

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 31—The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, second by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), that Bill 31, The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: This legislation will ensure that the total retail price of tobacco will remain at the same level once the provincial PST rate decreases to 7 per cent on July 1st.

As a result of the PST reduction, we are making this amendment to maintain the current selling price of tobacco and any additional revenues associated with the adjustment will be directed towards investments in health care. The proposed changes mean the tax on each cigarette will be 30 cents, up from 29.5 cents; fine-cut tobacco will be 45.5 cents per gram, up from 45 cents; and raw-leaf tobacco products will be at 27.5 cents per gram, up from 27 cents.

We are pleased to follow through on the advice we received from the Canadian Cancer Society and its partner agencies to maintain the retail selling price of tobacco. The proposed amendment to The Tobacco Tax Act will come into effect on July 1st if the bill receives royal assent before the Legislative Assembly rises on June 3rd, or on November 15th if it receives royal assent on or after July 1st, Madam Speaker.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Laurie Fischer

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): It is what it is, one step at a time, one day

at a time. Madam Speaker, these 15 simple yet inspiring words are the mantra of my dear friend, Laurie Fischer. They guide him and provide him the courage to battle on his—against his—to carry on his battle against cancer with strength and conviction.

Since that fateful day when doctors confirmed his diagnosis, Laurie hasn't questioned, why me? Instead, he humbly acknowledges, why not me?

Laurie openly shares his cancer journey to help encourage his fellow cancer warriors to continue to fight their battle. I was honoured to hear his—him share his story at the Never Alone Foundation luncheon just this past fall, and hearing him speak so candidly brought tears to my eyes.

Madam Speaker, Laurie has started many support groups for others battling cancer, making sure everyone fighting cancer knows they are never alone. His courage and perseverance are an inspiration.

Theatre, however, is Laurie's passion, so it makes perfect sense that back in 1997 Laurie and his wife Cathie founded the North Kildonan Community Players. With more than 40 productions under his cap, including the recent smash success, *Mary Poppins*, Laurie has doled out many spoons full of happiness throughout his acting career.

Madam Speaker, Laurie calls himself a proud North Kildonian, and I am honoured to call him my friend. Laurie's contributions to our community, whether in sports, business, charity fundraising, or on and off the stage, are a true testament to his generous nature.

As the MLA for River East, it's an honour to welcome and recognize Laurie today for his very incredible contributions. I will always remember his words: It is what it is, one day at a time, one step at a time.

Madam Speaker, I ask all members of this House to extend a very warm welcome to Laurie, his family and friends who are up in the gallery today.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage?

Mrs. Cox: Madam Speaker, may I ask for leave to have the names of Laurie and his guests inserted into Hansard?

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

Dean Cockell, Pat Cockell, Trevor Duncan, Doris Essenburg, Mark Essenburg, Cathie Fischer, Laurie Fischer, Pamela Fischer, Sara Gair, Dale McMillan, Ken Muzik, Denis Rochon, Sonia Rochon, Michael Schiefer.

Katrina Czarina

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Today, I want to acknowledge the achievements of an exceptional Point Douglas constituent, Katrina Czarina.

Despite being only 12 years old, Katrina has already accomplished so much. After moving from the Philippines to Canada in 2015, she became an active member and a young leader in her community. This past year, she was a finalist for the first-ever Kid Mayor of Winnipeg contest, and in 2016, she was named the first second princess of the Manitoba street festival—Filipino Street Festival because her—of her poise and leadership ability.

Katrina loves to volunteer and be of service to others and has received numerous 'erpord'—awards in academics and leadership. In addition to graduating from her grade 6 class with honours, she has been given several awards, including Outstanding Grade 6 Student, the 2018 leadership award from the member from Logan, the Winnipeg Foundation scholarship and the leadership award from CanU. In fact, she has received so many awards that I can't tell you all of them in just the two minutes that I have.

Katrina added to her growing list of achievements after she recently was crowned one of six queens of Canada Galaxy Pageant. She'll be going on to represent Manitoba and Canada in the Galaxy International Pageant in Orlando, Florida, this August.

We wish her well in this pageant and I am so proud to be able to represent people who are so inspirational and talented as Katrina, who gives back to her community. I can't wait to see what she accomplishes next, but for right now I'd like to ask my colleagues to get up and acknowledge her for all of her accomplishments.

Childhood Apraxia of Speech

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): Imagine, if you will, you are a young child who has a ball in front of you and your mom or dad has just told you to kick

that ball. You know what they mean when they say kick it; you walked right up to it and you know your foot is supposed to hit it. But somewhere between your knowing what you want it to do and your foot launching that ball forward, the message gets lost. You can't kick it even though you know that's what you want to do.

That's what it's like for speaking for Glenwood or Donovan or WWE star Ronda Rousey or many children who struggle with childhood apraxia of speech, or CAS as it is known.

CAS is a motor speech disorder that makes it difficult for children to speak. Children with a diagnosis generally have a good understanding of language and know what they want to say. However, they have difficulty learning or carrying out the complex sequenced movements of the mouth and tongue that are necessary for speech. There is a disconnect between the brain's message to the facial muscles to create the sounds of speech.

The Childhood Apraxia Speech Association of North America, or CASANA, is at the forefront of advocacy and awareness of this neurological disorder, providing information, support and research with their apraxia-kids website.

With early intervention and appropriate, intensive, frequent speech therapy with a speech-language pathologist, these children can avoid the secondary impacts in school—future school-related skill building and become productive, contributing, happy adults.

I know Glenny spends time every day practicing with his mom or his sisters—he has six—using repetition and using visual, verbal or tactile cueing, such as touching his lips to remind him that the sound starts there.

Today, May 14th, is Apraxia Awareness Day, a day where we wear blue and speak up for the children who work daily to literally find their voice, so I thank mothers like Patricia and Debbie, as well as the speech therapists who are speaking up for those that struggle to speak up.

Please join me in welcoming Donovan and Glenwood to the Manitoba Legislature and wishing them success in finding the power of speech in their future, and CASANA and the college audiologist speech-language pathologists of Manitoba, helping kids find their voices.

Olha, Manitoba

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I rise today talk about a very special community in Manitoba: Olha.

You may not have heard of Olha. It experienced a population boom some years ago when the number of residents soared from two to three. There is a beautiful hall there, as well as a church. There is world-class fishing and exceptional hunting.

* (13:40)

And while many who think of Manitoba may think of the flat prairies and the Portage Plains, Olha's rolling hills are in one of the most beautiful parts of all of Manitoba, just at the southern edge of Riding Mountain National Park.

There is a lot of history there as well: a national historic monument, a mass grave that marks the sad fate of new settlers and their children who died 120 years ago this spring.

In the Second World War, German prisoners of war were being held in Riding Mountain National Park, escaped, and when caught were found playing cards in Olha with some local girls. It was also home to Michael Swystun, a farm boy who in 1923 was billed as the strongest man in the world by Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus. He could bend iron bars in his teeth, support five men on his stomach and hold two automobiles to a standstill with his massive arms.

The hall was home to midnight socials and to fall suppers, which might see the population of the town go up 200-fold, with multiple sittings for the 600 people gathered to celebrate.

When travelling around Manitoba with my oldest daughter, she remarked that, while there is sometimes a sameness to many big cities, the malls and the stores, that each small town and village in Manitoba is unique and has its own character.

The Olha General Store is run by Marion Koltusky, who keeps it open year round. It is still the living, beating heart of that community.

While on the weekend we handed out the Order of Manitoba to many people who have made contributions to our province, today I am honoured to recognize Marion for her years of service to her community. She stands as an incredible example of the difference a single person can make in sustaining their community.

I want to thank Marion and all those like her, who through their work and their lives have sustained, built and promoted their communities across our province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Transcona, was—

Mr. Yakimoski: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I would just like to seek leave to include the names of my—guests of Donovan and Glenwood in Hansard.

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

Donovan Jordan-Johnson, Heather Foster, Faith Sawicki, Glenwood Sawicki, Glenwood Sawicki Sr., Glory Sawicki, Gracia Sawicki, Joy Sawicki, Jubilee Sawicki, Mercy Sawicki, Patricia Sawicki, Debbie Sladek.

The honourable member for Assiniboia, who has switched space—or switched rotation spots with the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

Conservative Values

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): And I—again, I'd like to thank the Premier (Mr. Pallister) for allowing me the opportunity to be free from the autocratic tendencies of his government, the freedom to represent my constituents I value very much.

As we know, the Premier doesn't listen to his caucus. In order to make sure that it is clear that he doesn't listen to the caucus or for them to make any kind of original thought, when I did make the mistake of thinking, he kicked me out. But the message has been received by the caucus and I'm sure no one has given a thought to anything since that point.

He wanted to send a message to other premiers. He wanted to be in the cool club for the carbon tax, and when all the premiers seemed to be supporting it, he supported the carbon tax. And now the smart premiers are against the carbon tax. And he really wants to be in with the cool premiers, but he's already undermined them all in every way: in the courts, public opinion, on principle. He flip-flops.

His support of the carbon tax is very disappointing. I told him so. He didn't listen.

The creation of the efficiency or inefficient Crown corporations, sweetheart land deals for those who helped the PC party raise money, sole-source

contracting, are all un-Conservative things. The Liberals in Ottawa aren't even as blatantly bad as this government under this leadership.

If the Premier (Mr. Pallister) wants to call an early election and spend—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member to continue?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals Request to Retain ER Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, patients, nurses, doctors, they all know that the best decisions in health care are made at the bedside. They also know that the further away from the bedside you get, the worse the health-care decision-making becomes, and that's what we've seen under this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and under this government during their brief time in office.

We know that they have made health care in Manitoba a disaster. This is the term that we hear over and over again and, of course, we know that people in Manitoba are still hopeful that health care can be improved, and I can still hear them chanting, save our ER, save our ER, from the steps of the Concordia emergency room.

Seeing as how the Premier's plan for health care has failed, their consultant is losing credibility and the Premier himself won't even stand to defend his plan, will this government simply accept that they've failed and cancel the closures of the emergency rooms at Seven Oaks and Concordia hospitals?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, doctors, nurses and patients experienced the chaos of an NDP health-care system for 17 years, a system that experts and clinical leaders described as scattered, defrayed, poorly co-ordinated, overly complex for a jurisdiction of our size and one that failed to put the patient at the centre.

Our health-care transformation is placing the patient at the centre, getting shorter wait times, getting better health care for all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: What nurses say about health care under this government is that health care in Manitoba is worse than it's ever been, and we know that this government's own statistics back up that assertion. The emergency room wait times are up across the city of Winnipeg. That's according to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority: up month over month, up year over year.

We know that the Canadian Institute for Health Information also says that surgery wait times have increased dramatically, and today we also learn that even for heart tests, the wait time has shot up 300 per cent, Madam Speaker. This is the record of a government that is failing the task of providing health care to Manitobans.

We need this government to stop, ideally make way for a new and better government to come in and repair the health-care system, but until Manitobans get the opportunity to elect a new government, will they please cancel the closures of the emergency rooms at Seven Oaks and Concordia?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, we acknowledge as a government that transition in the health-care system is difficult. It's difficult to ask people to do things in different ways and do things in order to get better results.

But the evidence, unlike what the member just put on the record, is that we are getting those better results. I had system and clinical leaders—*[interjection]*—if they listen to the answer they'll hear it. I had system and clinical leaders reporting back within the last week and two weeks saying that in areas like indigenous health, in areas like surgery, in areas like mental health and addiction, real improvements, real co-ordination, better results are happening right here in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Kinew: It's simply not true, Madam Speaker. The only thing worse than this government's record on health care is their record fighting the addictions crisis. It's an absolute disaster, and the meth crisis has just proceeded completely unopposed by this government, who would rather close emergency

rooms, delete nursing jobs and cancel physiotherapy than actually stand up and do something to improve the public health situation here in Winnipeg and across the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we know that the backbenchers in the Conservative caucus will raise their voices here, but they will never stand up in the caucus room and fight for their communities. So we'll do so. We'll fight to keep Concordia open. We'll fight to keep Seven Oaks open.

When will this government accept that they've failed and commit to keeping the emergency rooms open? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, we know that the road ahead to a stronger, better, more sustainable health-care system is one within reach. We know it's one that relies on partnerships.

I welcome to the gallery today the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, one of those excellent external partners that is coming to the table every day and saying, how do we address the challenges of our time?

* (13:50)

We were pleased to attend their lunchtime information session—many of our own members were at that session—and I thank them for the kind of partnership that we are forging. That opposition party did not know how to form partnerships. They didn't know how to actually improve health care. They complained. They argued. They put misinformation on the record.

We're fixing health care.

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

Post-Secondary Education ACCESS Program Funding

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Careful observers of question period will note that the Minister of Health has simply given up trying to defend the closures of the emergency rooms.

Now, since 1972 ACCESS programs have made sure students who had real barriers to getting into college and university would be able to get an education to transform their lives and the lives of their families for the better. ACCESS programs at

Red River College, at the universities, at UCN helped students become engineers, nurses and teachers.

