no nurse or front-line worker who speaks out against his cuts will face retaliation or sanction by the government or the WRHA?

Mr. Pallister: The question borders on asinine, Madam Speaker.

The previous administration spent over \$100,000 sending out mailers. They sent out mailers all over the province to known households of civil servants trying to frighten them prior to the last election, and the member uses in his preamble, he makes at least three references: fear, afraid, and afraid and so on.

Madam Speaker, what the workers and the front-line workers in this province are afraid of is a continuation of a broken system. What they want is a system that can help heal people, where people can get access to health care, where people are able to get the tests they need so that they can understand where their health situation can be remedied, not forced to wait.

What the member is advocating for is exactly what the previous government did to all Manitobans. He's advocating we wait, Madam Speaker. Manitobans are tired of waiting. They want somebody to fix the system. We will.

Madam Speaker: I would just encourage all members, whether asking or answering questions, to be careful with the language. We don't need to further inflame debate with provocative words, and I would encourage all members to please adhere to that.

The honourable member—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

Request to Reverse Funding Decision

Mr. Kinew: Thank you, Madam Speaker, always look forward to your learned instructions here in the Chamber.

Of course, if the Premier took the time to listen he would understand that these words of fear or anxiety or of people being stressed out are coming from the front-line workers themselves and the patients who rely on care from our health-care system, and he ought to listen to them.

Patients, nurses, they've had enough. Families have had enough. They see a Premier that will put money ahead of the care that their loved ones rely on. They see a Premier who refuses to listen to nurses and patients when they speak out against

these cuts. They see a Premier who pretends, using cherry-picked data, that everything is fine, when, in reality, patient care is going to get worse.

We know that the Premier is responsible for these cuts. We've previously established that in this House, that he's ordering these changes at the Cabinet table.

Will the Premier have the courage to listen to these patients and nurses and reverse his plan for cuts?

Mr. Pallister: Simple use of the word courage doesn't demonstrate it, Madam Speaker. The previous administration did nothing and watched a system descend into a state of disrepair that hurt Manitobans, that hurt Manitoba families—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —that created genuine fear, Madam Speaker. It takes no courage for the member to stand there and tell us to slow down changes that were needed when the NDP were in power but they did not have the courage to act upon. It takes no courage to stand there and try to frighten civil servants.

Madam Speaker, what we're about is healing the system and helping the people who deliver the care get that care, in a more appropriate and timely way, to Manitobans who need it so they no longer have to wait longer than every other Canadian for diagnosis and treatment and surgeries and in emergency rooms. This is not a system that is working. They broke it; we will fix it.

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

Health-Care Services Flu Shot Clinic Closures

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Madam Speaker.

The flu season is upon us and it's incumbent on all of us to do our part and get the flu shot. I've done it; my arm's still sore, by the way. It's also incumbent on this government to make sure that all Manitobans have access to the flu shot. Now, getting the flu is not a small matter. For young children, for seniors, for people who face barriers in the forms of social determinants of health, the flu can be a life or death illness.

Now, that's why it's so important to make sure that this front-line health-care service is made as

widely available as possible, but that seems to be the exact opposite direction the Premier is taking. The WRHA cut the number of flu shot clinics from 12 to five, over a 50 per cent reduction.

Why is the government cutting the number of flu shot clinics in Winnipeg?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, there's fear and there is ignorance, Madam Speaker, and the reality is we're expanding the system of availability for flu treatments and for flu prevention in the province of Manitoba, so the member has put false information on the record yet again. We've actually expanded the services to make them available to more Manitobans.

We've gone out there and encouraged more Manitobans to use the services that are available, and we have introduced a high-risk flu shot for seniors in care homes to assist them in maintaining their health, because we love our seniors, Madam Speaker, and we don't try to frighten them in question period.

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

Mr. Kinew: So, contrary to what the Premier would have the public believe, more—or, you know, less is not more. Consolidation is not expansion, and this broken approach to our health-care system is not a fix, right?

Government documents reveal that the southern regional health authority identified approximately \$40,000 in savings to be had by cutting the number of flu shot clinics it operates, and I table these documents for the Premier to take a look at, remind himself of the decisions that he's signing off at the Cabinet table.

Now, this cut was a direct result of the order by the Premier to cut millions from the RHA's budget. What's more, with reports that some private providers are running low on their supply of the flu vaccine, Manitobans are left with fewer and fewer options to get the health care that they need.

Why is this government cutting flu shot clinics across Winnipeg and across the province?

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, I'll let the member engage in a little further research so that he can come up with better preambles.

Madam Speaker, I'll only say this: that we are making flu vaccines available—more readily available than has been the case in the past, that

we're expanding that availability, that we've actually introduced a high-risk option for seniors in our seniors homes, and that we expect, unlike the previous administration's failure in virtually every category, that this will result in better, healthier situation for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: There are fewer flu shot clinics here in Winnipeg, fewer flu shot clinics in the southern region. This is the record that the Premier is creating for himself. He promised in the last election no cuts to front-line services, and yet whether it's physio, it's flu shots, it's nursing layoffs, it's health-care-aide reductions, we seem to see that that election promise is being broken over and over again by this Premier.

In 2016-17, there were four influenza deaths, 72 hospitalizations and 13 ICU admissions as a result of the flu. So we know that this is a very important issue, and, you know, getting that shot can help stop the spread and, you know, those further complications which may lead to more serious illnesses down the road. These cuts to the health-care system are causing real harm to Manitobans.

Will the Premier reverse course? Will he stop cutting the number of flu shot clinics in the province?

Mr. Pallister: So, Madam Speaker, there is an issue that was ignored under the previous administration, and we're not going to ignore it—it's an important issue—and it is: how do we sustain health care—quality health care for Manitobans at the same time as we're improving it.

Madam Speaker, we're doing both those things and neither were being done by the previous administration. We were left with a billion-dollar deficit. We were handed a billion-dollar bill—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —we were handed a billion-dollar interest bill on previous debt, NDP debt, that ran up ridiculously in good times with low interest rates, Madam Speaker.

And now the member opposite peacocks around talking about compassion while he's made over a billion dollars of new spending promises and hasn't produced a dollar of potential savings. This isn't how you create a sustainable system for tomorrow, Madam Speaker, let alone improve the system today.

They broke it, and with all these additional promises, they promise to make the system worse. They broke it; we're fixing it. *[interjection]*

* (14:00)

Madam Speaker: Order.

Lifelight Air Ambulance Pilot Recertification

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health either couldn't or wouldn't answer important questions about certification for Lifelight pilots to ensure air ambulances are available to patients 24-7. The minister has refused to commit to sending Lifelight pilots for recertification, meaning that, come December, they will begin to lose qualified pilots and planes will become unavailable.

We're told recertification costs about \$8,000 per pilot. It's a small investment to continue a vital front-line service for Manitobans.

I will give the minister one more chance. Will he commit today to ensure that all Lifelight pilots are able to recertify in time to continue flying?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Every year, government puts forward approximately \$300,000 for training for air services—Lifelight. This training is annually taking place. It will start this December, as it does every year, and this training schedule is mandated by Transport Canada.

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

Southern Air Ambulances Future of Service

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): The minister refused to hire new pilots to fly southern air ambulances, which have forced those planes could be grounded—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —for lengthy periods of time.

A government briefing note obtained through freedom of information shows that, because of this government's inaction, southern air was available less than one sixth of the time. That means Manitobans in Portage la Prairie, Morden, Souris, Emerson and even the minister's own constituency of Steinbach were left without life-saving health-care air ambulances 85 per cent of the time, and it could be worse now.

Is the minister find a need to ground Lifeflight just as he did with southern air?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Well, Madam Speaker, I would suggest to members opposite they be very careful with the questions they pose and not cause undue concern with questions that are raised not based on fact. Again I'd like to—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Schuler: —point out that the training that is done, it is done in a staggered fashion. Addressing some of the misinformation that was put on the record yesterday, our first one is due December the 1st and he is scheduled to go for training, and the others will follow.

Madam Speaker, when a airplane is shut down for servicing we always ensure that there is a replacement flight available through the private sector.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm glad the Minister of Infrastructure is asking for information to be put on the record, because what I'm about to tender is our freedom of information request: a briefing note for the Minister of Infrastructure entitled Staff Shortage. And I will quote from that document: southern air ambulance is being operated approximately 15 per cent capacity, which, of course, means that there's 85 per cent of the time that southern air ambulance service is not available to the people of Manitoba.

So I will tender this for the Minister of Infrastructure. Perhaps he can explain it; he can look at these facts and explain why his government has allowed key air ambulance services to be cut. And I table this now, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Schuler: I want to ensure that all Manitobans are aware that we are currently at full complement of pilots with air services—Lifeflight. The training will continue. I just want to make sure that Manitobans aren't unduly frightened by questions from members opposite. The training will start in December. We are at full complement. Lifeflight will continue to fly.

If such a time happens that a airplane cannot fly, we make sure during that period of time that we have sufficient air service available through the private sector.

Cannabis Industry Conflict Disclosure

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

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yesterday's question period was quite remarkable. We had a Minister of Health that didn't know the difference between an ambulance and an air ambulance. We had a Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) who didn't know the difference between Churchill and Thompson, and maybe worst of all, the Premier didn't know the difference between opioids and methamphetamine.

Then, the Premier went out in the hall and declared that his Cabinet and senior staff had to disclose conflicts in the cannabis industry. Why wouldn't any such conflicts have to be disclosed and why haven't they been disclosed already?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, finally a question the member has expertise in. He's an expert in creating conflict within his own party and everywhere else he goes, Madam Speaker. He doesn't agree with his leader in his own party; why would he agree with anything we do on this side of the House?

One thing he has no expertise in is being part of an organization that concerns itself with rising to a higher ethical standard. Certainly we want to—
[interjection]

Yes, that is good. That is good. Madam Speaker, I note a number of the members opposite, who were involved in collusion—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —around cover-ups, around the—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —purchase, from donors to their party, of Tiger Dam flood-protection devices that did not work, are now laughing. I would want that on the record. The member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), find this humorous. Madam Speaker, millions of dollars of taxpayers' money thrown at party donors is not something to laugh about.

Now, we're concerned about the ethical malaise we inherited from the previous government, and we're doing something about it on this side of the House. We're cleaning it up, Madam Speaker.

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

**Premier's Business Interests
Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, Madam Speaker, we know how edgy the Premier gets right around Halloween, and we're seeing more evidence of it today.

We know just how touchy the Premier is when we ask him about his difficulty with existing conflict laws. We know he failed to disclose corporations he owned, in breach of the conflict-of-interest law. The Conflict of Interest Commissioner has made it perfectly clear to him in writing, and will to any other member who actually asks, that those interests must be disclosed. Either the Premier forgot, or he simply chose not to disclose corporate interests outside of Canada, and he still, amazingly, never apologized.

Why is the Premier now making a big deal of the kind of disclosure, already required by law, which he himself failed to do?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We are an open and transparent government, and we continue to introduce things and laws in this province to ensure that we are more and—open and transparent, and that was what this legislation—or, what this announcement was for yesterday.

In cannabis, we have taken a proactive approach to ensure that we bring forward public health and safety—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —first in our Cannabis Harm Prevention Act. We were the first in the country to do so. We will continue to protect the health and safety of all Manitobans.

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

**Cabinet and Senior Staff
Premier's Communication Method**

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, if the Minister of Justice wants to convince any Manitoban that she's interested in openness and transparency, perhaps she could tell the House why the very people that her Premier chose for Cabinet and senior staff need a memo from the Premier just to meet their responsibilities.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, we take the issues around ethics very seriously on this side, especially on the heels of the previous administration's failure to abide by a standard of ethics, as pointed out by the Auditor General in her report. Tone at the top does matter. We've endeavoured to do everything we can to make sure that we're rising to the challenge of setting the proper tone at the top.

Now, the member opposite attacked his leader and said he wasn't abiding by appropriate standards. I don't know whether he was justified in that, Madam Speaker. I don't think he was, but he continues to sit here and attack everyone else's ethics while failing to look within himself as being an architect of the disrepute and disrepair of the previous administration. He should accept some responsibility, as well, for the dysfunction he helped put on display which saddened all Manitobans, including people on this side of the House, to have to watch.

Madam Speaker, he's tried to run this flag up the pole too many times. He's even tired out the media.

* (14:10)

**MMIWG Inquiry Interim Report
Implementation of Recommendations**

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls released its interim report yesterday. While many of the recommendations are directed to the federal government, they demonstrate that full co-operation and co-ordination with provinces and territories are necessary in addressing violence against indigenous women and girls, something I'm very proud to say that we were undertaking in concert with MMIWG families here in Manitoba.

The 'commissioners' outlined the role of the provinces in implementing the TRC's calls to action, UNDRIP and Jordan's Principle.

Will the minister commit to acting on the commissioners' recommendations and be a full partner to the national inquiry?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We did receive a copy of the interim report yesterday on the national inquiry into MMIWG and we look forward to reviewing that report.

We have heard loud and clear from MMIWG families that the national inquiry must be family and survivor centred, and it must be—actively involve Manitoba families, survivors and members of our indigenous communities. That's why our grand chiefs, our provincial government and family organizations are working together, collaboratively and in partnership, and speaking as one united voice on this very important issue.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The interim report identifies a need for more frequent, accessible, transit services providing safe transportation options for indigenous women and girls. This need is particularly more urgent in urban—or in rural communities. The government's decision to abandon guaranteed funding for municipalities means it will be harder for Winnipeg and smaller rural communities to expand and maintain a strong public transit system.

Will the minister amend her government's budget bill so that indigenous women and girls can access safer transit?

Mrs. Stefanson: I welcome the question from the member opposite. I know she is very passionate about this issue, as we are too, and we want to ensure the protection of families and ensuring that they have the tools that they need to properly participate in this process.

That's why we've consulted with numerous indigenous agencies about broadening the Family Information Liaison Unit to include community-based supports for families. So we will continue to work with stakeholders, we will continue to work with families to ensure they have the appropriate supports.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The report also recommends provincial governments provide project funding in addition to regular operational funds to help ensure indigenous organizations are able to fully participate in the national inquiry. The government has made some deep cuts to non-profits, including those that serve Manitoba's indigenous peoples like the North Point Douglas woman's resource centre.

Will the minister commit to increasing project funding for Manitoba's indigenous non-profit organizations?

Mrs. Stefanson: The member opposite is quite wrong. We are working and we're consulting. We've consulted with numerous indigenous agencies, including Ka Ni Kanichihk, Manitoba Moon Voices, Thompson friendship centre, Mamawi, others as well, Madam Speaker.

We will continue to work with these organizations. We have—through victim services we are supplying that support for those—the victims and the families. We will continue to work with these organizations to ensure that the families have the appropriate and necessary supports that they need as they go through this very difficult time together.

Inuit Community Governance Model

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): During my resolution debate there was mentioned that it only targeted First Nation leaderships and not the Metis and the Inuit. So I'll state the why again more clearly.

There is little respect shown to the majority of First Nation community leaderships as they govern over their lands and people. Just so everyone knows, the Metis communities are governed by mayors, Reeves and their councils. The governance model is well established and already quite respected.

But for the Inuit—I'll get the minister's help—can the minister please tell us the name of the Inuit settlement—land-based community—here in Manitoba, and tell us what type of governance model, please?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Certainly, I want to thank the member for the question. I know she is very passionate about these issues and we will continue to work with her and organizations to ensure that we have the proper supports in place, and I look forward to having further discussion with her about this.

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

Issues Facing Metis Community Government Position

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I was pleased to hear the three PC MLAs state their Metis status. Now I can finally be assured that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere), the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Mayer) and the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé) have been advocating and speaking up for the rights of Metis people. It's largely been behind closed doors, but perhaps they have daily

or weekly or even monthly discussions with the minister on issues facing Manitoba's Metis people.

Can the minister tell the House: What are the top three issues facing our Metis people and what steps have been undertaken to resolve those issues?

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

We have a tremendous amount of respect for the Metis community in our province, and we work—and I know the Minister responsible for Indigenous and Northern Relations works very closely with the members and the leaders within the Metis community.

We will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that we are listening to Manitobans, something that we do each and every day, and we will continue to do so.

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

Duty-to-Consult Framework Communities Consulted

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): There are over 500 Inuit living here in Manitoba. They have an association. We have over 80,000 Metis, 60 per cent live here in Winnipeg. There are several proud Metis communities. There are 63 First Nations that have Indian Act-imposed chief and council leaderships. We have one First Nations that is governed by a hereditary chief and council. One quarter of all First Nations people in Canada are not registered Indians due to previous government policies. That's why we need to be at the table.

Can the minister tell us the names of the communities they have worked with in crafting the PC indigenous consultation framework?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, we value the relationship with indigenous people very much and have worked hard to prove that value by having our ministers go out, actively, to each of the communities to personally meet with the leaders and community representatives and to stay in touch with them on a regular basis on all issues of importance.

Whereas things were not getting done under the previous administration, we are making progress on a number of fronts. For example, on the Treaty Land

Entitlement issues that many indigenous people are very concerned about. There had been no acreage allocated under those programs for the previous three and a half, four years. We have now tens of thousands of acres that have been allocated under the TLE program. And there are many other examples, as well.

We look forward to getting people back home to their communities from flooded-out areas. We look forward to completing Freedom Road. We have progress being made in a real way on a number of fronts, Madam Speaker. So I appreciate the member's reference to these important communities in our province.

Drug-Impaired Driving Road Safety Initiatives

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Our Minister of Justice attended an important event yesterday, launching the Project Red Ribbon campaign with the Winnipeg chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada, the Winnipeg Police Service, the RCMP, the City of Winnipeg—many groups were there.

Our government has already implemented strong measures to reduce drug-impaired driving in preparation for cannabis legalization.

Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Justice update the House on the steps she has taken to make Manitoba's roads safer?

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

I was honoured yesterday to stand with MADD Canada, and especially with Kelly and Leah Fright, who tragically lost their daughter to an impaired drive, and our hearts go out to them and their family.

Madam Speaker, I'm also honoured to serve as a co-chair of a national working group on cannabis legalization that will report back to the premiers on five key areas, including road safety and law enforcement. We've led all provinces with The Cannabis Harm Prevention Act, getting high drivers off the roads and restricting access to cannabis in vehicles. We will continue to work hard every day with MADD Canada, with law enforcement, with MPI and with others to ensure the safety of all Manitobans.

Northern Manitoba Communities Restoration of Rail Service

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Yesterday I asked what this government is doing to restore adequate rail service to the North. While the Minister for Infrastructure avoided the question, people in Churchill were learning that the cost of gas was going to jump up by 30 per cent.

I ask again: What is this government doing to restore full rail service to northern Manitoba?

* (14:20)

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): I'm pleased to inform the Legislature that the tanker 'Svend' Fjord did arrive yesterday in Churchill and has begun offloading the fuel supplies. We are pleased that there will be plenty of fuel up in Churchill.

There is, however, an issue of the cost. We would ask the member to join with us in pursuing the federal government to live up to their constitutional obligation to show leadership not just in the port, but also with the railway.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Reduced rail service to northern Manitoba means fewer jobs. Yesterday, we also learned that workers are being laid off at HBR rail. Fewer jobs now means fewer people who can live in the North and raise their families.