We're joined by many of those students in the gallery today. They are upset that the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) cut more than \$1 million from ACCESS programs. This has translated to a cut of some \$2,000 for each one of these students in the gallery here today.

Why has the Premier cut assistance for ACCESS students, who face so many barriers to getting a good quality education?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): Certainly, one of the things that our government recognized early on was that affordable and accessible post-secondary education was important to students in Manitoba. It is one of the reasons why we ensured that there was an increase to the bursary and scholarship program, Madam Speaker.

While the member talks about \$1 million, in fact, there are \$20 million of new funds were made available through Manitoba scholarships and bursaries. That is helping hundreds—or thousands of students across Manitoba to be able to afford a post-secondary education and better their life through that post-secondary education, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, Madam Speaker, when it comes to this issue I'll take the word of all of those students up there over the word of this minister, and what those students are telling us is they have each lost out on \$2,000 worth of support, worth of bursaries, \$2,000 less in bursary funding just this year because of the cut that this Premier ordered at the Cabinet table.

One of those students, who I and the Education critic on this side of the House had a chance to meet with before question period, she put it succinctly. She said: I, next month, will have to choose between paying my rent and paying for my tuition. That is an impossible choice for students facing barriers who want to transform their lives and the lives of their families for generations to come.

Will the Premier simply acknowledge the error of his ways and announce today that he is cancelling the cut to ACCESS programs in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, it's difficult for any New Democrat in this House to talk about affordability. We know that in their 17 years, they made life less affordable not just for students, but for every Manitoban through tax increases that spanned the gamut. On every possible thing that an individual could be purchasing, they made life less affordable. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: And I know he's yelling from his seat. He doesn't like to have his record pointed out, Madam Speaker, but I'll continue to point out his record of making life unaffordable, less affordable for Manitobans, and I'll continue to point out our record of making life more affordable for Manitobans.

He can yell from his seat. We get action, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the minister can continue to attack me and our team on this side. We'll continue standing up for the people of Manitoba, starting with these students.

Now, in the early 1980s my mother-in-law was able to lift her family out of poverty by becoming a teacher thanks to a program like ACCESS. Her daughter became a doctor, and now their family will never live in poverty again.

One of the students up there told us before the start of question period, she said: I am going to get an education because my family has already always lived in poverty. I never want my kids to live in poverty again.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) must answer a simple question: Why is he cutting \$2,000 in support for a student like that?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I can assure the member I've never attacked anybody either inside this House or outside of the House, but what I have done and what members of our caucus have done—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —is that they've stood up for Manitobans to make life more affordable for them when that comes to the purchasing of almost any good in Manitoba. This is a government that is making things more affordable when it comes

specifically to post-secondary institutions and students.

We've invested record amounts of money into scholarships and bursaries so that those students who need the help or those students who are exceeding in post—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —secondary education can get that help in Manitoba.

The member opposite, he can squawk from his seat and he can yell all he wants, but we're getting action on this side of the House.

Post-Secondary Education ACCESS Program Funding

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): ACCESS bursaries provide targeted assistance to northern, indigenous and low-income students in areas where they're under-represented like social work and education. These bursaries provided up to 60 per cent of a student's need. Research with low-income and under-represented groups show the fear of large student debt is a very significant deterrent of these students attending post-secondary.

The minister, however, has ignored this data and cancelled the ACCESS bursaries, bursaries that actually help lift people out of poverty.

Will the minister get up today and tell us that he's going to reinstate these bursaries to these ACCESS students?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I'm happy to stand in this House and inform that member and all members that there are millions of dollars more available in bursaries than were ever available under the NDP.

As—one of the key priorities of this government was to ensure that there was more access to bursaries, to engage the private sector in helping to support those bursaries, and they've stepped up. In fact, I know the former Education critic—or I'm assuming he's former because he doesn't ask questions anymore—used to say that we would never meet those targets. Madam Speaker, not only do we meet those targets, we exceeded those targets.

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

Mrs. Smith: Well, there's 40 members of the ACCESS programs up in our gallery today, and they

are not telling us what this minister is telling us. They are telling us that they are getting \$2,000 less a year towards their tuition and that they're having to make tough choices like paying rent over going to school, which would help lift their families out of poverty which would have a rippling effect for generations to come.

Why does this minister continue to pick on the poor? He's raised tuition. He's cut bursaries. He's cut the ACCESS programs.

Will he commit to at least making sure that the students that are in the ACCESS program continue to get the support for the duration of their programs?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I know that the member wasn't a member of this House when the NDP government raised taxes on the poorest and the least vulnerable in Manitoba.

Now she may have been in the community at that time railing against the NDP. She may have been saying that they shouldn't have done it. She may have been saying that they shouldn't have been raising taxes on those who could least afford to pay it. I never heard her voice do that. I never saw it in print. Maybe it exists and I'd be happy if she'd table that for us.

What we did is not only reduce taxes on Manitobans more generally, but provide more support for students in post-secondary, \$20 million more support so they can get the education that they need when they need it and they can better their future, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Smith: Well, Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we're listening to students.

While this minister continues to raise tuition, while he continues to cut ACCESS programs, while he continues to cut ACCESS bursaries, and he even cut the tax rebate for students to stay in this—the province—they got \$25,000 as long as they continued to work here, cut that as well. Shame on him.

Education is a right of everyone in Manitoba and this minister is making it harder for all of our ACCESS students to be able to access education.

Will he reinstate the ACCESS bursary for all of the students that are in the program so that they can finish the programs they're in?

* (14:00)

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I'm happy to compare the record of this government versus the former NDP government.

Under the former NDP government Manitobans were the highest taxed west of Quebec. That's now being reversed under this government by the reduction of taxes, of course, tax decreases that the NDP tried to block.

When it comes to tuition we put into legislation to ensure that Manitoba would have the lowest average tuition of any western province so that we would be the most affordable in all of western Canada. But we went further than that. We didn't want to just be the most affordable; we wanted to ensure that those who needed support could get it, so we increased the bursaries and scholarships by \$20 million more than ever existed under the NDP, Madam Speaker.

Centennial Concert Hall Upgrades and Repairs

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): The Pallister government is not listening, not to the mayor, the Prime Minister, nurses, teachers or students. Add to that list now, the heads of Manitoba's leading cultural institutions. Trudy Schroeder is executive director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. She has gone public, accusing the Pallister government of turning its back on our cultural institutions.

Why can't this government listen to anyone, and why are they picking fights with our cultural institutions?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Reality is that for 17 years the members opposite ignored the cultural sector here in Manitoba. They left millions—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cox: —and millions of dollars of deferred maintenance on the table. They left the roof leaking. They left the carpets duct-taped together. They did nothing for the cultural policy for all of the culture sector here in Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Mrs. Cox: They don't want to listen, Madam Speaker, because the truth hurts.

Anyways, we recognize the importance of this very important sector here in Manitoba. I've had

discussions with Trudy Schroeder and told her specifically that we are working together as a group here on this side of the House to ensure that we will solve the problems—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Logan, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Marcelino: The Centennial Concert Hall needs additional investment this year to repair the orchestral shell and it will need ongoing provincial support in the future.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has responded, saying no to necessary upgrades and signalling he intends to pull all financial support in the years ahead. Trudy Schroeder's message is simple. She says, quote, I don't know why the Province would be trying to say it's not their business, because it is their business, unquote.

Our cultural institutions need ongoing investment and support. Why is the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Cox: Well, again, Madam Speaker, it's interesting that they raise that question when they did absolutely nothing for 17 years. As a matter of fact, they left patrons in danger when they actually visited the Centennial Concert Hall. We had to invest five point million dollars immediately to ensure that patrons were safe when they visited that Centennial Concert Hall.

They didn't care, Madam Speaker. We do. We're going to get it done.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Trudy Schroeder says that allowing the concert hall to fall into disrepair sends a bad message, quote, that we are really struggling, unquote, and that our community's failing to thrive.

A modern progressive province invests in the arts for today and tomorrow, but the Pallister government isn't listening. They're only focused on the bottom line. Allowing the concert hall to fall into disrepair and pulling long-term funding is a tragic mistake. It's one the minister and the Premier can correct.

Will they make needed investments in the concert hall for today and tomorrow?

Mrs. Cox: Well, Madam Speaker, we have invested more in arts and culture than this government ever has: \$15 million towards Diversity Gardens; \$10 million towards royal aviation museum; \$15 million for the Inuit Art Centre; \$5 million for the Heritage Trust; and there's more to come. *[interjection]* Yes, the military monument. The list can go and on and on. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cox: They don't want to listen, but, anyways, we're moving forward, Madam Speaker. We value the arts and culture.

Freedom of Information Requests Transparency and Accountability

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): For a government that ran on a promise of openness and transparency, more and more it looks like a government with something to hide.

One would think that since the Premier is so eager to call an election he's going ignore the law to do it, that his government might actually be keen to talk about their budget. But, instead, we've got stonewalling and evasions. This government doesn't provide numbers in its reports. We've had 100 hours of Estimates set aside, and the Premier's only lasted an hour and 48 minutes.

This government is also ignoring or stonewalling on freedom of information requests. We asked about this government's decision to sell off publicly owned water bombers to Babcock International. I table their response. They say they can't say because they would allegedly, quote, harm business interests of third parties and cause economic harm for a public body, end quote.

Can the Premier tell the House why he believes the business interests of Babcock are more important than the public's right to know?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Our government is extremely proud of being open and transparent, having one of the most open and transparent governments in, really, the province's history. Look at our consultations where we listen to Manitobans on a daily basis to get things done. Another example of listening to Manitobans is the policy change we made today with the tobacco tax. We have the Canadian Cancer Society that's here.

Our government is always listening to Manitobans.

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

Mr. Lamont: One of the other freedom of information requests we made was about MLLC, Manitoba liquor, lotteries and cannabis, after we heard that this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his chief of staff were doing an end run around the board and directly telling that Crown corporation what to do. There was no response from the department unless you count the Premier ditching his chief of staff and shuffling him into another department. At this point, the information that we requested won't see the light of day until after the next election.

Did the Premier get rid of his chief of staff for interfering in Crown corporations, or was he turfed because he told the Premier something he didn't want to hear—that calling a snap election is a bad idea, for example? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Well, Madam Speaker, I'd like to advise the Leader of the Second Opposition that it was the PC government that first introduced that FIPPA legislation way back in 1998.

So we understand the importance of transparency here on this side of the House, and I'd like to maybe suggest to the member opposite that he should talk to his friends over in Ottawa-east about what's happening over there with SNC-Lavalin.

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

Mr. Lamont: We could always talk to the member from Costa Rica-north, Madam Speaker, but he's not available.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lamont: Now, it's not news that this Premier has no interest in hearing anyone—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please.

It's a breach of our rules in this House to refer to members by some titles that are not appropriate, and that—I would encourage the member that when we are speaking and referencing ministers or the Premier that it should be by their titles. There is no opportunity in this House to take any leeway with that. Members are supposed to be addressed by their proper titles.

Mr. Lamont: I apologize, Madam Speaker.

I would—I also wonder whether this government's concerns about the carbon tax are that they'll face a personal bill for all their gaslighting.

It's not news that this Premier has no interest in hearing anyone's views but his own. We know this government granted over \$10 million in untendered contracts to a donor without going through Treasury Board. We know this government is being—put—playing—been playing political favourites with millions in grants for the Community Places Program.

* (14:10)

But what is it about the sale of water bombers to Babcock that the Premier and his government don't want Manitobans to know?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Deputy Premier): Here's a member that doesn't respect the rules of this House, Madam Speaker. He didn't respect them just a few minutes ago. He didn't respect them all the way through question period and after question period. He doesn't respect the rules of the House.

He also doesn't understand the FIPPA laws, Madam Speaker. When it comes to open RFPs, those are not FIPPAble. So perhaps if the member opposite would spend his time doing his homework, that maybe he would get it right.

So I would suggest that before he comes here and breaks all the rules of the Chamber, that he actually understands the FIPPA rules before he starts throwing these kinds of allegations around, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Hydro Dam Operations First Nations Consultations

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Yesterday we had the honour of meeting some members of the Tataskwaskyak *[phonetic]* Cree nation, and they tell us that they'd met the Minister of Sustainable Development to hear some of their concerns about the lack of proper consultation when it comes to Manitoba Hydro dam operations.

They didn't really feel that they'd got through to that minister at that meeting, so I'm going to ask if the minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro believes that proper consultation with First Nations communities that are being affected by Manitoba Hydro dam operations, particularly when it comes to interim flows and final licensing, if she will sit down and make sure that those people are properly consulted.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Well, Madam Speaker, I'd like to remind the member, and I know he wasn't here for 17 years, and obviously he didn't bother to stay informed as to what was happening in the province of Manitoba, particularly up north for 17 years before he arrived here, but I'd like to remind him that his previous government had issued interim licences year over year over year.

Seventeen years they issued an interim licence. They never did any consultation with any communities about issuing a final licence. All they did was issue interim licences and—while they ran Manitoba Hydro into the ground. So I wonder how much consultation they did before they ran Manitoba Hydro into the ground.

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

Mr. Lindsey: What the members of that community were asking is for ongoing consultation, not just a one-time thing, but as we move towards the final licensing that is required before hydro gets sold in the States, they want to make sure that not just their community but all impacted First Nations communities will be part of the ongoing consultation to determine the proper operation, that recognizing their traditional knowledge can actually help Hydro manage their operations for Hydro's benefit and people of Manitoba and those communities.

So will the Minister of Crown Services (Mrs. Mayer) agree to that today?

Ms. Squires: Well, again, Madam Speaker, I'd like to remind members opposite that for 17 years they listed—or signed interim licences year over year to Manitoba Hydro to operate the augmented flow program. They never cared about the environmental destruction that they caused.

They never cared about the environmental destruction that they caused when they strung a bipole line down the west side of the province—450 kilometres longer than it ought to have been. They destroyed wetlands; they destroyed forests; they never did any environmental consultation as they destroyed all the habitat along the west side of the province. So when will members opposite take responsibility for the damage that they caused this environment?

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

Mr. Lindsey: So I guess I'm to assume from that that the Minister of Crown Services will not be asking one of the Crown corporations to do proper consultation, going forward. So far all we've heard from the government today is things that have happened in the past, and we may all admit that things can be done differently than they were in the past.

So, really, that's what I'm asking today is that we progress so that the people of those communities feel that they've been properly—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —consulted with, on the ongoing operation of those dams, that their traditional knowledge gets recognized—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —and that we find a new way of doing business that recognizes the honour of the Crown when it comes to proper consultation.

Will the minister agree to that?

Ms. Squires: Well, Madam Speaker, I'd like to point out to the member opposite that in 2011 Tataskweyak Cree Nation had walked away from their consultation with the NDP government. They failed to reach an agreement after two years of trying to have an engagement with the former NDP government. They failed to come to terms on a work plan.

I would like to also point out that we brought Tataskweyak Cree Nation back to the table for consultation in 2016 and we are working with them right now on consultation as we move forward in the province of Manitoba.

Resources for RCMP Detachments Use of HealthIM System

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): In many municipalities across Manitoba, including my own home town of Swan River, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police provide a critical front-line service keeping our community safe.

As part of our commitment to a safer and stronger Manitoba our government understands the vital role the RCMP and role they play in rural and remote communities, and is proud to partner with them to support important work they do every day.

Can the Minister of Justice tell the House about our most recent announcement of support for the RCMP in Manitoba?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I appreciate this good question from the member for Swan River.

Our government is pleased to announce over \$500,000 to support new resources for RCMP detachments across Manitoba. Madam Speaker, \$200,000 will go towards expanding the HealthIM system to help front-line officers determine the best response for those who are experiencing a mental health crisis. The pilot project just completed has proven very effective in reducing apprehension rates and actually a decrease in time spent by police officers in health-care facilities.

Over and above this, we are also investing \$350,000 in projects and programs across Manitoba. RCMP are positive role models for many youth and these funds will assist in developing positive relationships across all of Manitoba.

Indigenous Community Safety Programs Funding and Training Support Needed

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Manitoba has the second highest rural crime rate in Canada which the stats show that it's being driven by northern crime. This is a direct result of this government's complete and total abandonment of the North, addictions and poverty in Manitoba, and, finally, three years later, a peep as to what this government is doing to better the relationship between RCMP and indigenous people.

I'd like to table this article by APTN titled: were you turned on at all by this: an RCMP officer asks an indigenous youth during a sexual assault report.

Most Conservatives in Manitoba believe that community safety is important except the ones sitting here.

Can the minister tell me what his plans—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I know we certainly look at statistics and we view some of the statistics with some alarm. We certainly are concerned about some of the statistics we are seeing across the province.

In my previous response here we are investing in northern Manitoba. A lot of the resources I talked about in this previous announcement from yesterday will go into RCMP hands and these

northern communities, and we really want to build relationships with RCMP and the people in these communities so that we can take a fight out of the criminal activity that is happening in these remote communities.

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

Ms. Klassen: Community policing only works when it's being supported by all levels of government. For years in Manitoba government's have set up policing groups to fail, like the institutional safety officers, community BIZ patrols, First Nation safety officers and others. All these groups have been given the legislative tools without the practical tools, such as training and equipment, that they really need to make a difference in their communities.

* (14:20)

The NDP and PCs then leave the programs in a continual state of underfunding, unable to do the immense job that they have been tasked with, and then they complain when—that these programs do not work.

Can the minister tell us what his mandate states in respect to public safety?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, I don't agree with the premise of the question.

Certainly, we brought forward a criminal justice modernization strategy. Certainly, that strategy talked specifically about being tough on major crimes. We are doing that.

We're certainly putting the resources in the police officers' hands. This year's budget alone, we allowed for an extra 29 RCMP positions across Manitoba. We're investing more money than ever before in criminal operations here. We've set aside \$2.3 million in this particular budget to deal with illicit drugs, and certainly we're investing all kinds of money across Manitoba, including northern Manitoba, to achieve results.

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

Ms. Klassen: In 2015 the Province took over the First Nation Safety Officer Program from the Harper Conservatives. Rather than investing in the program, it was left as is, completely underfunded, and today it is no surprise that it is failing.

In some of my communities, the FNSOs work their shifts as expected, but the stress of not getting

paid in a timely fashion, or even at all, is a continuous worry. But they do it anyway because our people are gripped with a meth drug crisis that is taking place across our province. They are our heroes.

The FS-FNSOs want search and seizure training, not traffic violation training in a place where there are hardly any roads. A set of two-way radios would be great.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Cullen: In terms of training, I will advise the member opposite that we actually just did renew an agreement with Assiniboine Community College to provide additional training for front-line officers for northern communities. That's been a very successful program.

I will also talk about our criminal justice modernization strategy. It talks a lot about restorative justice. We sent over 5,000 cases to restorative justice last year alone. And we also are going to be increasing the capacity of other communities to deal with restorative justice.

We think this is a tremendous opportunity for youth to be accountable and not getting into the criminal justice system. So a lot of work and a lot of energy is going in for positive results and we are getting the job done on behalf of Manitobans.

Department Estimates Request to Consider

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, the Pallister government refuses to call Estimates in this House.

Day after day the government refuses to allow opposition members—New Democrats, Liberals, the independent members—the chance to examine and question this government's Estimates of budgetary expenditures. They've called Estimates exactly one day since budget debate concluded. There's only 10 days left in spring session; it doesn't appear the government's going to do that any time soon.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) stand in his place and direct his House leader to call Estimates today after question period?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, this is the Manitoba Legislature, and in the Legislature we debate and should pass legislation. So we've been calling legislation for a number of weeks, in fact, months.

And yet what has the NDP done? They've stalled it, they've talked it out, they've rung the bells. They've tried every procedural tactic. In fact, on a bill called the minor corrections and amendment act, a bill that corrects spelling mistakes, this opposition has stalled it for eight hours.

If they actually want to get to Estimates, maybe they should consider passing legislation, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

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

Mr. Swan: The Government House Leader well knows, as he put on the record probably a hundred times when he was in opposition, it's a common practice in this Legislature to call departmental Estimates following the completion of debate of the government's budget bill.

Now, of course, we know this Premier says he's a results guy. We'd love to ask him questions about the kind of results we're getting. With crime rates through the roof, with higher wait times in health care across the province, less support for deserving students through the ACCESS program, a failed green plan, you'd think the Premier is actually afraid to call Estimates.

Will the Premier stop being so afraid and direct his House leader to call Estimates so we can ask questions and take this government to task for their failures across the board, Madam Speaker?
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Goertzen: Compare the priorities, Madam Speaker. There's no question, in opposition, members who are in the government now who were in opposition, we absolutely tried to stop the PST from going up, and so we did spend a lot of time trying to stop the PST from going up.

This is an opposition who has spent a lot of time trying to stop the PST from going down, but they've also been spending a lot of time doing other things. They spent eight hours trying to stop a bill that does things like change the word from that to there, Madam Speaker, or change a couple of spelling mistakes. Trying to change a couple of spelling mistakes, that's been the priority of the opposition: to stop spelling mistakes from being corrected.

It's no wonder they wanted an election, Madam Speaker, because they are out of priorities. We'll give them their wish soon enough.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral—*[interjection]* Order. Order.

The time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

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

Following oral questions on May 9, 2019, the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Martin) raised a point of order regarding off-the-record comments he alleged were made by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) during debate on private member's resolution No. 5, Mental Health supports needed for youth in Manitoba's north, which had been debated earlier the same day. The honourable member for Morris alleged that while he was speaking in debate and referencing a story about a mental health situation in his family, the honourable member for St. Johns said, and I quote: Do you have a brain? End quote.

The honourable member for St. Johns and the honourable Deputy Government House Leader (Mr. Pedersen) both spoke to the point of order before I took it under advisement.

I have reviewed the Hansard transcript from the private member's resolution debate in question on the morning of May 9, 2019, and I have also listened to the audio recording of the same debate, and I can report the following to the House: (1) When the honourable member for Morris began his speech there was some disorder in the House. His initial comments made reference to the scheduling of debate on the resolution, and during the first minute of his speech some heckling could be heard, including the phrase, and I quote, give it a break, end quote, which can be heard twice; (2) five minutes later in his speech the honourable member for Morris referenced a story about his mother. At that time no heckling can be heard as the House was appropriately silent and respectful; and (3) there was no heckling heard at any time during the member's speech with the phrase, and I quote: Do you have a brain? End quote.

Accordingly, I am ruling that the honourable member for Morris did not have a point of order. *[interjection]*

I would just urge members and remind members that these are serious, when issues, statements are

made on points of order or other transgressions in the House. So I would urge that there really is no value in making extraneous comments and throwing out comments through the House. That just exacerbates all of this heckling that goes on in this House.

So I would urge courtesy from all members, please.

PETITIONS

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

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:

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

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Allum: —early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which

will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Anna Lissa Sands [*phonetic*], Sharon Ann Blanco, Digna Cortez and many other Manitobans.

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

Quality Health Care

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government's program of cuts and restructuring in health care have had serious negative consequences, reduced both access to and quality of care for patients, increased wait times, exasperated—I'll try that again—exasperated the nursing shortage and significantly increased workload and the reliance on overtime from nurses and other health-care professionals.

(2) Further cuts and consolidation are opposed by a majority of Manitobans and will only further reduce access to health-care services.

(3) The provincial government has rushed through these cuts and changes, and failed to adequately consult nurses and health-care professionals who provide front-line patient care.

(4) Ongoing cuts and changes appear to be more about saving money than improving health care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will improve the timeliness and quality of care for patients by increasing the number of beds across the system and recruiting and retaining an adequate number of nurses and other health professionals to meet Manitoba's needs.

This petition is signed by Bill Torrance, Robyn Powell, Alison Noe and many other fine Manitobans.

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Cal Richardson, Chassidy Friesen, William Penner and many others.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early child-care educators has continued to increase;

quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

* (14:40)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this is signed by P. Desjardins, L. Kopenchuk, Kristin Carter-Preston and many other Manitobans.

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early

learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, was signed by Gillian Guodaik Lindsay Stangl, Sumita Holmes, and many other fine Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

And the background to the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition was signed by many Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Aldona Stein, Shipra Kaushik and Dominic Maliakal and many more Manitobans.

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Joseph Eadie, Ingrid Hillman, Kim McMillan and many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could you please call for debate the following bills for concurrence and third readings: Bill 17, The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers); Bill 19, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Possession Restrictions); Bill 7, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Immediate Roadside Prohibitions); Bill 11, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cider and Cooler Sales at Beer Vendors); and Bill 13, The Private Vocational Institutions Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider concurrence and third reading debate of Bills 17, 19, 15, 7, 11 and 13.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 17—The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers)

Madam Speaker: Therefore, I will call concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers).

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 17, The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: I'm happy to put a few words on the record for a third reading on Bill 17, The Police Services Amendment Act.

Our government believes that no Manitoban should ever feel unsafe at work or when accessing needed public services like health care. That is why we are taking action with Bill 17, which amends The Police Services Act to create a new institutional safety officer appointment. The amendments will provide security staff at health-care facilities and other designated public institutions with the legal authority to enforce certain provincial laws. Regulations will allow for standardized training and qualification requirements.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Bill 17 will allow institutional safety officers to provide an initial response to incidents that pose a threat to safety and security, co-operate with the local police to enhance safety at the institution and alert local police of any incidents that require a police response.

Our government is happy to have the support of key stakeholders across our province for this important legislation. I would like to particularly thank Darlene Jackson from the Manitoba Nurses Union, Shelley Wiggins from the MGEU and Craig Doerksen from the Health Sciences Centre for presenting at committee last week and expressing their support for this legislation.