This government needs to pressure OmniTRAX to restore full rail service to northern Manitoba, but more importantly, will they take immediate action for a long-term solution, that is, northern ownership of the rail line?

Mr. Schuler: We certainly appreciate the member's passion on this issue and, again, we want to let the House know that fuel has arrived. It arrived yesterday and is being unloaded today.

We understand that there are issues about the ownership of the railway. We would again like to ask members opposite if they would join with us in pursuing that the federal government live up to their constitutional obligations on the railway and start dealing with the issue appropriately.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Northbound freight has fallen rapidly since the rail line to Churchill closed. Reductions in service, and the increased costs of living that follows, aren't isolated events.

What happens to Churchill happens to Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas, Nelson House and OCN. It happens to all of northern Manitoba.

Instead of band-aids and blaming Ottawa, will this government take immediate action that will lead to northern-Manitoba ownership of the northern rail line?

Mr. Schuler: Again, Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question, and we appreciate her passion.

I would also mention to the House that yesterday was the unfortunate passing away of her father, the former MLA, and I know we all mourn his passing away.

I'd like to point out to the member, when she talks about bandages, there was a previous government, her government, that spent \$20 million on OmniTRAX. I would suggest that band-aid didn't work. We have to pursue the federal government that they lived up to their constitutional obligation to deal with 'wailway', and I would ask the members opposite to join us.

Post-Secondary Education Funding Supports for Students

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Students pursuing post-secondary education are investing in themselves and investing in Manitoba as the future workforce and contributors in our economy.

They're doing whatever it takes to make post-secondary happen. They're often working multiple jobs while they study, and they're racking up student loans and increased debt while they make ends meet.

But students are worried, as this government is making post-secondary education less affordable. There are less supports for students, and tuition fees are set to skyrocket under this government, and yet the Premier (Mr. Pallister) doesn't seem to hear their concerns.

Does the minister have the same commitment to post-secondary education as the students apparently do?

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

I can assure him this government is very committed to post-secondary education in Manitoba. We're working very hard with the institutions and with the students to make it sustainable in the future.

And in his preamble, he was certainly in error when he said that we have less supports. We have significantly more supports for students through scholarships and bursaries than ever occurred under the previous government.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, the numbers don't lie, Madam Speaker. This government has cut \$60 million in supports for students in post-secondary education. This government has failed to raise the funds that it had intended to raise for scholarships and bursaries. The government is raising tuition at an unprecedented rate, and the government is cutting funding to post-secondary institutions. All of these decisions combined will hurt students and take away the supports that they need the most.

Will this minister stop hurting students, and will he restore funding in post-secondary education today?

Mr. Wishart: I can say that all of the comments in the preamble that the member brought forward were all in error.

Certainly, in the last two years our government has been more than in line with other provinces in terms of our support for post-secondary institutions. We are working constructively with the universities as they continue to raise funds with—from private sector for scholarships and bursaries, and that is going well.

So I suspect that the member over there just doesn't like—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wishart:—good news, especially when it relates to students in this province.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, Madam Speaker, the minister can try and refute the facts that I've put on the record, but students who came to committee, who came to this Legislature, made it abundantly clear that the supports that they count on and the tuition going up will be a real barrier to their access to post-secondary education.

And, clearly, the minister's plan to—for low-income students to access scholarships and bursaries is failing because they've only raised \$1.8 million of the \$20 million needed from the private sector. This is a real barrier, Madam Speaker, to many students who are already being hit by these increases, and the removal of the tax rebates and increasing interest on student loans is just the icing on the cake.

Last chance, time is getting short. Will this minister—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you for the very appropriate timing.

Certainly, we're very pleased with the way things are going in regards to 'braising' money for the Scholarship and Bursary Initiative. We are very happy to work together with post-secondary institutions to make sure that we can be part of raising the Scholarship and Bursary Initiative in this province to \$20 million.

When they were in government, they actually cut that and froze it for four other years. So I can see that they're not very committed to really helping students. It's more about talk in their case, and less about action.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Transit Funding Legislation Public Presentations at Committee

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): All week long I've been asking about—the Finance Minister about his renegeing on the 50-50 formula for funding public transit in Winnipeg and in—across Manitoba. I have yet to receive an answer about whether he's prepared to send this to committee so that the public can have their say.

So, Madam Speaker, for the umpteenth time: Will the Finance Minister commit to sending this bill to committee and letting the people of Manitoba have a say?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for that placid question and I want to respond, as that member knows, that we have some of the most significant arrangements when it comes to municipal support.

This government will be, of course, investing in the second phase of rapid transit in the city of Winnipeg. That member knows that this

government's new green plan articulates, explicitly, measures to bring new transit opportunities which will both create jobs and help our environment.

So, on the subject of transit, we're always happy to provide that member with these answers.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Transit Funding

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

* (14:30)

The background to this petition is as follows:

Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8) repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act which states, quote, The municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue.

(2) Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

(3) Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

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

Fisheries

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Many fishers are opposed to the provincial government's Bill 23, The Fisheries Amendment Act, which will pull Manitoba out of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, also known as FFMC.

(2) Fishers are concerned their livelihoods will be negatively impacted by this legislation in multiple ways, such as: loss of revenues, higher expenses, uncertain market conditions and potential depreciation of the value of quota entitlements.

(3) Multiple recent court rulings have shown that a government must engage in proper consultation with indigenous communities when a government decision is going to impact treaty rights. No such consultations occurred before Bill 23 was introduced.

(4) Additional court rulings have established that a government cannot delegate its responsibility to proper consultations to a third party. The meetings hosted by the fisheries envoy after Bill 23 was introduced did not constitute proper consultation.

(5) Fishers are alarmed by public comments made by the fisheries envoy that the decision to pull out of FFMC was final and that the provincial government has no intention of changing its decision, no matter what the fisheries envoy heard from fishers during meetings.

(6) Bill 23 could very well face court challenges, which will be expensive for all involved, including the provincial government.

(7) Fishers are additionally concerned that Bill 23 could lead to excess fish processing capacity in Manitoba, thereby putting unsustainable pressure on fish stocks.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to immediately withdraw Bill 23, The Fisheries Amendment Act; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to initiate proper and respectful consultations with fishers on the future of Manitoba's valuable fisheries and the families and communities that depend on them.

And this is signed by B. Drozdowski, K. Wilson, B. Wilson and many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Northern Patient Transfer Program

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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 the 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, Madam Speaker, has been signed by many, many, many Manitobans.

Taxi Industry Regulation

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

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

(2) 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 the 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. That 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.

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.

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

* (14:40)

Transit Funding

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8) repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act which states, quote, "The municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue," end of quote.

(2) Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

(3) Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Concordia Hospital Emergency Room

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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 Concordia Hospital.

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 northeast 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 for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in northeast 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 northeast Winnipeg regarding the closing of their emergency room or to consult with health officials and health-care workers at Concordia 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 Concordia Hospital's emergency room so that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

This petition was signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): 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 Concordia 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 northeast 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 for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in northeast 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 northeast Winnipeg regarding the closing of their emergency room or to consult with health officials and health-care workers at Concordia 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 Concordia Hospital's emergency room so that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans. Thank you.

Northern Patient Transfer Program

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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.

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans. Thank you.

Health Care Investment

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

The Premier has launched an attack on Manitoba's health-care system, imposing reckless cuts to facilities and services, which will have a devastating impact on the health and safety of Manitobans.

The Premier has broken his promise to protect the front-line health-care services families and seniors depend on, as well as to protect the front-line workers who deliver these services.

The Premier is closing three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in Winnipeg, forcing families in south and northeastern and western Winnipeg to travel further for emergency health care.

The Premier has already shuttered the St. Boniface QuickCare Clinic and has announced plans to close four more clinics in Winnipeg, meaning families will no longer be able to access primary health care in their communities.

* (14:50)

The Premier cancelled \$1 billion in health capital projects, including a new facility for

CancerCare Manitoba, primary-care clinics for St. Vital and The Pas, a consultation clinic for Thompson, a new facility for the Pan Am Clinic, two new personal-care homes and an international centre for palliative care.

The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) millions of dollars in budget cuts have forced the WRHA to cut crucial services like occupational therapy and physiotherapy in hospitals, lactation consultants for new mothers, the Mature Women's Centre at Victoria Hospital, a home-care program for the chronically ill.

The budget cuts have resulted in the raising of fees for seniors in the long-term care program and cancelled a program that recruited doctors to work in rural communities.

On top of these cuts, the provincial government has opened the door to privatization by bringing in private home-care companies and expressing interest in private MRI services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately reverse these cuts which hurt families and seniors' care, weaken health-care services and drive health-care workers out of the province, and to instead invest in the provincial government health-care system in order to protect and improve patient care.

Signed by Linda Wingert, Luella Stephens, Jim Stephens and many, many others.

Concordia Hospital Emergency Room

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

And 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 Concordia Hospital.

(2) The closures come on the heels of 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 northeast 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 for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in northeast 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 northeast Winnipeg regarding the closing of their emergency room or to consult with health officials and health-care workers at Concordia 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 Concordia Hospital's emergency room so that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Madam Speaker: The House will now consider the Opposition Day motion of the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino), and as members likely know, Bill 233, The Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Day Act, has passed second reading on October 26, 2017. Rule 42 states in part that no member shall revive a debate already concluded, and rule 30(9) referring to opposition day motions states that no motion under this rule shall be for second reading or concurrence or third reading of a bill.

While the Opposition Day motion moved by the member for Logan is in order, debate must be limited to the reasons why the bill should be referred to standing committee and not the substance of the bill itself. Debating the merits of the bill would be beyond the scope of this motion and would be a revival of a decision already made by the Assembly this session.