We look forward to seeing Bill 17 passed into law. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I would like to put a couple of words on the record in respect of Bill 17.

Like the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), I want to just take a couple of moments to acknowledge each of the presenters that we had last week in committee who came and shared their—well, the realities of what many folks within the health-care system, including nurses, are currently facing in respect of their safety—their personal safety—while attempting to execute their duties as nurses.

I think that for everybody in the committee, I would imagine one of the statistics that was both shocking and disheartening was when Darlene from the Manitoba Nurses Union had—Darlene Jackson, pardon me—had mentioned that, you know, years ago there'd maybe be, you know, some—a couple of

incidences of violence, you know, a month—or, every couple of months. And now Darlene Jackson had indicated last week that, in fact, there are upwards of four violent incidences owing to patients who come in, citizens who come in, who are in the midst of a—meth psychosis, per shift.

And so I think that that was pretty telling in respect of where we are at addressing the meth crisis here in Manitoba. And I want to just reiterate that again and put it on the record, that Darlene Jackson from the Manitoba Nurses Union said that per shift there's about four incidences of violence against—towards nurses—Manitoba nurses.

I think that—well, I've been—I know that I've been pretty open and I know that other people have spoken about the difficulty of sometimes just working in this space, in this Chamber. When we have incidences of heckling or whatever it is, it can be difficult to be in this space.

And I can't imagine—so in this space, you know, we have heckling or we have things that are said that are, you know, so egregious and so disrespectful, and that affects us on, you know, a personal level or a spiritual level or a mental level or an emotional level. I know it certainly does me over the three years that I've been an MLA. I can't imagine what it would be like to be a nurse and have to face or have the threat of facing physical violence in the workplace.

And, you know, one of the things that I'm sure we can all agree on—and, you know, there's some things we can agree on and, certainly, there's some things that we can't agree on in this Chamber, but I would suspect that we could all agree on the fact that nurses are pretty amazing, compassionate, caring, dedicated human beings, and that they're like teachers—teachers and nurses are very special people, and I have an enormous amount of respect for the work that nurses and health-care providers do in keeping Manitoba families safe physically, in respect of their health; the role that they play in helping Manitoba citizens navigate whatever health concerns that they have going on; and, certainly, the role that they play at end of life, or at the beginning of life.

* (15:00)

You know, I can go back to when I had my own children. And I had some really amazing nurses and, you know—who—and I've shared this in the House before, you know, if it wasn't for the health care—health—front-line health-care services that I received as a first-time mom, I wouldn't have been able to

breastfeed my son, having recovered from a Caesarean. They—I mean, nurses are amazing.

And so, I've thought, actually, quite a bit, since the standing committee last week, about the fact that Manitoba nurses have to face physical violence or the threat of violence in just executing their duties, in just serving Manitoba in the most intimate of ways.

I suspect we can all agree on that; that nurses provide some of the most intimate forms of care at our most intimate times of—you know, when we're scared the most, we don't know what's going on with our health.

So, you know, I—certainly, I, you know, on this side of the House, we want to ensure that nurses and health-care providers are protected, that there are the—measures that are put in place so that nurses can do their jobs, they can do their jobs to the best of their ability, they can do their jobs free of violence and free of assault or free of threat.

It would be remiss of me if I didn't also note, in there, that in the context of nurses in Manitoba, that, you know, this—the Pallister government has also created a space where nurses are overworked. And I actually feel like that word, overworked, it does not do justice to what nurses are going through today, in respect of the workplace and the work that they need to do. So, for a lack of better work, I will say overworked.

And the fact that nurses are forced to work mandatory hours—I've said it in the House before, in respect of, you know, what the—what members opposite have allowed to happen in the last couple of years, where nurses, Manitoba nurses, go to their shift; expect that they're going to be done their shift after they've done a 12, 14—whatever hour shift it is; expect that they're going to be able to go home to their families; expect that they're going to be able to go home, rest, spend time with their children or their partners or whatever they—whatever their family situation is; or expect that after they've completed their shift, they can go rest and do what they need to do, if they work out or whatever it is.

Basically, nurses expect that once they do their shift, they can live their life. But, actually, there is so much chaos, and it has happened so fast that Manitoba nurses are the ones who are bearing the brunt of this chaos.

And so imagine, then, executing your job as a nurse or a front-line health-care provider, the myriad of different positions that we have within the

health-care system: you're operating within a chaotic system.

You don't know what's going on. You don't know if your job is being shuttered or if you've got to apply for a different job or you now have to go and drive to a different part of the city, because now you've been—you have to go work at this hospital.

And then you don't know—you're just crossing your fingers that once you're finished your shift, you're actually going to be able to go home to your family. And, while you're actually with your family, you're crossing your fingers that you're not called in, because there's not enough nurses for that particular shift.

So, in the midst of all of that—in the midst of all of that—you come to work, you are at work and you're threatened with violence. You are—your life is actually in jeopardy in executing your duties as a nurse.

I think that that is beyond tragic. It is beyond egregious, and, as I've said in this House before, the vast majority of nurses are women. And to try and silo the totality of the context that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has created for Manitoba nurses, and not intrinsically understand that this is being borne on the backs of Manitoba women is just indicative again of how little the Premier and his ministers and his backbenchers actually care for Manitoba women—that you can sit back and allow this to happen.

And I brought it up in committee last week, pointing out that—I thought it was good for the couple of members that were there. I guess there's seven members that sit on the committee, including, you know, the Premier's, a couple premiers—or, sorry, a couple of ministers, pardon me. I thought it was important—although I think that every member should have an opportunity to hear, but at least those seven members had to listen to the presentations from nurses—or, for those that—from those that work in the health-care system. They had to sit there because, as you know, Deputy Speaker, nurses have organized two rallies to date on the steps of the Legislature while we've been in session.

So it literally takes two minutes to walk outside, and not one member of the PC caucus, not one minister and certainly not the Premier bothered to go outside and to listen to nurses. And for all the talk of this is a transparent government and we're listening to folks, not one member of the PC caucus was outside to listen to nurses.

And so it is quite egregious that members opposite sit and do nothing. They do not ask their Premier (Mr. Pallister), they do not demand of their Premier, of their boss, to actually think of Manitoba nurses, to think of women in the province and demand that he halt immediately the chaos that is created—demand that he put immediate measures and a security infrastructure in place that will ensure that Manitoba nurses and front-line health-care workers are protected in the workplace.

Now, I know that this is the—a start. One of the concerns that was brought up, Deputy Premier—or, Deputy Speaker, sorry—*[interjection]*—soon maybe? Soon, you never know. Pardon me, sorry.

One of the things that was brought up in respect of Bill 17 was this disconnect between the—in order to have institutional safety officers, they will have to be trained. And so when I asked the question about whether or not there has been any engagement by the Pallister government with the Manitoba Nurses Union or anyone from the Health Sciences Centre in respect of training, I believe it was—and I could be wrong, so I'll put that out there, I could be wrong—but I believe it was Darlene Jackson who had indicated that there was some preliminary discussions last year about working together or partnering with the Pallister government in respect of training, and training in particular to how to deal with meth-induced patients and citizens. And to that end, Darlene spoke about—Darlene Jackson spoke about that she hasn't heard anything. There's been no further engagement in respect of training.

* (15:10)

So I hope that, as this bill—very, very soon, I imagine—receives royal assent, that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen)—and I know that the Minister of Justice, you know, said that he heard all of the presenters.

So I hope that, you know, as soon as the election is over—because obviously that—it, you know, looks like that's where we're going towards—that, well, I know, for us, whoever our Minister of Justice is will ensure that the proper training occurs to ensure that Manitoba nurses are protected in the workplace.

So I'm not sure who the new Minister of Justice will be, on this side, but, to you, Deputy Speaker, and to everyone in the House and to Manitoba nurses, you know, rest assured that we will ensure that there is the most comprehensive and robust

training for safety officers so that Manitoba nurses and front-line health-care workers are protected.

So I think it's important to acknowledge, as well, that, you know, a lot is—a lot of us saw the video that occurred, in respect of an attack on staff at Health Sciences Centre. You know, I think that many times we're kind of—obviously, because we're not in the system, we're so divorced from what nurses actually go through, in respect of their safety, and what they're seeing now.

But there was that video, and I think that that's perhaps, maybe the closest thing that we can try to connect ourselves to what nurses go through. Again, I think that it's important for every member opposite to sit and to listen to nurses.

So I would suggest, as well, Deputy Speaker, that, you know, the violence that nurses face is—are not going to simply going to be fixed by institutional safety officers. That, in fact, is actually just a Band-Aid solution to a far greater crisis that we're going on.

And I'm sure that you would agree with that, Deputy Speaker, that that is actually just after the fact, right. We need to be, you know, as Manitobans, looking at what we need to do to ensure and to offer services to those that are struggling with addictions.

And so, yes, you can, you know, start with Bill 17 and we can have institutional safety officers, but you can have thousands of institutional safety officers. But, if you're actually not dealing with the fact that individuals are in crisis with addictions and not dealing with any of that, it is simply just an afterthought. It is just a band-aid solution.

It's no secret that, on this side of the House, one of the things that we've been advocating for and, you know, asking the Premier to seriously consider, alongside experts like Main Street Project, like other politicians—Mayor Brian Bowman—one of the measures that we've asked to put in place is a safe consumption site, so that the folks that work at the safe consumption site—which, in many respects, the vast majority of them are health-care providers, because, certainly, that is the best way to ensure that people are safe when they are using drugs—they are best equipped to also be able to deal with any potential issues.

And a safe consumption site—and I don't know if members opposite have ever had the opportunity to visit a safe consumption site. It is—I don't know if in the mind of, you know, members opposite or some—

or in the minds of some members of the public, you just, kind of, think it's a bunch of, you know, a bunch of—you know, a space and everybody's just shooting up or whatever they're doing, but that's actually not what it's like.

It's actually—the safe consumption sites that I was able to travel to, with the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), it is almost like a doctor's office. It is—the one that we went with, there are different sections. So individuals, when it's your turn, you go, you have a little bit of privacy. You—well, when you first come in, though, you have an intake with a nurse, who says, well, you know, when was the last time you did this, have you seen a doctor, da da da da da. You go into this kind of second stage where you partake, very safely, with your drugs. You're given what you need to be able to do that. Safe needles are clean; we're not passing along any potential diseases, blood-borne. And then you go into another room where you kind of just sit on chairs, and it's at that point that you have an opportunity to also connect with outreach workers.

And, you know, what's interesting, and what we heard when we were in Calgary and we met with these folks, they were saying that often, quite often, that's where you get folks who want to stop doing drugs; you're able to connect them with other resources. That's the beauty of a safe consumption site: (1) it saves lives, (2) it is the path to potentially living a clean and sober life.

If there are any spaces that we are looking to create that will actually lead to individuals having the supports and resources that they need to be able to quit doing drugs, it is a safe consumption site. I would suggest to the House that it is certainly one way to mitigate the violence that we're seeing within the health-care system, and, quite honestly, Deputy Speaker, it is just smart governing. It's just smart governing to look at Manitoba—Manitobans who are struggling with addictions as human beings, as human beings that need support, as human beings who deserve support instead of punishing Manitobans who are struggling with addictions for a variety of different ways or for—because of a variety of different things in their lives, things that were beyond their control.

Instead of punishing Manitobans, I would suggest to the House that it is our responsibility to take care of Manitobans. It is our responsibility to take care of Manitobans who are struggling. It is our responsibility to take care of Manitobans who

need help. It is our responsibility to take care of Manitobans and to offer those supports and those different avenues—who want to get clean, who want to live sober, who want not to be in the clutches of drug addiction. None of us want to be in that and for many of us, including myself—I've shared in this House that I also suffered with drug addiction very, very early on—none of us want to be doing those things. It is a matter of survival, in many incidents.

And, you know, I know that members opposite can believe whatever they want to believe, but, you know, I would suggest to members opposite to read Dr. Garbor [*phonetic*] Maté, who is a phenomenal doctor. I know I just butchered his name; I'm pretty sure I just butchered his name. I had the opportunity of hearing him speak and reading his books. I heard him speak in—where did I hear him speak? I'm not even sure where I heard him speak. But he is Garbor [*phonetic*—oh, I can't say that; Maté—anyways, it's M-a-t-e. He actually is a survivor of the Holocaust. His parents sent him to Canada, and he's just a phenomenal human being. He's really just a genuine, phenomenal human being, and he—when I had the opportunity to hear him speak, and in his books, he really does very succinctly outline and map out for people that, you know, 99.9 per cent of the time, it is impossible for people with enormous entrenched trauma not to be—not to have addictions.

* (15:20)

And so, you know, to blame Manitobans and not to put supports in place for Manitobans who, to no fault of their own, are simply attempting to deal with trauma, I would suggest that, you know, we can do better in Manitoba. We can actually show compassion. We can actually show kindness to Manitobans who are struggling with addictions.