I will now recognize the honourable member for Logan.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I move, seconded by the member from The Pas, that the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to immediately refer Bill 233 to a standing committee so members of the public may make presentations to MLAs on this bill.

Thank you.

Motion presented.

Ms. Marcelino: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank you for the reminder that you've just relayed to us about how we will go about discussing this motion. We're not debating this because it's already been done last week, and I thank all my colleagues for approving this bill unanimously.

Very briefly, I am standing up just to reiterate that this bill is meant not to divide communities, not to open old wounds between communities, but simply to commemorate a tragic event. And, by doing so, we will internalize and we will be reflective of these sad events and be—and have that resolved in our hearts and in our minds that these atrocities, these acts of inhumanity, these cruel—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Richmond, on a point of order.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madam Speaker, I would just like to remind that we are to be speaking about the actual motion, which is asking us to move to committee. It is not to be discussing the merits of the bill.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Concordia, on the same point of order?

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the member raising the issue. I think you've been very clear in your instructions to this House.

Obviously, this is an important issue and something that I think members feel passionately about. They do want to speak, too, this afternoon. I think your caution is one that I think all members will do their best to adhere to and try to stay on the issue at hand.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate that I'm hoping the member was reaching her point in her debate as

to why this needs to go to committee. I was giving her a little bit of latitude on that to reach the point, but it could come close to starting to debate the issue again, and that is not to be what is discussed.

Today the discussion must be as to why this should go to committee. So it's a valid point, and I'm hoping that the member is reaching that part of her debate.

* * *

Ms. Marcelino: You're—thank you, Madam Speaker, you're certainly correct. I'm about to end that sentence, before I was interrupted.

I was just referring to the fact that—and, in fact, I thank my colleagues for unanimously siding with us on this bill. And I was just about to say that those tragic events had transpired. We don't want to relive those events, we don't want old wounds opened up, but we wanted this bill to be forwarded to the standing committee so members of the public—not everyone agrees to this bill—may be able to express their concerns.

And that's what the standing committee's all about. I was about to say that.

But we believe that this bill was not to be judgmental of other communities, but to usher in reconciliation and healing and for this tragic event never, never to be repeated again.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

*(15:00)

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Crown Services): I do rise to speak to the Opposition Day motion. I know with the topic at hand—Madam Speaker, I know you provided us some guidance around our discussion and debate here today, I know, but with the topic at hand it is certainly a sensitive issue and I think it's going to be hard to avoid where we were in debate and certainly where we're going to go. So I will certainly try to heed your words of advice as I go through my presentation today.

First of all, Nelson Mandela once said, for to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. And that's, I think, part of the discussion and the debate we're having today on this particular resolution as it's brought forward. I think we understand the stated intent of Bill 233 was to help Manitobans reflect on the lessons of war and the importance of respect for fundamental human rights.

We understand concerns raised by individuals and groups with respect to the implications of the bill if it is passed, certainly for the members of the Japanese community here in Manitoba and, quite frankly, throughout the world, and it—if this bill does pass at some point in time, it will potentially impact relationships between Asian countries, Manitoba, Canada and certainly Canada-Japanese relations and ultimately Japanese and Chinese relations. So I think this is very important to keep this in context when we think about the motion before us today.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, history is painful. We have to learn from the past and we must take care to be cautious about what divides us and what those issues are that divides us, and we certainly have to learn from the past, and hopefully that will be a reflection for all of us.

I think we also have to understand the ongoing concern that these measures would detract from the positive relationships that now exist between Japan and China as well, and certainly it's the position of our government not to interfere in matters of international relations or foreign policy—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a point of order.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Yes, on a point of order, Madam Speaker.

As you so clearly said in your ruling and as the member opposite pointed out previously, this member is also starting to get into debating the actual meat and potatoes of the bill and not focusing on why it should go to the standing committee. So if he could perhaps focus his comments on that. Thank you. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

I would urge all members—and this will be a somewhat difficult debate this afternoon because we are not allowed to debate in any way the bill itself and it will be difficult, but I do urge everybody to focus on the one issue, and that is why this bill should be referred to committee.

So, I had given the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) a little bit of latitude. I was giving the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) a little bit of latitude. But I would urge people, as we're getting into the debate now and getting a little bit

used to the nuances of the debate this afternoon, that we do need to get specific around why this should go to committee.

* * *

Mr. Cullen: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the advice.

I'm getting to the point. The position of our government is not to interfere in international relations or foreign policy. Clearly, if we allow this motion to proceed, we would be crossing that border. And giving those concerns, I think it's in the greater interests of Manitobans not to support this particular resolution going forward.

And I think I made the point about the important relationships that we have, and we certainly don't want anything to impact positive relationships around the world.

And, you know, with that—I'll keep my comments very brief, Madam Speaker, just to say that, you know, on behalf of the government, I must note that we will be voting against this particular resolution.

Mr. Lindsey: I will make every effort to make sure that my comments are directed the way they should be; however, I'm sure that, at some point in time, someone will suggest that I've vectored off a little bit, so—the point of this bill is—already been stated, so I won't go to that, but what I do want to talk about is democracy in this province.

We've perhaps already seen some instances where things didn't get to committee in a timely enough fashion, or not enough time was given at committee meetings to actually hear everyone that wanted to present. Certainly, we need to make sure that this bill gets to committee—

Madam Speaker: Order.

I would indicate that it is getting a little bit loud in here. I am having a little bit of difficulty hearing the member, and for the courtesy of the member in debate, I would urge that members keep their comments quieter. We have guests in the gallery as well who I'm sure want to hear debate, so I would ask for everybody's co-operation.

Mr. Lindsey: To get back to what I was talking about, we need to ensure that, whether it's this motion or other bills, that there's adequate time given at committee to actually listen to Manitobans. As has been said earlier by others that perhaps not

everyone's in favour of this. There may be people that have very conflicting views about the importance of this particular bill. And, while we don't get into debating the importance or non-importance of the motion itself, we do need to really focus our comments today on the importance of allowing Manitobans to have their say.

And that's the whole purpose of this motion, is to get this to committee—

An Honourable Member: Faster.

Mr. Lindsey: —to get it to committee, as the member opposite said, faster. And that's not a bad thing, Madam Speaker. That'd be a good thing to get it to committee faster, to allow Manitobans the opportunity to let us know what their views are on the bill.

But as well as getting it there faster, of course, Madam Speaker, is the importance of ensuring that there's sufficient time for all those Manitobans who wish to have their views heard, actually have the time to have their views heard.

We've certainly seen recently that that's not always the case; in fact, I think the first time in Manitoba history since this Legislature came into being, the very first time this government did not allow everyone who wanted to present to committee the opportunity to present at committee. One hundred-and-some individuals that were ready, willing, able and wanting to speak weren't afforded that opportunity.

So the point of my friend from Logan bringing this forward is to ensure that this does not happen again with this bill. She feels very passionately about introducing it. She feels very passionately about ensuring that proper and adequate time is given for Manitobans to have their voices heard.

* (15:10)

We've listened any number of times to the government members say that they're the most open and transparent government that's ever existed since time began, I think. Of course, Madam Speaker, we would like to be able to stand with them and say that that's correct, but what we have seen with things already, particularly going to committee, is that they want to limit the amount of time that people have. They want to limit the amount of time that things can be debated, that things can be—ideas can be shared by Manitobans.

And I hear several members opposite spouting off about rules and rules, and of course there's rules, Madam Speaker. And that's why we want to ensure that the rules aren't used against democracy in this case because we've seen already that the government did use rules against allowing Manitobans to express their opinion, and that cannot take place, should not be allowed. If we're going to have a rule, we should have a rule that says that we can't do things that are antidemocratic, we can't do things that limit people's ability to have their views known to this Legislative Assembly, but that's what we've seen from this government and that's shameful.

We need to ensure that this gets to committee and maybe we'll see future private members motions suggesting that another bill, that another matter gets towards the committee stage so that we can actually have meaningful consultation with Manitobans, not some online poll that some party hack may fill out 50 times apiece. We need to listen to real Manitobans—in person—that come out and tell us what they think.

So I suspect maybe—I don't know this for a fact, but maybe we can see more motions like this in the future to ensure that important business of this House gets to committee stage, gets to listen to Manitobans, gets to have Manitobans give us their opinions, and then hopefully from that, help this government revive, 'rechange' any legislation coming forward so that it actually reflects the will of Manitobans.

That's the whole point of going to committee, is it not, Madam Speaker, to ensure that Manitobans voices are heard? That it's not just a government ramming through a piece of legislation, it's not the opposition, it's about the democratic principles. It's about the open and—transparency that this government claims, actually coming into being, so that we can all say yes, Manitobans that wanted to be heard were heard. We can't stand here together and say that today. In fact, we can stand here today and say the complete opposite, that Manitobans who wanted to have their voices heard on a different matter were denied that opportunity.

The point of this motion is to make sure that that opportunity is not denied to Manitobans. And again we were very cautious after your ruling and your previous 'admonishments' about vectoring off that we don't want to get into the meat and potatoes of debating the pros and cons of this particular motion, because as you've so wisely said, that's not what we're supposed to be doing here today.

And just to reiterate because my time is quickly coming to an end, that we want to ensure that democracy is upheld by this Legislative Assembly. We want to ensure that the voices of Manitobans are heard. We want to ensure that this Legislative Assembly—that this government—affords every Manitoban that wants to have their voice heard, the opportunity to realistically have their voice heard in person, at a committee, in this Legislative Assembly, Madam Speaker. Not online, not anonymously, but in person have their voices heard and make sure that the legislation then clearly can reflect what Manitobans want this government to listen to.

And we implore the government to listen when in fact people get the opportunity to come to the Legislative Assembly committees and have their say. We implore this government to actually listen to what those people are saying.

We haven't seen that to date, so we're hoping for a better future for all Manitobans when the government actually listens to Manitobans at committee, and we want this particular motion to get to committee sooner rather than later, so that people can have their voices heard.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to be able to put some words on the record in respect of our very important Opposition Day motion in respect of The Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Day Act. So I appreciate the opportunity to stand in the House today.

I think it's a—very important, and I want to just acknowledge the—my colleague from Logan for bringing this Opposition Day motion forward. It's important that we have the opportunity in this House as legislators to be able to hear from the public in respect of bills that are brought forward before all of us that require our attention and our due consideration and our respectful consideration to listen to the different perspectives of Manitobans. And even if we don't always agree with one another in the House—certainly, we see that we don't always agree—but I think it is important. We're all here; we're all elected by Manitobans; and it is important for us to be able to hear their voices.

And you know—so we are hoping that the government and the members opposite see the importance of the democratic process and our

democratic right as Manitobans to be able to speak to legislation of importance to Manitobans.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And what I think is really quite fascinating, and I think that we—certainly, I'm sure, we all are very proud of, is that if I am correct, Manitoba is one of the only jurisdictions that actually hears from Manitobans, from citizens on bills. I'm not sure if we're the only one, but we're certainly one of the few across the country that allow that. And, certainly, that's something to be proud of, that we create a space in this building that, you know, can often be quite intimidating to most Manitobans. But it is their building; it is their House; it is their Legislature. And so I'm proud to be able to say that, when we put bills forward, that there's opportunities for individuals to come forward with their—you know, their different opinions and their expressions towards our bills and—in the hopes of actually strengthening our bills and making our bills stronger and, actually, at the end of the day, listening to Manitobans.

And, certainly, I know that if the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen), my colleague, were to say today that Bill 233 was going on to standing committee, it would be a really good day. And I think that we would have lots of people right away sign up to be able to speak to it, including several members of the Chinese community, but, in particular, several members of the Manitoba Chinese Women's Association, who, I believe, would have a lot to share and say in respect of the importance of this bill.

So, you know, I think that it's been mentioned a couple of times, but I—or certainly by the member—by my colleague—I do want to just mention, as well, that for the government not to simply allow Bill 233 just to go to standing committee is kind of illustrative. It's this one part of this totality in the way that this present government looks at bills and, dare I say, actually looks at democracy. So, you know, even if we were to talk about BITSA and the fact that the Government House Leader actually has the prerogative and, I would say, the responsibility to call BITSA to standing committee so that we could hear some of the folks that have signed up to be able to present on that piece of legislation—and, certainly, wanting to present in respect of the 50-50 transit that's just been wiped out.

* (15:20)

So, you know, again, I suppose we could also add to this picture, this totality of actions by this government that they didn't even see fit this morning to vote to send Bill 227 to committee and, you know, certainly I think that was an opportunity to hear from, you know, different victim advocacy organizations, perhaps different Manitoba women who have been through the system and have a lot to share and let us know about the process in our court systems. And maybe, you know, certainly—probably those on the other side that would say, you know, the bill, maybe it doesn't do enough or, you know, it is in contravention of the constitution.

The material point is that the government could've sent the bill to committee so that we could've heard all of those different arguments before the government stood in this House and decided to just vote it down without hearing from any other Manitobans, and certainly without hearing from women and girls that are, you know, adversely affected to some of the behaviours and beliefs and stereotypes and myths that seemingly still persist in the judiciary. And certainly, as we've seen in the last couple of days, among some of the JJPs, so it would've been an opportunity for this government to show some courage and send that bill to the standing committee.

And, you know, again, part of this picture is, even if we look at Bill 30, I'm not sure if it's the most people we've ever had—I'm sure the clerks would know that—sign up to speak to a particular bill. Certainly, we've had more, I am told, but it certainly was way up there, way up there, and I think that that's a beautiful testimony, again, to the unique position and unique opportunities that the Manitoba Legislature and all of us offer Manitobans to be able to speak to bills that impact on their lives. And, in the case of Bill 30, certainly that impact on their lives, but the lives of their families and their children. I mean all of us on this side, you know, listened very, very intently.

And I do want to just acknowledge my colleague that stood there—my colleague from Elmwood that was there every single minute to listen to all of the presenters who—we were kind of laughing because he wouldn't even go and eat lunch and we were trying to get him to go eat lunch and he—and there was cheesecake from Homer's restaurant and he wouldn't even go and eat lunch. So that's how dedicated the member from Elmwood—the dedication that he showed really to democracy, the dedication to

democracy and really the respect that was shown to the individuals who took the time out of their day to phone the Clerk's office, to make the appointment, to sit there for hours upon hours upon hours upon hours waiting for their opportunity to speak to Bill 30. And so I really do want to say—in fact, I want to say to the member from Elmwood that I actually learned quite a bit watching him, and I really do want to say *miigwech* to him from one colleague to another.

So, you know, again, it brings it back to the fact that this government has in many respects, you know, when we don't send things to committee and we don't hear from Manitobans and we thwart their right to be able to participate in our democracy and we thwart their right to be able to enhance our bills to make them stronger, to support them or not. Maybe they don't want that, and that's fine too. We need to be able to listen to them.

And I'm not sure like why the members opposite are so scared to send things off to committee. I'm not sure why their boss, their Premier (Mr. Pallister) doesn't want to hear from Manitobans, but clearly he doesn't. He only wants to hear from certain segments of the Manitoba population, which I think I would suggest is unfair and certainly not equitable in who we choose to listen to and who should be given a right to voice an agency in respect of executing our democracy. So, you know, again, I'm proud to stand up and I'm proud of our team. I'm proud of this Opposition Day motion and the fact that we are standing with Manitobans for their right to be able to participate in our democracy, and I say *miigwech*, Deputy Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, thank you very much, Madam Acting Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Sarah Guillemard): Order. On House business, the honourable House leader.

Mr. Cullen: Thank you very much, Madam Acting Speaker, I appreciate it. Just tabling some documents, as per written request on the Order Paper.

Mr. Swan: It's a pleasure to stand this afternoon and speak about this Opposition Day motion, and I thank the Speaker for her direction on how we can best debate this this afternoon.

I think, really, this is a question of how, as members of this Legislature, we can best further the democratic process. And, you know, not only do we

have a Progressive Conservative government that is responsible for probably the largest fiscal deficit in any year without a flood, we now see that this is a government which has now brought in two of the largest democratic deficits in the history of the province of Manitoba. And I was dismayed to hear the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) stand up, and without even hearing what members had to say, to let us know that his caucus would be voting against this motion this afternoon, really brings to a heart the exact problem with this government, this one-term government that is so quickly losing the respect, losing the trust, losing the support of the people of Manitoba.

And I know we have a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who will, at the drop of a hat, Madam Acting Speaker, tell us how open he is and how transparent he is and how, boy, he sure listens. There is nothing that upsets this Premier more than putting the facts on the table and demonstrating that his narrative is one that maybe only he and his caucus believe, because every day that goes by there are fewer and fewer other Manitobans who actually take what the Premier says at face value.

And this motion is about sending a bill, Bill 233, that was brought forward by my colleague the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) to pass it through second reading and send it on to a standing committee of this House, and I think it is worth expanding on what the member for Logan said and what the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) said.

The standing committee process and the ability for Manitobans to come forward and let their views be known about particular bills is something which, if not unique, is at least the most pronounced and democratic in all of Canada. And, Madam Acting Speaker, having served in this House for some time, I can tell you, whether you're on the government side or the opposition side, sometimes those committee meetings are not especially comfortable. They are—can be long. They can be messy. People come forward and speak from the bottom of their hearts about their views on issues, and I have no doubt that in Bill 233 there are Manitobans who feel passionately, who do want to come and let government and opposition members, all members of this House, know how they feel. And I think it's very reasonable the member for Logan today has brought on this resolution for consideration by all members to direct this government to think it over and move this bill ahead to a standing committee. And I know my friend the member for St. Johns talked a little bit

about the depth of this democratic deficit, and we've seen this pronounced just in the events of the last couple of days and even the events of today.

This morning, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) had a bill, Bill 200, which is an amendment—was intended to be an amendment to The Human Rights Code to protect individuals from discrimination based on their size. It's the second session now the member for River Heights has brought this bill forward. He's spoken very passionately about it, but, even more importantly than that, I've understood how many people out in the community have been concerned about this and have been willing to speak to MLAs, prepared to raise their views and gather support out in the community to say that now in 2017 maybe we should be doing things better.

* (15:30)

And, unfortunately, the government used its majority to prevent even sending the bill to committee for consideration. I mean, even if it goes to committee, there's no guarantee it becomes law. The government, of course, can make choices on when the bill comes back. The government can make choices on what they're going to do on third reading. But it's unfortunate that the many people who were passionate about this didn't have a chance to present.

And I do expect—I don't have any control over what the member for River Heights does. I expect we'll see that bill back in the next session. And I hope perhaps reflecting on the debate this afternoon, perhaps reflecting on what they're going to hear from the public, that the government will agree to use a very, very robust and a very, very important democratic system to let Manitobans have their say.

And, of course, just this morning, we also had a vote on Bill 227 at second reading. The member for St. Johns brought in a bill which would call for the Provincial Court to determine the nature of training for Provincial Court judges on the issues surrounding sexual assault—a bill that makes sense—a bill which, most inconveniently for the government members that voted it down, is very similar to a bill that was brought in Parliament by Rona Ambrose, who served as the acting leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. And, rather than let the bill go to committee for discussion, to hear from Manitobans, instead the government used its majority and voted down the bill and refused to let it proceed to committee.