I know that here on Treaty 1 territory many of my own community suffer with addictions, including many, many in my own family, my immediate family, and as I've shared, obviously my own mom, and that comes from a history of colonization here in this country.

And, you know, I know a lot of people often will think that, oh, well, colonization is finished, but actually it's not; it's a historical continuum, and I would suggest to members of this House, and I would suggest to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) that when we don't acknowledge that individuals have trauma and intergenerational trauma within the indigenous community, and we don't put those measures in place to offer help and offer support and

offer protection and offer safety, we are participating in this historical continuum, because what it says to people is that it says that their lives don't matter, that whether or not they live or die does not matter.

And so, you know, again, one of the small things that we have repeatedly asked in dealing with the meth crisis, just one measure, is a safe consumption site. I think it's important for members opposite, and to put it on the official record of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, is that most provinces and territories across the country are moving towards a safe consumption site model. In fact, we know in Alberta, like I said, we went to the one in Calgary, but they were working on—and I think they had—they're moving towards seven or they have seven and they were moving towards 10, so—in fact, I want to Google that while I'm talking here, that I'm pretty sure they have quite a bit of sites in Alberta and we have none, and that is not good.

That doesn't necessarily show that the Pallister government is at all concerned with the lives of individuals and—[*interjection*]-yes, here—yes, so there's certainly quite a few. Calgary, Alberta—where is this? Boyle Street community centre services.

The Associate Minister of Health supports proposals and [*inaudible*] to bring [*inaudible*] services to—there's going to be in Medicine Hat, Grand Prairie. In Calgary, they're looking at a mobile site. In Red Deer, they're looking. They're also looking at—they've done a needs assessment for supervised consumption sites for Fort McMurray and Edson.

And so, you know, I would suggest to you that Alberta, of course, under the NDP, as you know, Deputy Speaker, were pretty progressive in ensuring that there were safe consumption sites, or the infrastructure for safe consumption sites.

And, again, I think it's important to put that we don't have any; we don't even have a government that wants to look at safe consumption sites. We have a minister and a Premier (Mr. Pallister) that keep trying to spin to the public that this isn't actually a good model in dealing with the addictions crisis, just one facet of dealing with the addictions crisis.

We have a government that actually took it out of a supposed independent report. They actually took out the recommendation to have a safe consumption site.

I don't understand how members opposite can allow this lack of concern and lack of care for Manitoban citizens. I just—I don't understand it.

And let me just be clear in my final remarks here: it doesn't matter where you go in Manitoba or who you are, the meth crisis is affecting everybody. It is affecting the south side of the city, it is affecting the North End of the city, it's affecting rural areas, it's affecting northern Manitoba, and this government is doing nothing.

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

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I would like to speak to this bill and reference back to my questions today about the First Nations Safety Officer Program, as the issues we foresee will be very similar. But, first of all, I'd like to read this article that just came out, something that Sagkeeng First Nation is doing to combat the meth crisis that they're having.

So the article is titled: Sagkeeng First Nation plans to demolish two homes where meth production is suspected. So the elders are concerned about the increase in crime in the community. The chief and council of Sagkeeng First Nation in Manitoba plan to demolish two homes in the community this week suspected of being used for drug production.

Newly elected band councillor Dylan Courchene said leadership in the community about 100 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg have received numerous complaints about the homes, and former addicts have told him that meth is being produced there.

You have people walking in and out at 4, 5, 6 in the morning, and they're totally out of it.

The RCMP's drug and tactical unit has been notified, and the First Nation plans to work closely with them to see if the homes are being used to produce meth.

Toxic residue from meth production and use can leave a home uninhabitable. Under the Indian Act, First Nations band councils have the power to move and evict citizens. A plan to evict the occupants and demolish the homes was drafted by band council and presented to the community's elders council on Monday evening with, around 50 elders present.

With the elders council's blessing, band council gave the occupants two days to leave the homes.

They plan to begin Friday with a ceremony and then proceed to demolish the homes.

Sagkeeng's leadership are asking community members to join the proceedings. The elders are concerned about safety. The decision to take a hard stance against comes one month after Sagkeeng's band election. Second-term councillor Lin Dorey said drugs are one of the major issues that the community is facing, and the problem has gotten worse over the years. The band recently hired two constables and have hired security guards to help patrol the community due to the concerns from elders.

They're expressing that we need to do more to protect the people because we have a lot of break in and enters and we have a lot of home invasions, said Dorey.

According to Courchene, the community also plans on doing more to help people struggling with addictions.

We introduced through our treatment centre a detox program for users who are going through addictions. We are advocating for additional funding to have a detox centre here, said Courchene.

This article was written by Lenard Monkman. *[interjection]*

Thank you.

So our communities are doing things. I know in my—one of my Island Lake communities, known drug dealers were—their house was searched and about \$8,000 worth of cocaine bags were taken by the RCMP. And what they did was they turned around—the—and luckily, this time, the RCMP helped with the search and seizure, and so it was done as per the books and the—what do you call the—not the victims, the perpetrators were put on a flight out of the First Nation. Well, out of St. Theresa because, as you know, Wasagamack doesn't have an airport. So they were transported to St. Theresa airport and flown out.

* (15:30)

And there was a band council resolution sent to the Remand Centre pleading with the courts not to let these people be funded to come back into the community, because the pattern would just repeat again.

But, unfortunately, these people were still given the funds to be boarded on a plane, once they were

released, and actually flew to St. Theresa Point, where they were met with chief and council, in conjunction with St. Theresa Point chief and council, to ensure that they wouldn't step on Wasagamack territory.

So they had the support. They were immediately put back on a plane to come to Winnipeg. And I'm sure these individuals that were evicted out of Sagkeeng First Nation will be coming to your city as well.

And so we need to make sure that, you know—a lot of people are complaining that when bands do this, that these perpetrators, these criminals are placed within Winnipeg. But, unfortunately, our communities don't have the resources to combat this problem, and so Winnipeg is the only available place where these people are placed, these unprosecuted criminals.

And so I know that there are resources here, though, to help try and deter these types of activities and, hopefully, help these people who have no choice but to have relied on the black market. I've said so many times that there is no good market. There is no good economy in our First Nations, and so the black market dominates.

And I know that young people, as young as 12, are being recruited to enter the black market, because it is a lucrative industry. So we need to make sure that we come together to address these serious crimes and to address these serious issues, because once we're all healthy, as Manitobans, you know, the Province will start to succeed.

So, speaking of the Province, in 2015, they took over the First Nation safety officer program from the Harper Conservatives, and then they decided that the program was a failure, but this is because the program was initially set up to fail.

When a new Winnipeg Police officer or RCMP officer is hired, they not only must pass very rigorous testing and months of training, but they also receive continuous training throughout their careers. When laws change, they receive new training in how to respond to those situations. They also have this massive framework of equipment and support rooted in decades and—decades of history and government support.

What this bill does is give safety officers the same powers and responsibilities as a police officer but without the framework of support, equipment and training that the other police officers receive.

What ended up happening with the FNSOs is rather than investing in the underfunded and therefore failing program, the government left it as it was, and they were unable to do the immense job that they had been given.

Community policing only works when it's being supported by all levels of government. For years in Manitoba, governments have set up groups to fail, like the institutional safety officers, community BIZ patrol, First Nation safety officers and others. They were given the legislative tools but without the practical tools, such as training and equipment, that they really need to make a difference in their communities.

We are supportive of this bill, generally. The common issue with giving peace officer status to groups other than police forces is that they do not have the necessary training and capacity to take on such a large responsibility, particularly with universities and health facilities, who are currently working with smaller budgets for service delivery.

I do not see the institutions putting the proper amount of resources behind improvement of those security services without directing funds from the Province. Service delivery and improved security should not be in conflict with one another.

Another issue is that the institution itself is responsible for the officers' use of power. Without the appropriate resources, they should be liable. Last thing we want is to have one of our hospitals or universities sued because they were forced to put officers on the job that weren't prepared. Training is vital. We need to ensure that there is adequate training for those officers in dealing with people with mental illnesses, those with autism, Asperger syndrome or individuals with dementia. *[interjection]* Thank you.

I encourage all of us—those of us who care, at least—to try and get mental health first aid training. I know that I've missed out on the meagre offerings that they have had here in Manitoba, but I would rather the front-line staff take it versus me taking up a spot.

So I reiterate: this program is a great idea, but there must be adequate financial supports to ensure its success. Megwetch.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm honoured to speak this afternoon with Bill 17.

I've listened carefully to not just the minister's speech, but also comments put on the record by my colleague, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), and also the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen). And both opposition MLAs put on the record a lot of information about mental health and addictions. And I think that's absolutely appropriate when we're talking about Bill 17, the police services amendment act dealing with the security guards in Manitoba's health-care facilities, because we know we're trying to deal with a problem which stems from—for Manitobans that are suffering mental health issues and addictions issues that are being left behind by this government.

And I will remind everybody—well, I'll tell everybody, because they may not be aware—today is actually a very, very important anniversary in Manitoba. It's VIRGO day in Manitoba. It was exactly one year ago today that the provincial government unveiled the VIRGO report. And I remember what a fascinating day that was because we went to see the VIRGO report that the government put up online and we were surprised and we were pleased to see the VIRGO report contained a recommendation for a safe injection site and needle-exchange program.

And we thought, well, this is great. I mean, the government has—despite the comments of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) in this House repeatedly and despite the comments of the Minister of Health, we had a report that actually contained something that clearly they didn't agree with, and we thought, well, that's a positive step forward. Now we can have that discussion about how to implement the VIRGO report.

And I remember our leader, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), and I stood outside the Rotunda after we'd asked questions in the House that afternoon. And I remember how strange it was when my leader got up and asked about the safe consumption site and the Premier looked over at the Minister of Health and the Minister of Health looked back at the Premier and you could see them furrowing their brows trying to figure out how it was that the NDP were asking about a recommendation for the safer consumption site in the VIRGO report.

Because, you see, the copy that was put up publicly on the website was not the final version of the VIRGO report that this government then relied upon with the general public. And I remember my leader and I standing out in the Rotunda as we saw

these ashen-faced Conservative communication staffers and staffers in the Health department running back and forth trying to figure out what to do. And eventually, after a delay of, well, between—I think it was about an hour, hour and a half, the Minister of Health came out and told us that there seemed to have been a terrible mistake. That, in fact, what was put up on the website was an earlier draft, that that wasn't actually the VIRGO report that they wanted Manitobans to see.

Couldn't give any explanation as to how it was that that recommendation just disappeared from the final draft report to the final report. There's never been any explanation. Of course, the only explanation that anybody can give is that that was removed from the VIRGO report because of political interference by this government, which had been on the record, time and time and time again, opposed to harm reduction, opposed to progressive measures and, indeed, we have a government which has still kept its head in the sand and refused to deal with what we now know is best practice spreading across this country.

* (15:40)

So it is VIRGO day today, a day of infamy, I guess we can call it, for the government. But, in all seriousness, one year since a frustrating day in those in the know, those who work with people on the front lines, those who are experts in mental health and addictions, who want this government to take concrete steps not just to deal with the aftermath of mental health and addictions issues, but to actually get out in front and strengthen Manitobans and effectively inoculate Manitobans from all of the damage that happens when people's mental health and/or addictions issues affect their health, their livelihoods, the safety of themselves, their families and community members. And, you know, I know, if I was the Premier, maybe I would get all folksy and maybe I'd weep a little bit when I got to the key parts of my speech, but, you know, if it—if I would say to the Premier (Mr. Pallister), I would say to the Premier, that, indeed, this is all about trying to shut the barn door after the horse is long gone.

And, yes, Bill 17, given the situation that health-care providers now face in this province, Bill 17 is not an unreasonable measure to bring in; it is disappointing. It's frustrating. It's upsetting that things had to get to this level, that we had to have unions on behalf of their members, individual health-care workers and even people within the

health-care authorities, begging this government to do something to try to deal with the unpredictability and the violence that workers in our health-care system now face on a regular basis.

And how bad have things gotten in Manitoba? Well, you know, I highlighted a little bit of that the other day when the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) got up to answer a question—I think I asked of the Premier, but I got the Minister of Justice instead. And he wanted to tell us how Manitoba was the most improved province. And he didn't look in his own portfolio. And I've got to tell you it's been strange the last little while finding myself not just agreeing with, but actually sharing, some of the writings of a certain columnist for the Winnipeg Sun, who seems to actually be hitting a lot of the right notes.

Of course, that columnist has exposed the emperor as having no clothes when it comes to the Premier's insistence on calling an election, because, of course, Manitobans couldn't possibly have a provincial election and celebrate Manitoba 150 in the same year, in his view. We have this same columnist laying bare the absolute lack of credibility of Dr. Peachey coming out just the other day, after being hired back at a cost of another six-figure count that the taxpayers of Manitoba will have to pay, to try to explain that somehow there's been a sea change in Manitoba, because it appears the population is getting older. That's hard to stomach.