And what do we still have before us? Well, we have Bill 30 that's before us. And I want to say that it was a remarkable standing committee to be a part of. And the government, of course—the bill was passed on to committee several weeks ago—the government chose not to call it for hearing until Monday of last week. And they were surprised, I believe, by the number of people that came out and told members of that committee very, very emotional, very, very sincere stories about what Bill 30 would mean to their families. And we heard from people saying that their investments of \$300,000, \$400,000, even \$500,000 or more, was now going to be worthless as a result of the bill.

And that continued on Tuesday night. The government then called for another night of committee on Thursday night, and it became extremely apparent on Thursday that there was not going to be enough time to let Manitobans have their say. The government called committee for Friday, and that committee sat from 10 in the morning until midnight. The committee did not sit on Saturday. The government could have called the bill for Monday. The government could have taken that step and had extra time for people to come and present, but the government chose not to. And, instead the government chose to rely on the rule, and left over 100 Manitobans who took the time to come down to this Legislature and tell a committee of this House their views—well, they were left out in the cold.

This government did not want to hear what they had to say. And you know, as I believe the member for Elmwood has put on the record several times, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) put on the record, that is something that has actually not been a feature of how we do things at the Manitoba Legislature.

And I said, Madam Acting Speaker, it's not always convenient for the government of the day. I sat in committees for days, and days, and days when we were the government and there were people who were unhappy with a bill, and we listened to every single one of them. We didn't cut them off. We didn't refuse to give leave for people to talk and to tell us what they believe as Manitobans who feel passionately about the bill.

And the way it worked with Bill 30, I believe is a shame. I believe there's still some opportunities for this government to show that perhaps they are prepared to listen. Hopefully we'll have more time to debate the report stage amendments that we now

have presented to us. I hope there'll be more time to debate Bill 30 as we get towards the end of next week, but I have no confidence that's going to happen.

I hope that the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) will reflect on what we're doing this afternoon and that not only will this motion pass and allow Bill 233 to get to a standing committee, that perhaps this government can actually start listening to what Manitobans have to say.

And the final bill that's still before us is Bill 36. And Bill 36, of course, is a statute every year which is brought in. BITSA is the short name; it's the budget implementation act. It contains provisions that are going to set public transit in Manitoba back 40 years, because BITSA—this year—contains the end of the commitment to the provincial government to cost share on a 50-50 basis public transit in Winnipeg and in other communities across Manitoba.

There are Manitobans who've registered to speak to that committee; Manitobans who have set aside time and are making their preparations to come down and tell the Finance Minister and tell this government why they believe that this bill is a mistake. Maybe there's Manitobans who want to come down and say the Finance Minister is on the right track; I doubt it but that may be the case. But what's important is that we give those Manitobans a chance to present. And my friend, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), has asked the Finance Minister repeatedly in this House if that will happen, and we haven't heard that happen yet.

So I'm hoping this afternoon can be a watershed in this Legislature. I'm hoping that members will reflect on what's been brought forward by the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino). I hope they'll vote in support of this resolution, and this will be a watershed to move towards actually listening to Manitobans and using the committee process to make this—

The Acting Speaker (Sarah Guillemard): The member's time has run out.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Deputy Speaker, I do want to congratulate the member for Logan to have introduced Bill 233, The Nanjing Massacre Commemoration Day Act.

And, you know, I do recognize that we're getting into a procedural argument here as to what we can and what we can't say and what we're speaking to.

But I just want to get back to an earlier day in the process when we redid the rules that we're dealing with right now after having dealt with, you know, older style rules that had been changed over the years, but the fact of the matter was that even though the House changes rules, there's a certain spirit that should not be tampered with.

For example, when I first got here, we had a set of rules that, you know, you could argue were heavily favourable to the opposition whereby the opposition could spend all summer if the government didn't drop a bill or two, here or there. The opposition could actually make you sit here all summer.

And there's—became a recognition that we wanted to attract people to the Legislature and new people to the Legislature, and for one reason or another, they did not want to get elected as MLAs because they did not want to sit here till three in the—four in the morning every night and sit here all summer. And it became sort of like a, almost a tractor pull where, you know, one group is pulling one way and the other group is pulling the other. And, really, the public, you know, weren't even aware we were sitting most of the time, and I'm not really sure they know right now either.

But, anyway, this process went on with sitting evenings and a lot of, you know, hospitality was being partaken by members here, especially those Monday night caucus meetings that used to have breaks, and the caucuses would end up in restaurants down Broadway and they'd come back here after the caucus meeting and there was some pretty wild speeches being made here 'til midnight.

So things started to move in the right direction. We got rid of Monday night sittings, and we started restricting the hours a bit, and this didn't happen overnight. It was a slow process, and sometimes we would get a change in the rules that seemed to be headed in the right direction, but then one party or the other wouldn't honour the rules and—because they were brought in on a temporary basis—and so we'd go back to the older version.

But we made a big, big change in the rules just before the last election, in the run-up to the election where we felt the parties could negotiate it on a basis of a fair outcome, because it wasn't absolutely clear who was going to be on which side of the House. And so each caucus did review these rules and changes were made, and at the end of the day, all of us who were here at the time did sign on to them,

whether we were in government or whether we were in opposition. Okay.

* (15:40)

So, at the end of the day, we now find ourselves in our current situation and we have gone through the first full year with the new rules, and we are starting to see some of the shortcomings of those rules. And I guess that's to be expected. But there's some basic principles that have lived for the last, well, I guess as long as I've been here, but I'm guessing for the hundred years before that, and one of those principles is that when you go to a committee, everybody who signs up for that committee—you know, I think in the old rules even up until the last day—got a right to present. That's just the way it was. And no Conservative member disagreed with that, nor did any NDP member or Liberal member. And it didn't matter who was in government, we always heard from the people.

And I accept that Manitoba is—may not be alone, but it's one of the minority of provinces to allow a situation like this. If you go to the House of Commons in Ottawa, good luck going in and presenting on anything because they really limit the presenters, and they're limited to experts on the subject matter.

So we do have a system that is—I'm going to say unique, but close to being unique in that sense. But no party on either side has ever gone and manipulated the rules to cut off 100 people—over 100 people that were not only registered to present on Bill 30 the other day, but who were not allowed to make their presentation. It isn't heard of.

Now the government had a cut-off on Thursday night. As the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) has pointed out, there were six hours of presentations last Monday, then there were another six hours on Tuesday, and we got into Thursday. Now, you'll know that under the new rules, the third day of hearings—at the end of those, is a cut-off of—for presenters. I don't think that was the way it was before, but it's the way it is now. So, at the end of that day, there were roughly, say, 300 people who had registered.

Now, the government could do the calculations. They knew that on the first two nights, we were going through say six presenters per hour, which would be about 36 people per day. And they knew that the very next day, the 160 presenters they started with, were right back up to 160. So it wasn't until

Thursday night that they knew—that they absolutely knew how many people they were going to have. But they could clearly see that it was a lot of people and it was going to take more than just 14 hours on Friday to hear from them all.

Now I would suggest they calculated, well, oh, 14 hours. There they—they're not going—this—the presenters are going to go home. You know, it's all going to be over on Friday. That's exactly what they calculated.

And why do I know that? Because they had the opportunity on Thursday to have hearings on Friday, which they did. They could have just simply—it's like being lazy, I guess. They could have just said, well, if we don't finish on Friday, we'll do it on Saturday for 14 hours. And if we can't do it Saturday, we'll do it on Sunday. And if they're not done by Sunday, because now you knew how many—what your maximum was. I mean, call it a learning curve, maybe that's what happened here, but it did happen that way. They could have called it on Monday. And they sat back and said no. We go through Saturday, and that's the end of it.

So they left over 100 people standing there not being able to present.

So that is—that tells me that they're violating the spirit of the rules, you know? And this all came about with the size of their majority. As soon as—you know, if this government had come in with a Howard Pawley majority of, you know, 31 seats, which is likely that—where they're going to be at next time the way they're going. The trajectory is just down. The fact of the matter is they will be—they would be more attentive. But they have this attitude that with 40 seats, they should get one fortieth of everything. You know, one fortieth times 40. No, I guess—I guess I'm getting my math mixed up here, but you get the point: they felt they should have all the front-row seats at one time, you know?

So the reality is now they find themselves with admittedly a better set of rules than they had before—because these rules are favourable—reasonably favourable to the government at the expense of the opposition, but they've come in with the attitude that we're going to follow—and that's why they can't keep their House leaders. You know, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) tells the House leader we want—the Premier tells the House leader go and drive those people into the ground. You know, it's not about driving the opposition—but that was their attitude. You've got inexperienced new members and

they're being told by the big boss that, well, you got 40 seats so you're going to get your proportionate share of everything, and with an attitude like that and the inexperience that they have they never really understood that a opposition needs basic tools to operate. And that's what I see here, is the spirit of the rules say all those people should be able to present, and they're not following the spirit of the rules, and it's to the detriment of democracy in this province going forward if they don't change their approach.

Thank you very much, Madam Deputy.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Let me just say two things about my honourable colleague from Elmwood. First of all, I hate trying to follow him after his speeches. I put this out there from the outset: there's no way I'm going to top that great performance. And secondly, he deserves a huge word of thanks from all Manitobans for the remarkable job he has done trying to make the process around Bill 30 as democratic and as accessible as possible, despite this government's atrocious behaviour.

Bill 30 is a perfect example of just how important it is, Madam Acting Speaker, to defend the proper processes down here. Democracy is not a given. Power of the public to bring their voice directly to those that govern them should be a sacred right and it can be deteriorated. Democracy can be weakened or strengthened, depending on the actions of those in charge and also based on the response from those who are under their care and their watch and whether they decide to challenge a government's inappropriate heavy-handedness when it comes to limiting public access to democratic processes.

And for those who may be new to the debate on Bill 30, this is, of course, a piece of legislation that our caucus, using the rules of the House very properly, prioritized as one of five bills that we delayed. We have the ability, as the official opposition, to delay five of the government's bills each session. This bill would have passed back in the summer had we not done that and because we gave the public the opportunity to learn more about this legislation and give them the opportunity to bring their voice here directly, the public clearly has responded.

As my hard-working colleague from Elmwood has just described in fantastic detail, an enormous number of people are fundamentally opposed, and for good reason, to this legislation and to the way it has been conducted, and the democratic process was surely violated by this government when they

decided that over 100 people who were still on the list to speak to Bill 30 were wiped out by a single action by this government. That is unprecedented.

Manitoba should be very proud and I believe is very proud to be one of the few, if any, jurisdictions in Canada that allows members of the public to come directly to the Legislature at the committee stage so that members of the public can share their views directly with the MLAs in government and those in opposition. It is a very valuable process and, yes, for a governing party, it can make for some long and uncomfortable evenings. That's what happens when you bring in bad legislation like this one.

* (15:50)

Lo and behold, rather than listen to the people who did their part, who stepped forward and said, I want to participate directly in the democratic process. I want to come to the committee hearings on Bill 30. I want to share my views directly with this government. The government, instead, listened to some, but for the remaining 100 presenters who could have been heard on additional evenings of committee, they were all denied their basic democratic right here in Manitoba.

That is precedent setting. It is not the type of precedent that any government or any premier or any Cabinet minister should be proud of, and I very much hope and anticipate that the people whose rights were violated will make known their views in many creative ways in the years ahead leading up to the next provincial election.

This is, sadly, Madam Speaker, just one of several examples of how the current provincial government is, in fact, weakening democratic institutions in our fine province. It's by no means the only example. Happening right now we have, led by our equally hard-working MLA, the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), has asked this government repeatedly to commit to allowing people who want to speak to another piece of legislation, Bill 36, also known as BITSA, which will implement the government's budget. He has, on repeated occasions in question period, invited the provincial government to allow people to speak at the committee stage when that bill moves forward.

And this government repeatedly has slammed the door on that process, and one of the reasons, one of many reasons why members of the public want to speak to BITSA is because the government tried to

hide stuff in BITSA that it should have been upfront and accountable about from the get-go.

Under their BITSA legislation, this is how the government is legally going to cancel a funding arrangement which supports public transit, not just in Winnipeg, but in all other communities in Manitoba that have public transit programs.

And a little bit of history on this. This is not the first time that Conservative governments have whacked this particular agreement. The Filmon government, a previous Conservative government here before this one, did exactly the same thing—wiped out the funding arrangement with municipalities. Under our time in office, we restored that arrangement and it commits the provincial government to cover half of the costs of public transit. It's not a complicated concept. It also applies to capital expansions and capital costs related to public transit, as well as operating costs, so if your operating costs go up by a certain amount, well, the local municipality has to cover half the cost, but they know the other half will be covered by the provincial government.

It's a very reasonable policy. As I said, it has existed for multiple NDP governments. Conservative governments either hate municipalities or hate public transit because every time they're in office in recent history, this is one of the first things to go, and rather than be accountable about that, rather than own up to the fact that, yes, they were going to, yet again, look exactly like the Filmon government of the 1990s and put that decision front and centre in their budget document or in their budget speech or in their budget news releases, it was nowhere to be found.

It was our caucus team digging through the BITSA legislation which uncovered this hidden fact, and I want to give full credit to the hard-working folks in our caucus, working alongside us and supporting us as MLAs, to expose this government's true agenda. They're the ones that brought this to our attention, and we have been raising it publicly all along.

And here's how the government can take a very easy, very simple step in the proper direction to ensuring democratic process in Manitoba. When it comes to Bill 36, there's a number of people who want to present at the committee stage. They do not support this government's cancellation of the 50-50 public funding arrangement with municipalities. All they want to do is have up to 10 minutes with the committee to share their points

of view and then to receive as much as five minutes of question and answers from the members of the committee, should they have any questions to ask—exactly the same democratic process that exists for every other piece of legislation.

And, if the government didn't want to have to go to committee on BITSA, they probably shouldn't have tried to hide their agenda in the bowels of the legislation. This is coming back to haunt the government. They've got no one to blame but themselves. And here's another example of how the Pallister government is fundamentally undermining the democratic process right here in the legislation—right here in the Legislature right now.

So, between just two pieces of legislation, Madam Acting Speaker, their complete disregard for over a hundred presenters who wanted to present to Bill 30, their complete disregard for everybody who wants to present to Bill 36, namely the BITSA legislation. In both instances, the government had a democratic option that it could have pursued and in both instances the Pallister government failed miserably.

This is not the way we should expect our government to conduct themselves. It is not acceptable precedence to be establishing. And I want to thank all of the Manitobans who are continuing to push this government to do the right thing and tell them we stand with you one hundred and ten per cent.

The Acting Speaker (Sarah Guillemard): The member's time has expired.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, you know, I am concerned, as are other MLAs, about the fact that on the recent Bill 30 that not everybody had an opportunity to present to committee. I am concerned about the tendency to the extent that it's there for this government to shut down the ability of people to present. And I think that that's been very important. Right.

However, what we are talking about today is the Opposition Day motion, which is the Legislative Assembly, or to the provincial government, to immediately refer Bill 233 to a standing committee so members of the public may make presentations to MLAs on this bill.

Now what this bill is, it's an example of where we have many, many communities coming from all over the world and one of the things that we want to make sure is that whatever community you come

from, wherever in the world, whatever your history is here, that we're ready to accept you. We have at the same time a history where we have started to address some of the difficult issues in the past that we have here with residential schools and other matters where there were major problems.

At the same time, I believe we have to be—proceed with care in a situation like this where it has the potential if not handled very carefully to be divisive between two important communities in our province, the Japanese-Canadian community and the Chinese-Canadian community. And my understanding is that this bill was presented in Ontario in terms of recognizing the Nanjing events, that there were problems in Ontario with kids from the Japanese community being targeted as a result of bringing forward with this bill in Ontario. Right. I think that we have to be very careful as we proceed to deal in Canada, in Manitoba, with issues which have the potential to be quite divisive among important communities in our society here in Manitoba, that we are proceeding with care in the way that we handle this so that we don't end up with kids in one community being targeted. We know that we have had problems in the past with people in different communities being targeted for one reason or another, and we want to avoid that.

* (16:00)

My suggestion to members of the Assembly would be this: that before we go to committee, that we have a group of all-party people—all-party MLAs who meet with leaders in the Japanese and in the Chinese community to talk about how we deal with this in a respectful way and in a way that doesn't result in people being targeted, one side or another.

It is not an easy situation, and we know that there are residues of past traumas. I deal in my office from time to time with people who have suffered traumatic experiences earlier on in their childhood, and we don't want to create new residues of traumatic experience because we don't handle this in the best possible way.

And I respect the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) for bringing this forward. I think it is an important discussion that we are having with respect to the Nanjing—the events at Nanjing during—many years ago.

But I also feel that because we're treading in waters where, if we are not careful, we could have kids in one community being targeted, kids who have no connection to these events, and when we're

unearthing and talking about difficult and traumatic experiences in the past, that there needs to be a path forward to allow us to do that. But that path forward has to be one that is done in a very careful way so that we understand the sensitivities and we don't get into a situation where we've got kids being targeted and getting into situation where they may be bullied and targeted and in a lot of distress because of what we're bringing forward.

So it is my recommendation and our view in the Liberal Party that we proceed with caution right now rather than immediately going to committee stage and that we look at these events and look at a way to proceed so that we don't have kids in our communities being adversely affected as a result.

I think that there have been too many children who've been adversely affected by past experiences which have been traumatic in one reason or another and it is a situation which we need to handle with considerable care. And we need—there were obvious examples recently where we had a national committee into inquiry of the missing, murdered women—tremendously important subject, but it was obvious that it had to be handled in a very sensitive way.

And I think that here we have, in a completely different circumstance, a situation which we have, as legislators, to handle in a sensitive way. And I think that that sensitive way may actually not be to immediately go to committee, but to work out among members of the community a safe way to be able to talk about this that won't result in kids being hurt and targeted.

So I put that forward as our view in terms of the Liberal Party, and I would ask for that consideration from all members of the Legislature.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci. Miiigwech.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I've been listening to this debate with interest, comparing the systems of discussion and debate from the federal scene to provincial scene, and this issue of not having a bill proceed to after it has received second reading and—

An Honourable Member: Unanimously.

Mr. Fletcher: —unanimously. And based—and not proceeding to committee based on the Government House Leader's (Mr. Cullen) thoughts on this. Just because he or she doesn't want to bring it forward, that is not a good enough reason and, in fact, is an affront to this place. Why have a vote if you're not

going to follow through on what the obligations are, and in this case, it is to discuss the issue that this House unanimously agreed to discuss.

Now, Madam Speaker, this particular issue relating to the Rape of Nanking, as I said in my previous comments when this bill was introduced, is a very personal—to my family but millions of families and has a substantial implication on—or, lessons to be learned in history, because it—the Rape of Nanking diminished lives to such an extent that the aggression of the Japanese imperial army in World War II destroyed the lives of tens of millions of people and laid the foundation for the communists to take over China, and how many—the consequences of that are incalculably negative for humankind.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Having said that, this is a important issue and an issue that people do not know much about. My granddad and my dad, my grandma, suffered—well, they lost everything when the Japanese army came down through Malaysia and granddad was a POW on the Burmese railway after the fall of Singapore and saw horrific atrocities.

Having said that, and as important as this issue is, another issue has arisen, and that is the rules of how this Assembly operates. I am going to speak to that. Madam Speaker, when a bill comes forward there are three stages for—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I would remind the member that right now we are debating the Opposition Day motion and it is supposed to be about why this particular bill should go to committee, and that is the intent of the Opposition Day motion, and I have asked all members to please make sure that their remarks are reflecting that and not go off on some different tangents.