And let me quote from the article that was in the Sun, I believe, just yesterday morning, about how well this government is actually doing at dealing with public safety. And here's what the columnist had to say: "Statistics Canada's crime severity index for Manitoba grew from 96.5 in 2014, to 118.1 in 2017. Worse, StatsCan's violent crime severity index ballooned from 127.7 to 159.8 during that period. Winnipeg still has by far the highest violent crime severity index of any major city in Canada."

And the columnist goes on to say: "And there's no sign that rising crime rates in Winnipeg let up last year, either. The official crime data isn't in yet. But the Winnipeg Police Service's preliminary numbers for 2018, up to October, show overall crime is way up last year compared to 2017 and is well above the rolling five-year average."

Well, if the Minister of Justice defines that performance as being Manitoba's most improved province, I'm not sure what planet he's living on. And that is one of the reasons why—that the

Progressive Conservative Party has run into some significant headwinds here in the city of Winnipeg.

Obviously, their decision to leave residents of north Winnipeg and northeast Winnipeg hanging as they threaten the closure of emergency rooms is a big piece, but also people's lack of safety, which really is one of the reasons that Bill 17 is being debated today, has also been a major negative factor for this government.

You know we read, just the other day, that gun crimes and gun homicides in Winnipeg are way up. You know, when the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said aim higher, I don't think this is what—what we had in mind, but that's exactly what we're seeing as this government fails to deal with the major issues.

And we are prepared to acknowledge that a great deal of these issues are because of this government's failure to deal with mental health and addictions. And I know when you press the Minister of Health, you press the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) or the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson) or the Premier, they will say, well, you know, every province is having trouble with methamphetamine.

Well, that's not really the case, and we know that when we had a government that was interested in helping people and a government that believed that governments had the power to do something, we were able to hold back the spread of methamphetamine that provinces like British Columbia and Alberta and Saskatchewan sustained in a much greater way.

Now, I don't want to say that the situation now is identical to the situation 12 or 13 years ago. At that time the government acted very quickly, and at that time one of the big steps was to try and prevent access to the ingredients for methamphetamine that people were using to make the product locally, that braking the bad situation, if you will.

And I remember there were some steps we took like, for example, requiring Manitoba's agricultural producers to keep their hydrous ammonia tanks locked, and it took a lot of discussion because a lot of farmers said, well, what is this drug you're talking about, what does my ammonia tank have to do with anything. And we had to spend a lot of time making, with great organizations like KAP, understand that this was a serious thing,, and I remember, as we were trying to get people to take the issue seriously, we had the Attorney General of North Dakota come up here, who actually—a very fine individual, a staunch

Republican—who would decide to fly up to Manitoba, and Wayne Stenehjem had a press conference with the then-Attorney General and said: You know, you folks in Manitoba don't know what you're dealing with. This is what has happened in North Dakota. You should feel very lucky that you've got a government that is prepared to step in and try to deal with this long before we ever did.

And so, because of those kinds of restrictions, restrictions on Sudafed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why, if you want to get certain sinus medications, they're behind the counter because that was another precursor, another ingredient that was involved in making meth.

And now, well, I understand some people were unhappy with that being more red tape. We thought it was very important to try to stop methamphetamine from spreading throughout Manitoba.

And, by and large, but not entirely, those efforts were successful, and I don't want to pretend that methamphetamine did not exist in Manitoba, but it certainly, until the last three years, did not exist in any way near the quantities it does now and did not have anywhere near the impact that it now has on the people of Manitoba, including, of course, people who work in our health-care system.

Now, we know that front-line workers provide services that keep our province running smoothly and keep Manitobans healthy, and we believe that their safety and well-being is a priority. And it was, I think, a really disturbing symptom of how this government and their agents deal with workers that when health-care workers at Health Sciences Centre released a video to try to get people to understand just how serious this issue was, the immediate response of the health authority and this government was not to say: Yes, this is evidence of a real problem; these are the immediate steps we're going to take. The response of the health authority and this government was to say, how dare a health-care employee leak this information. This could be cause for discipline. We are going to go after any health-care employee who tries to pull this kind of move to try and get attention to an important issue.

And that is, unfortunately, a symptom of the way that this government has been addressing very, very serious issues.

* (15:50)

Now we know that back in October 2018 the Manitoba government and employees' union asked for more support in trying to enhance the roles, clarify the responsibilities of security guards to try to keep the—those working in the health-care system, to keep patients, to keep everybody who attends our health-care facilities safe, but also to make sure that those security officers aren't being put in a position where they're being asked to do things that they are not trained to do, or things for which they do not have adequate legal protections.

And again, we support health-care facilities being given security guards with some additional responsibilities and some additional rights because we know the level of violence that nurses and other health-care professionals have been following. And there have been many instances of violence against nurses in recent months.

Just to give you a snapshot of just how serious the problem is, according to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's own figures, which I think we can trust even if it appears members of the government sometimes don't when we quote their statistics, there were 444 violent incidents reported to Health Sciences Centre and 175 incidents in Grace Hospital, just from October twenty-six to October 2018. And those instances include verbal abuse, violent threats, physical aggression, things that we don't just hear about in the newspaper, but we hear about as we talk to people who work in the system.

And I know, speaking to one nurse who lives nearby, she told us her own experiences at Health Sciences Centre, where she's had aggressive people try to assault her. She told us she actually had to hop over a counter one time to get away from an attack. She's had items thrown at her. She's been punched. She's been kicked. That is not the way that we want our health-care providers to be treated.

We know the Manitoba Nurses Union has been calling for greater safety. We know they have come up in support of this bill, as they've been pushing for provincial security standards. And that's why we are not going to delay having this bill pass. But we need to understand that nurses have been trying for most of this government's mandate to have this government deal with issues regarding the safety of nurses. We know they've been lobbying for a provincial strategy which would address safety and security in all Manitoba health-care facilities.

Now, of course, we want to make sure that workers feel safer. We want to make sure that other

patients and other people visiting our health-care facilities feel safe. We want to make sure that those safety officers have the right training and that the right balance is met between doing their job and also making sure they're not inappropriately interfering with people's ability to access those facilities.

And I think most people would agree that as much as possible we want universities, government facilities, libraries to remain open to the public. People shouldn't feel threatened or unwelcome in a public facility. And we want to make sure that security officers don't dissuade people with a legitimate reason for being there to access buildings and resources that exist for the public.

So we want to make sure that security officers are not threatening presences, but rather they're proactively creating a safe environment. And that's why it is so important that safety officers receive extensive training. We know that security is necessary, but we want to make sure that the individuals that are going to be filling the role as set out in Bill 17 will be properly trained and properly supported so they can act appropriately and only intervene when required. But then, when that intervention is needed, to make sure that they're able to act professionally and appropriately.

We want the training requirements and regulations to be clearly outlined after consultations with front-line workers—with those having been conducted. And when we say consultations with front-line workers, we mean real consultation with front-line workers—speaking to nurses, speaking to other people who work in our health-care system.

Just recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course, we had the return of Peachey and we had his boast that, of course, there's been consultation with nurses, and the nurses were onside with everything he had to say. The only problem, of course, is that isn't what the nurses actually told him. And we are now dubious, but we are hopeful that this government, when they bring in the regulations under Bill 17, will do better than Dr. Peachey did, they'll do better than even they will admit they have done at speaking with front-line workers and making sure that there's real input, that there's real advice that's given and advice that is listened to and heard by this government to make sure that this works as well as possible.

So what does this actually mean? How bad is it in our health-care system? Well, I put some stats on the record just a couple of minutes ago. Darlene Jackson, the president of the Manitoba Nurses

Union, has confirmed what I think many of us knew, but, on behalf of her members, she tells us that she's heard from nurses that violent incidents in health-care facilities are increasing across the province. It's not just one community, it's not just Health Sciences Centre; it's every corner of the province in acute facilities, in rural facilities, in long-term-care facilities.

You may know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the hospital, I believe, in Pine Falls was actually closed for an extended period of time because of issues dealing with drugs and mental health issues in that community. There's no part of the province now that is immune to these kinds of problems occurring.

And what Ms. Jackson, as president of the Manitoba Nurses Union, tells us about this kind of violence, she said this is all very stressful for nurses, and if you've ever witnessed it in a department as a family member or a patient, it's very, very stressful. Well, if it's stressful as a family member attending or a patient who may be there for a day or for a week or for a month, just imagine how stressful it is for people working in the system who are showing up day after day after day dealing with people, some of the most vulnerable people, with some of the most difficult conditions, and who wind up never knowing when somebody is going to act in a violent manner, in an unpredictable manner, in a way that could result in an injury.

And that is one of the reasons that we've been calling for so long to this government to get out in front of the methamphetamine problem. And it's been well said by my leader and by others that the addictions issues are not new in Manitoba, and I think everybody accepts that. What is new is that we're now presented with a drug which has the worst of all properties.

Methamphetamine is a drug which, thankfully, is not being manufactured in any great amount, as far as we know, in Manitoba or elsewhere in Canada, but it's now being imported in large quantities. It's a drug which is, unfortunately, quite cheap, and it's a drug which has a great deal of attraction to people who suffer from a lot of the social conditions that we know are existing in our province and getting worse, because methamphetamine does a number of things. It suppresses your need to sleep and it suppresses your need to eat.

So if we look at people that do not have a safe place to live, Mr. Deputy Speaker, methamphetamine, at least in the short term, provides some

relief, even if that relief means someone walking around in the middle of the night with a shopping cart. We know that individuals who do not have food security find methamphetamine a drug which suppresses their hunger and suppresses their need to eat. You couldn't really come up with a drug that has more negative properties all rolled into one.

And, as we know, when people are high on methamphetamine, unlike some drugs which may have a high of four hours or eight hours or 12 hours, methamphetamine can last 36 to 48 hours. And, as we know, when people are coming down from being high on meth a lot of things happen. The body has difficulty processing a lot of the solvents and other components contained in methamphetamine, and there are physical issues, including skin lesions, including rotting of people's teeth and, equally concerning, we know that people coming down from being high on meth often undergo meth psychosis, other difficulties, which make people very, very difficult and unpredictable.

And we don't have to look any further than the news stories from last week. We had a horrible day; I believe it was Thursday afternoon when the media reported not just one hatchet attack in the city of Winnipeg, but two hatchet attacks. One was from an individual being transported in an ambulance, and paramedics were then suddenly assaulted by someone who got their hands on a hatchet and threatened first responders who were simply trying to help that person, and that's upsetting.

The very same day, at the rapid transit bus stop, right at Confusion Corner, which I would hope most members of this Legislature know where it is, there was an individual who suddenly put a hatchet to the neck of an unrelated individual who was simply waiting for a bus.

* (16:00)

That individual was able to get the hatchet away, cutting their hand in the process. The individual then chased after a woman on that rapid transit platform. Thankfully, no one else was hurt, but it highlights just how dangerous this drug is, how widespread this drug is and the impact that it's having on public safety.

And, you know, it was more than two years ago that I began to see the change in the way the police service was dealing with these cases, because all of a sudden, these strange reports started to appear in the

media, of people acting in a way that just did not make any sense.

And we're not going to pretend, in Winnipeg, there haven't been challenges with robberies, with assaults, but the stories that were coming out were just so far removed from the usual routine. And we noted that the police were then beginning to say: and the individual was found in possession of a certain number of grams of methamphetamine, or the police would say, we believe that this individual was high on meth at the time.

And the police, I don't think, did that accidentally. The police were putting that out there to try to get some kind of response from the federal government and the provincial government to try to deal with this very, very dangerous, difficult, addictive and, sadly, inexpensive drug.

And what did the federal government do? Well, they were quite prepared to talk about opioids a year or two after the opioid addiction was at its worst, and it was only last fall that the federal government changed their tune and said, you know that fund we've set up for opioids? If your province is suffering from methamphetamine addiction, maybe we'll let you take some of that money and spend it on methamphetamine instead, which was good if we had a provincial government that actually had come up with a plan, a strategy, anything to try to deal with this very, very difficult drug.

So what happened? Well, ultimately, there was a task force that was formed. The City had been calling for a task force for some time and, eventually, the federal government, somewhat reluctantly, and the provincial government, very reluctantly, came to the table. That task force, we presume, is doing something. We haven't seen any results from that task force. There's been no ideas that have been brought forward.

We could ask the Minister of Health to detail what progress has been made, but, of course, we can't do that because the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is too frightened to call Departmental Estimates. So we can't even get into that, because we've had one day of Estimates called in the 16 days since the budget was passed.

So we don't know what this government's doing. I remember in last year's Estimates, I asked the Minister of Health, quite clearly: you now have the VIRGO report in hand—or at least, the last version, the edited version, the—

An Honourable Member: Redacted.

Mr. Swan: —the redacted version, thank you.