So I would ask the member to please address his comments to why this particular bill should go to committee. And also, a reminder too, that we are not to be talking about the bill itself and the content of the bill, because that would be taking us back into debate. The only thing that should be discussed on the floor is why this bill should now go to committee.

* (16:10)

Mr. Fletcher: Okay. And that is where I was. There are three stages—first, second and third reading. First reading is when the bill—well, there's, you know,

notices and concurrence motion, but the first reading is considered when the bill is introduced into the House. So everyone has a chance to read the bill for the first time, hence the name first reading.

Then there is a debate, a discussion in the House and the bill goes to second reading. It is at second reading—or just before second reading—where a vote is taken and the Chamber, based on a multitude of factors and hopefully on the debate and the content of whatever bill it is, will say yea or nay or vote on division. And if the majority of members support that bill moving forward to committee, that is what in the textbooks, and in Ottawa, and in the mother Parliament in London, that's what happens. You go through the debate, you have a vote at second reading, and then at second reading it goes to a committee—of the Chamber or of the Assembly—a committee.

Now the House leader—in the case of Ottawa—has some discretion on which standing committee the bill will go to, but the bill has to go to committee. You just cannot not send it to committee, because that is essentially a veto. And can you imagine if we did that on the Armenian genocide because one of our NATO allies got upset? Or on the massacre in Yugoslavia, because a foreign country, Serbia, got upset? No, it's absurd.

We make decisions in this place based on what this place decides to do. And sometimes calling out other countries for atrocities—and it was an atrocity—is fair ball.

By going to committee, now let's take the issue—it doesn't even matter what's the issue. If it passes this House, it needs to go to committee. There should be no ifs, ands, or buts about it. You know, maybe the House leader can decide which committee but they cannot prevent the committee from hearing the bill. That is an absurdity. That is essentially a veto. And, if on this bill, it must be true for all bills.

So, under these quote-unquote rules, it is conceivable that no bill that passes second reading would ever get to third reading because it would be prevented from getting to committee. Like, that cannot stand. That is an absurd situation.

The member from Elmwood has articulated very well in his previous comments some of the absurdities, but this must be dealt with by this Chamber as soon as possible because it's a slippery slope. If we don't—if we let it stand once, it'll happen again. And through this—you know, every single

member supports something—the House leader can veto it by not sending it to committee. This has to change.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I would like to put a few words on this issue.

I was really surprised when House leader said that, because of—this goes to committee, then we will have a deteriorated relation with the other country. And that's really not Canadian values. Canadian value is to stand for human rights. To stand for human rights, it's very important this bill go to the committee so people will come, they tell us what is—what happened, how it happened. Some people will be in the favour, some people will be in the against.

But it's very important to go to the committee, because if it go to committee, there so many happenings in the world. Look at Myanmar, what is happening there. If those people come over here and we are not able to listen what they are saying, only that way will be to say it if they come to the committee.

And 33 year ago, massacre happen in New Delhi, and Sikhs were killed, burned, raped and, again, if those people or Sikhs over here are not allowed to go to—on such an issue on the committee, again, that will be against our Canadian values.

Similarly, Madam Speaker, you may know Prime Minister of India, Modi, was not allowed to travel to USA before he became Prime Minister. And—but we did not know about that. If that issue had come over here, we could have gone to the committee people, could have told how many Muslim, Gurjarti Muslims, are massacred, and that government's direction when he was provincial politician.

So every day, these things happen all over the world. But if we are afraid our relation will deteriorate with the other countries, that means we are not standing up for our values. Our Canadian values stand for human rights, does not matter if we have to sacrifice, because this all is in life, if you stand for—stand up for something, you may have to sacrifice. But you have to stand for that.

Now, this is our Canadian value, and therefore, I think each and every bill should go to the committee. But this kind of bill, which especially demand for human rights, has to stand up. Those people should be listened. Does not matter whether they are against, whether they are for.

On the other day, Bill 30—many people came over there. At least they feel they have listened. Also, there is no action. I understand that we—government was really determined before that they're not going to do anything. But one community had a chance to speak, but everybody was not able to speak. Should the people be let down? But at least we gave them chance. I wish each and every one could have got chance. One girl came, her father died and her mother was only taken care of because they have taxi. She cried on our shoulder, she cried on my shoulder. And I was emotional too. I could not handle myself.

So, Madam Speaker, these are very, very real issues that have human values. And if these kind of issues we don't take to committee, what kind of issue will it take to committee? Otherwise, we go through the motions and dramas and democracy stop there. Actually, sometime I feel like that we are failing in democracy because it's number game. And when it's number game, or even sometimes, some countries they have a religious majority. They want to—politician want to make happy those majority people, and minority being let down. And that way, in a way, is democracy, because people—majority will elect the politician, but on the other hand, that minority has been let down.

* (16:20)

So we must have to. I think even in a micro way, sometimes the democracy is being let down.

So I think those people who make excuses that this should not go to the committee, I think this must go to committee because that's the only way we will find out what happened, how happened. It doesn't happen some other place, and it doesn't—it happened all over the country. It every day happening now. And democracy eventually furthering this is kind of situation, because people are only after words; they are not after real values, and they will stand up with the people who are in the majority—or who that grew up in the majority, but they will put down the people who are in the minority.

That's why I think at least some people who are really genuine—if those politicians listened those people in the committee and they will feel sympathize. Like on Bill 30, many politicians, even on the government side, were so emotional when that girl was crying. And why that—I think that brings you down to the heart's level instead of being cunning and smart, just come on human—come at the human values.

So these committees are very important—very important—we must have to take this bill to the committee, does not matter whatever happens over there. It—I don't think it will harm anything, only we have to spend a little extra time. But, to understand people, to understand the issues, nothing wrong to spend extra time. Sure, we sometimes like—we speak it, but when we don't have to speak to kill the time. But what about—that's real time, and that time where people are being listened, their concerns being listened, their pain is really—a little bit reduced, and that way—that's the real way of a democracy.

So, I think, let me think about the two things because it should go to committee. Number 1, democracy is failing because the minority rules—a majority rules. When people only take care of the majority and they don't care of the minority, that what happened in Bill 30, and that's where people get hurt. There's—they lose their trust in the democracy. We have to demonstrate democracy, not to make it fail. Otherwise, there's no use. Otherwise, why we don't have dictator? Why we don't have one president? Why we have that many politicians over here? Only we have to have politicians over here because we want to make it work—not work only majority, but for everybody.

Although people are elected by majority, but are they really elected by majority? Sometimes 30 per cent votes on their side, sometimes 40. It's not really—and that way, they are elected by a minority.

So, Madam Speaker, I don't want to go away from the issue, but my main concern is, this issue is really important. Any issue like that where a massacre happen, where people who could not protect themselves—they should be allowed to come to the committee, and they should be listened. And that's the only way we can satisfy our conscience and we can satisfy their people's conscience. Let us—we can satisfy your conscience. Forget about politics, because it came from the opposition, therefore we want to let it go. Forget about that this time. This is a very real issue. A real issue—all we politicians, we must have to think about that, how we can help—listen the helpless people so that those things—we can understand the issues and we can—in the future, those things does not happen.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): The motion before the House right now is to call Bill 233 to committee. Now I want to preface my remarks by saying that I have a deep

respect for the members of the Chinese-Canadian community, especially those here in Winnipeg. I also have a deep respect for those members of the Japanese-Canadian community and again with a special reverence for those here in Winnipeg and Manitoba.

We have, as legislators, since the passing of Bill 233, passed second reading, heard some feedback from members of different cultural communities, including the Japanese-Canadian and Chinese-Canadian communities, and there are different opinions as to the merits of Bill 233 and whether it should pass into law eventually.

But I believe that Manitoba's rich democratic tradition of having the public given an opportunity to weigh in at the committee stage would be the best venue for us to hear these sorts of concerns so that all of us in this House could weigh the merits of those substantive issues being brought forward by those who have reached out to us.

And I remember it was just a—it seems like just a few days ago that we all voted unanimously to support this bill past second reading, and it strikes me as particularly odd that the government would now refuse to call this bill to committee, especially with the added urgency of those members of our community reaching out, wanting to make their voices heard.

It seems to me that this is part of a disturbing and growing trend of undemocratic behaviour on the part of the governing party. Not only are they refusing to call Bill 233 to committee, there is also The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, which they are refusing to call to committee; this, in spite of the fact that many, many people are reaching out to the members of this Chamber to let their voices be known, in particular about a clause in that BITSA bill which would see the 50-50 funding for transit revoked.

Beyond that, burying the repeal of that funding in the back of the bill itself is a Harperesque tactic reminiscent of the former federal Conservative government who were widely believed to be pursuing their governing style in an undemocratic fashion. And now we see some of these same techniques being used by the current government here in Manitoba.

So, the request of this bill is simple. It is to call a bill that all members on the government side supported to committee where Manitobans could

make their voices heard. If this government does want to be open, if this government does want to be transparent, then they will call those pieces of legislation that they themselves have voted in favour of, to a committee so that any person in this province could come, present and have their voices heard. It's a simple motion and it is one that every person in this House should support.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further speakers on debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the Opposition Day motion, in the name of the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino).

Do members wish to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: The Opposition Day motion is that the Legislative Assembly urge the provincial government to immediately refer Bill 233 to a standing committee so members of the public may make presentations to MLAs on this bill.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Could you summon the members for a recorded vote?

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

Order, please.

The question before the House is the Opposition Day motion.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Fontaine, Kinew, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

Bindle, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Klassen, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Martin, Mayer, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pallister, Pedersen, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Southdale), Smook, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 11, Nays 36.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 2, 2017

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