So is the government going to report on the progress that you're making in implementing these various recommendations? And the Minister of Health flat out told me: no. No, we're not going to report on that.

It's like playing Battleship. Well, what about this recommendation? Are you doing anything on that? And the minister may or may not answer, rather than be openly accountable at whether or not they're going to actually implement the recommendations.

We know, of course, they've gone through the VIRGO report, and they've picked out any recommendation that they think can save them money. If that's what the recommendation says, they're all about it. If you read through the VIRGO report, there are a lot of good recommendations that, however, require the government to actually step up and make investments.

And look, Bill 17 is necessary, but Bill 17 has nothing to do with actually solving and getting to the root of the problem that we have in this city and in this province. So, again, because we're not able to get to Estimates, we can't ask specific questions about what the government has or hasn't done with the VIRGO report—

An Honourable Member: Pass the bill.

Mr. Swan: And, well, I'm glad that the House leader wants to talk about this. I was just putting on the record, for his benefit, that in fact, he was the Minister of Health who told me they would not be giving any kind of report or ongoing progress advice on implementing the VIRGO report. And I think that's a missed opportunity,

This is a government which claims, of course, to be open and transparent, and yet, when they spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of public money on getting a report—well, many versions of a report—they aren't prepared to stand up and say, here's what we're doing. Here's the progress we've made. We've actually completed this many recommendations. We are in progress on these recommendations.

And, frankly, if there are recommendations the government doesn't want to follow, that's all right if they're going to actually give a rationale for it.

But, instead, we're left with playing some kind of legislative Battleship, if we ever get there, of

asking about specific recommendations to try to find out whether this government is even going to follow the advice that it was given with taxpayer-funded dollars. And that is why we have very little confidence in this government's ability to deal with these serious issues.

So Bill 17, again, because it attempts to deal with the big challenges that are happening in our health-care system, because nurses, who have been so frustrated have been calling for some greater measure for security guards, we are prepared to support this, but our support for this bill in no way, in no way condones this government's abject failure to deal with a horrible drug which has touched every part of our province, which has had huge impacts in my community. This government needs to do better.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

The honourable member for Wolseley.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I hope I can live up to that introduction.

I want to thank my colleague from Minto for his articulate comments on this bill. I will try to emulate that and add some additional information where it pertains to Bill 17.

Now, this piece of legislation, formally known as Bill 17, the police services amendment act, primarily will do two things when it comes into law: It will give specific institutions in our society the ability to establish their own safety officer programs, and those officers would then be responsible for, of course, maintaining safety and a sense of safety for everyone who may be working or visiting that institution. An institution could be anything from a university, a personal care home, an emergency room, schools, you name it.

And then, under regulation, once the law is passed, the government would then have the ability to pass regulations that would give those new safety officers the ability to actually enforce and—specific parts of the act and—of specified acts, and exercise power to do so legally. And these legal rights to both create institutional safety officers and to give them the ability to enforce safety does not exist on the books in Manitoba right now.

So this act changes that, and I want to note, as I have noted in previous speeches in this Chamber,

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is an example of where we, as an opposition, freely acknowledge that the government has brought forward a piece of legislation that we think will be in the public interest and that we support, and that partisan politics does not always run the day as far as we are concerned.

On many occasions there have been opportunities for the government to reciprocate, to acknowledge that ideas we have brought forward merit not just fulsome discussion, but deserve to be passed into law, and a disappointing small number of those ideas have actually made it through the legislative process to become law. There have been some that have happened and I applaud that instance, but I do believe the public, while they understand there are reasons why we have different political parties, we have different political beliefs in this Chamber, they also expect us to have the common sense and the—a level of commitment to the public good to recognize each other's good ideas when they come forward, and we are speaking in favour of this government proposal even after a somewhat acrimonious and rambunctious question period, which happened just a few hours ago.

* (16:10)

If any minister in this government was actually cursed with self-awareness, they should be incredibly embarrassed at their performance in question period, where we saw the usual dismal display of an inability or unwillingness to even address the basic tenets of the questions being asked and the issues being raised.

That is standard operating procedure for this government. They don't like people to know what it is that is actually going on. They certainly don't want information about the impacts of their many negative decisions to be widely known. And, lo and behold, we have a question period which is not very productive in furthering the calibre of debate.

Despite their dismal performance and despite their quite arrogant approach to question period, we nevertheless have the maturity and the decency to be standing here not very long afterwards and speaking in favour of a legislative proposal that they have brought forward, which we do believe will make a positive difference for Manitobans. I can only hope that members opposite will someday begin to emulate the same sort of behaviour. All we can really do is lead by example, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, as for the specifics of Bill 17, I've already mentioned the basic purpose of the bill. And the

largest contributing factor to the need for this legislation is, tragically, the arrival of crystal meth in our society. We, of course, have experienced waves of addiction crises before. Each time a new drug is created and begins to make its rounds throughout the world, there will be new impacts in each community, as it is adopted and consumed by some members of that society.

Crystal meth, from all that I have seen and heard, is the worst of these so far. So it's not as if we have never had addictions as an issue previously in our society, but the impacts of this particular drug, the extremely dangerous and erratic behaviour that it can elicit from people who consume it, takes the danger level to uncharted territory. And so, understandably, the people who work in public institutions, the people who maintain our public spaces, the people who access important public services from these institutions—everyone, I'm sure, has either read of incidents that no one would wish upon their neighbour or perhaps have witnessed some of these things themselves.

And, tragically, this government's response to the crystal meth impacts is to not respond. And the complete lack of connection to this issue, which is affecting so many Manitobans—not just those who, perhaps, may tragically have a family member who has become addicted or is consuming crystal meth—but for the surrounding communities. So many people concerned about the impacts of this new drug and the erratic behaviour that it can elicit, and this government has just been utterly tone-deaf in its lack of a response to what crystal meth is doing.

And it's all the more tragic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all of our front-line workers and all of our families are grappling with these impacts on their own, without any government support from the province—from the Pallister government. But, at the same time, tens of millions of dollars specifically earmarked to help with the response to crystal meth has been available to Manitoba for months and months and months from the federal government through the national health-care funding accord. And this provincial government, for whatever bizarre and unfathomable reason, has not made the signing of that accord a priority, and only recently finally came around to putting pen to paper.

Meantime, how many hundreds or thousands of Manitobans have been negatively impacted by the impacts of crystal meth, all because this government could not bring itself to actually work with the

federal government just long enough to get one signature onto a document and start flowing money that had already been agreed to and made available to multiple other provincial governments and territorial governments in Manitoba, governments where they were willing to work with the feds to access the funding and then put it to good use in their communities.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Manitoba was one of the last, if I'm not mistaken, to finally sign the health-care accord, and how many of those tragic events might have been prevented, might have been avoided, if this government had actually cared about the families and the individuals so directly involved? And let's make no mistake; this issue can potentially involve any of us. We had just recently two horrible attacks with small axes, separate incidences on the same day. One person's just waiting for the bus and suddenly they have an axe, you know, being threatened with an axe, chased with someone with an axe. This is just completely unacceptable. No one in society expects to have to deal with that when they start their day. Nobody should have to deal with that when they start the day.

And I mention these incidences, Madam Speaker, because the government's response, while this legislation is an important piece of it, this has just got to be a tiny, tiny part of what a government who actually cared about its citizens would actually be doing. And, of course, once the legislation is ultimately passed, there will then come the question of will this government actually provide the resources to make it possible for these public institutions to hire the safety officers that they will have just made possible. This government's track record is, in fact, the exact opposite.

What I suspect will happen, unfortunately, is that there will be at least a couple of news releases sent out by the government applauding their—the passage of Bill 17 when it happens, and it won't make a wit of difference to anybody waiting on the bus, to anybody working in a health-care facility, to anyone at a health-care facility with a family member, to anyone attending a post-secondary education institution. It won't make one wit of difference because the government will not increase funding to those institutions to actually make it possible for them to hire the safety officers that would now be legal in this province. They will instead tell the institutions, go find the money from

within, go make up this magical pot of money which doesn't exist and, you know, fund the safety officers out of that. I can almost guarantee you that that is what will happen.

And it really is tragic, particularly when you look at the impacts that crystal meth—and it's not just crystal meth, but crystal meth is a huge factor here—it is leading to an increase in violent instances in public institutions where people should feel safe because they've only gone there in the first place because their health has been compromised.

The number of violent incidences reported at the Health Sciences Centre just between October of 2016 and October of 2018 was 444. So in the span of two years, a little over 700 days, we have 444 violent incidents at one public health centre, at the Health Sciences. And it was an additional 175 violent incidences at the Grace Hospital, which, of course, is much smaller than Health Sciences, so we should not be surprised that the number of violent incidences are smaller at the Grace, and that was over the same time frame.

* (16:20)

So just those two health facilities, just those two all by themselves, we're looking at over 600 violent incidences in the span of 700 days. That is just absolutely unacceptable. And the level of threats, the level of violence can be very severe, can involve violent threats, it can actually involve physical aggressions. And we should not be surprised, Madam Speaker, that none other than the Manitoba Nurses Union, doing its usual outstanding job of standing up for front-line health-care workers in our province, have called for quite some time for more attention to be paid to this issue.

The president of the Manitoba Nurses Union, Darlene Jackson, says she's hearing from nurses that violent incidences in health-care facilities are increasing and that it's a problem-wide problem—province-wide problem, which includes acute facilities, your long-term care facilities, urban, rural, northern facilities. It's happening everywhere. She says, quote, this is all very stressful for nurses and, if you've ever witnessed it in a department as a family member or a patient, it is very, very stressful. And that was a quote taken from a very good interview that she gave with the local CBC back in early March.

We have, you know, incidences where three security officers and a nurse were attacked by a

patient all at once on—in the last day of August of last year. And later that same day, in another area of the hospital, the same patient physically assaulted two security guards—two security officers before police were able to take him into custody. So all of this speaks to the severity of the situation that our public institutions are facing.

And I also want to give voice, Madam Speaker, to the many staff in my own constituency who are not working in a public institution per se—they could be working with a local community organization, they could be working with a nonprofit, they could be working in a wide variety of different locales like your community centre, your community renewal organization, drop-in centres—every single one of them has noticed the impact of crystal meth. And they're having more and more difficulty just getting their basic jobs done, because they always have to be on the lookout now for someone, who is not in the right state of mind, enter into their workplace and, potentially—well, for sure, disrupt the work that they're trying to do and, potentially, put them at risk—they, who are the staff just trying to do their jobs for the organization that they are working for. Or, heaven forbid, pose a real, physical threat or risk to workers or people who may be in the office seeking services.

And this could be children, Madam Speaker. I mean, Art City, located just down the street on Broadway—you can have drop-in centres such as at the Broadway Neighbourhood Centre or West Broadway Youth Outreach. All the community centres in my constituency, they potentially face this problem. And local community groups, I think, would certainly be well placed to call on this government to include them in the government's response to what crystal meth is doing and the threats that it is posing to them and to our community at large.

I've lost track of the number of times that a constituent has contacted me. Many of them—I mean, they—it doesn't matter which neighbourhood in the Wolseley constituency we're talking about; it could be Wolseley itself, it could be West Broadway, it could be Spence, St. Matthews, Armstrong's Point, Assiniboia. People who come home from their day of work or their day of volunteering, and they'll find that someone clearly under the influence of something is on their property, you know, in their yard, in their car, on their porch trying to knock the door down. This is happening on a regular basis, and

it is completely unacceptable. People should not have to deal with that in their day-to-day lives.

And what is even more unacceptable is that this government's not doing anything to prevent it. Their response has been pathetic, and I'm being diplomatic in using that term.

If anyone from the Conservative benches wants to actually come and talk to my constituents and get a real eye-opener of what crystal meth just means in the day-to-day lives of our community, I would welcome that. I would encourage them to do that, and with any luck, hopefully, it will lead to a much stronger response, a much more appropriate response from this government.

And certainly, we also need to make sure that anyone who would end up serving as one of the new institutional safety officers, that they have every opportunity to be trained, that the training they receive is sufficient, and so that, as any of the many issues that can arise in a work day in that type of workplace, that they will know how best to respond to anything that can come up.

The other piece, of course, that can be mentioned here—well, just before I leave the—my thoughts on the workers who would be, for all intents and purposes, probably appear to most of us, in our day-to-day interactions with them, to be security guards, I really want to thank each and every one of them who have stepped into that role.

That's not an easy job to be doing. Doesn't matter if you're a security guard for a private firm at a public institution or if you are, in fact, a security guard right here in the Legislature, working for the Province at the front doors and elsewhere in our famous building here, security involves long hours, and you always have to be alert and ready to respond when things happen.

So it is both physically and mentally a challenge, and I want to give thanks to the folks who do that. I had the honour of working with the South Sudanese community, many of them refugees, and many of them have gone on to become security guards. And so, when I sit down with them and talk about how they are doing, that's often one of the first jobs that many in their community have managed to get.

And it's really—you know, you can tell that it takes a toll, especially when they may well be working two or three jobs, and still trying to function. And that's where the proper training and supports certainly need to be provided to them.

And just as another example—in my community, there's so many to choose from, but another example in my community of where additional security measures have had to be taken is Crossways in Common, where my own constituency office is located.

For almost 16 years, we had an open-door policy. And to be clear, Crossways in Common is—operates very much like a co-op. There are multiple faith organizations who are housed there. There's multiple non-religious organizations. Gordon Bell's off-campus program is housed there. Horizons training is located there.

West Broadway Youth Outreach, of course, used to be there for many years before they managed to get their new space, and we're very happy for them that they were successful in doing that. There's the Young United Church's community drop-in.

Well, that drop-in right now—and it's been featured in the news on many occasions because, especially in the wintertime, people struggling with addictions end up sleeping on the floor for every single minute that that drop-in is open, because it is one of the few safe and warm places where they can go.

But, because of crystal meth and the erratic behaviour that can result, Crossways in Common has now had to hire a security guard to be there when the building is open. And they have had to change a number of their procedures.

*(16:30)

There's the Day Nursery Centre. The Day Nursery Centre has been providing high-quality child care to Manitobans for over 100 years, Madam Speaker. It's one of the oldest child-care centres in our province and in our city, and so obviously we want to make sure that children coming to their day care for the day and all of the staff who work with them throughout the day and all of the parents who drop them off, all the parents who pick them up, that everybody is safe.

And so Crossways has been put in this horrible situation where they want to be welcoming, they want to be accessible, they want this to be a safe place for vulnerable people to be able to come and recover or to enjoy community, to have some warm food free of charge, perhaps begin to access some of the information or programs they might need in order to make some improvements in their lives, but because of crystal meth and the impacts that it's had,

and the opioids as well—we can't overlook those—that is just becoming a more and more difficult line to walk. And at the community level, Madam Speaker, that's where I really see this government's response and lack of response to have let people down.

And, as I mentioned before, we can pass this law; I can speak to it, everyone else in the Chamber can speak to it. Until we actually have some resources put into place, until we actually have some preventative measures put in place so that we can do everything possible to prevent people from ending up addicted to anything that would be unhealthy for them, and also then provide the supports required to help people who have become addicted, to exit that as much as possible and as quickly as possible.

And, when you don't do those things, it's at the community level where the impacts are first visible, when people come home and they have a stranger trying to bash the door down to get into their house, or when you're waiting for the bus and someone decides to chase you with an axe, or when you're just at work at your work station with a non-profit and someone storms into the building believing that, you know, everyone who works there is evil and they all have to be, you know, harmed by the person who's under the influence of crystal meth.

This type of stuff happens on a regular, regular basis, and when you're at the community level and the government is not taking the issue seriously, well, the general public has a way of letting governments know when they're not happy with the work or the lack of work that a government is doing.

We have the VIRGO report. It looked specifically at mental health and addictions in Manitoba, and when was that released? It was released back in May, and it had a hundred recommendations in it, laying out very clearly for this government, for our political party, for everybody in Manitoba who cared to take a look at it, everybody could see that there's a hundred recommendations there showing how to address mental health care in our province, which, of course, includes addictions, both prevention and treatment, and, lo and behold, almost a year later—yes, it was released in May of last year, and almost a year later this government has no plan—like, no plan anywhere. There's been no updates. The public version of the VIRGO report was altered from its original state by this government, but even with, you know, the more damning evidence removed,

the government still has no response to the VIRGO report, its 100 recommendations.

Where's the update? Where's the update to this House? Where's the update to Manitobans on where the government is at? They've set up a task force; the task force, so far as we know, hasn't even met once. Why do we not know? Because there's been no update, and, you know, I want to highlight here a quote from Daphne Penrose, who serves as Manitoba's provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. She's an independent officer, does not report to any government department or to any particular political party, but reports directly to the Legislature, who notes that young people in particular are dying from drug overdoses and suicide while the province remains mired in what she terms an ideological debate about treatment. And she says, quote: I am disappointed to learn that six months after the VIRGO report was released, the government still does not have a concrete plan of action for youth mental health and addiction.

Now, she made that statement—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley, to continue.

Mr. Altemeyer: Oh, okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

No, I thought it was me. All right.

It's always a compliment when your own colleague's heckling, so it's a—it's no small feat.

Allow me just to conclude. I want to point out, Madam Speaker, that Manitoba's Advocate for Children and Youth, Daphne Penrose, made that very clear statement back in September of last year. September of last year, she was disappointed, quote, unquote, to see that the government had not responded to this VIRGO report after six months. I wonder what she would describe her feelings now so many months later.

Thank you so much.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): This bill is something that I will support not because it solves the ills of the province just like that. This is a good step, and I praise the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) for at least making those small steps in providing more safe and more secure environments and workplaces for those who are in some of our institutions.

The basic thing that I wanted to emphasize, though, is that this is not enough. This is just a grant of another stripe to the already overdone and overworked shoulders of security officers who have to deal with the meth crisis in our hospitals. There has to be more.

And, if the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) believes that this will be sufficient, I think I have to say that he's got it all wrong.

The basic premise of what I want to do in my speech for today is that the band-aid solutions that this government has been proposing is all that: band-aid solutions, because it does not really go deep enough into the symptoms of why we have a meth crisis. The reason why we have a meth crisis is because of the lack of hope and sometimes I would even suggest that it's despondency. When people feel hopeless, when the young do not get any chance to find a good place where they could work, or even prior to that, even schools and universities that will accept them—there's not enough programming for youth employment, and there's not enough programming for the engagement of the poor.

* (16:40)

The—most of those who use meth are eventually, and forever almost, affected mentally because meth is a very serious scourge in our society. It's quite cheap and most of the time it's readily available, because some folks are making money off it.

The way that we see it is that the criminal organizations have taken control of the supply. And I don't know what the Minister of Justice knows about it or what the intelligence—information he gets about it, but there are some that are coming all the way from British Columbia and are brought in by truckers. And, for those instances where the Minister of Justice ought to know and for those things that need to be done, I find him lacking.

And this is a special shout-out to the security officers, because they are doing a tremendous job. And my real concern is that even the nurses were asking for this because they need help. And what does the government do? Oh, we'll give you a cloak—an official cloak of powers so that you could detain those that you need to detain without any legal backlash or blowback.

My real concern is that the Minister of Justice might stop with just this bill and not address, while in Cabinet, those problems that plague our society. And the problems that we have stem from the

emotional instability that most of those who use meth have when they engage in this drug use. And I just hope that there is more help that could come from this government.

But, with the austerity program that we are going through, it's like starving the economy by cutting all those programs that can help those who need it most. I—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

We do have a member that is trying to speak in debate and there is quite a bit of noise.

The honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), to continue.

Mr. Marcelino: I don't see any light at the end of the tunnel. This government has closed even the end of the tunnel, and we are all dealing in the darkness. The society that we live in cannot be helped if we keep on cutting and focusing on how much money we can save. We have to invest in our people; we have to invest in our economy; and we have to invest in those programs that have been proven to work.

What are those programs that work? Programs that involve subsidies or bursaries and scholarships for students, whether they deserve it or not—it's that hope that they could be enrolled and not worry about the tuition fee while they are in post-secondary. And we also need role models in our community. In our society, we don't have that. What we have, in this government, are pretend accountants and pretend economists. And they believe—and the problem, I think, is that they believe that they are who they feel they are, when they are not.

Most of this stems from a lack of—they call it a sense of social justice. They feel that they are entitled to cut those that they want to, just because they can. And it shows the harshness of the policies of this government.

The harshness of the policies of this government also could be traced back to the proclaimed goal of balancing the budget. It is as if it is the end-all and be-all of government. Government is not a business, and I hope that it is not run like a business. Governments do not have to show profit. That's why we have those social programs that governments engage in.

And, when this government attempts to cut on those social programs, it hurts a lot, and it hurts those that need those programs the most. And when profit

becomes the centre of attention, when profit—or I would call—not profit but savings become the centre of attention, it is not fair for those who do not have any.

And in our society—I have been here in this country 39 and a half years of my life and I have seen enough misery. And governments need to solve that, meaning governments have to show vision—how to get out of poverty, how to get out of unemployment, how to get out of being hungry.

How do you do that? Education. Education is the only answer. And when the Education Minister proclaims that there's enough funding for everyone, it's not really, exactly accurate. What is accurate is that people are hurting.

When the emergency rooms are being closed, left and right, the demoralization of those who are serving our people sometimes shows in how they treat others. And the impatience that we have for each other, meaning we do not have the same forgiving attitude, has results.

And one incident, right in my constituency, wherein one who was driving in the back lane became very impatient with a neighbour who was backing up his boat. And there was just one punch that killed a 66-year-old and the suspect was a 24-year-old.

And it's an attitude problem that this government does not really promote, but it is the effect of how those cuts, those austerity measures have resulted in those attitudes, wherein, me, I'm in a hurry, get out of my way.

And when those cuts that were instituted by the Conservative government as soon as they got into office—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please.

I would ask the member to make his comments relevant to this particular legislation, which is about institutional safety officers. And, if the member can draw his comments back into that, that would be much appreciated.

The honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino).

* (16:50)

Mr. Marcelino: I'm sorry, but I was on my way to marrying those issues with what is in this bill, because this bill is just a palliative, band-aid solution to a bigger problem in our society. And

my message, as I said, was for the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) to take a closer look at how he could really help those who are in our hospitals and clinics and institutions.

And I just was hoping that there is no need for institutional safety officers. If only we were doing our job. And that's the correlation—the correlation between what is before us and what's happening outside. We cannot ignore the correlation between our reactionary attitude—that when there's a problem, we will solve it by doing this.

And the institutional safety officers, Madam Speaker, are important. They are needed. They have to be trained how to negotiate down a very angry man and/or woman who is in some kind of a meth psychosis. And I think that's the issue that is before us. Do we need to maybe change the militaristic uniform that those institutional safety officers wear? Sometimes, you know, the reaction of those who are on meth to those who are uniformed is different if it were not as paramilitary uniforms, as they seem to be.

And we have to also provide enough training to those institutional safety officers. Is that part of the program? I'm not sure. It's not here. It's not in the bill. It is only encouraged.

And the—I will pretend that I am an institutional safety officer and I am taking care of a patient. How do I approach the patient? If I were trained correctly, I should act in the most humane way, in the kindest way possible. And when you have security officers, they act like paramilitary officers.

And I guess maybe I'm too idealistic. I'm an ex-cop, so I know how to use a gun. I know how to use my baton. I know how to put on handcuffs. But—or, I know how to make effective arrests. But that's not enough. When you're dealing with patients who need help, it is not enough that the training is only to confront. It is not really just to appease, but to put the issues of the one who is suffering in a more humane frame of mind.

And, when negotiations fail and when kind words fail, then the training should be try again. And institutional safety officers should be trained like that. And I'm not sure that that's part of what our minister who proposed this has said. I don't think he does.

And, with this, I am concluding my remarks. And I was just hoping that I made my message clear:

that we have to treat each other with more kindness. I think that's my age talking.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further members that wish to speak to debate on this bill?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Police Services Amendment Act (Institutional Safety Officers).

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 19—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: We will now move to Bill 19, concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mrs. Mayer), that Bill 19, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: I'm happy to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 19, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. Bill 19 will protect victims by making it easier to end a tenancy agreement due to violence and abuse. Under the current law, a tenant can only end a tenancy agreement early if they experience domestic violence or stalking. And when they go to end that agreement, they must show that they have filed a police report and received a no-contact order from the court. Under this new law, we will expand protections to victims of sexual violence and make it easier for all victims to end their tenancy agreements early.

We will do this by no longer requiring that a victim must report violence to police and by no longer requiring a no-contact order. Instead, victims will be able to provide a statement from a range of professionals who are well placed to assess danger. This statement will be provided to Manitoba Justice Victim Services to receive an authorized certificate to present to the landlord, which ensures that our Victim Services workers are engaging with victims to provide the safety, planning, information and support they need.

Madam Speaker, I'm proud to have the support of stakeholders across Manitoba for this important legislation, and I want to thank service providers Willow Place and Survivor's Hope Crisis Centre for joining us for the introduction of Bill 19 earlier this year.

I also want to thank Jerra Fraser, counsellor with the Sexual Assault Crisis Program at Klinik community health, for expressing her support at committee for Bill 19 last week.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to seeing Bill 19 become law so that we can provide victims of domestic sexual violence with the help and support they need.

Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): It's my pleasure to put a couple of words on the record for the next couple of minutes—30 minutes.

Certainly, Madam Speaker, the NDP support provisions that help Manitobans escape dangerous and abusive situations. I think we can all agree in the House that it is incumbent on us as legislators to ensure that we put measures in place that protect all Manitobans from domestic violence and sexual violence situations. And, certainly, we applaud, actually, the government's effort in Bill 19 in—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member will have 29 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

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