

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

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated. Good afternoon, everybody.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 244—The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act (Reducing Single-Use Plastics)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Kewatinook, that Bill 244, The Waste Reduction and Prevention Amendment Act (Reducing Single-Use Plastics); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réduction du volume et de la production des déchets (réduction des produits en plastique à usage unique), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, this bill would end the use of single-use plastic bags and related plastics and it would do this with a timeline over the next several years, depending on the type of plastic material.

Thank you.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Bee Anne Henry

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): Madam Speaker, it's an honour for me today to share a story of a brave and determined young woman that left her family and

beloved Ireland to find a new life in Canada. Bee Anne Henry was 15 years old when she and her brother James boarded the ship to travel to the new country. Within six months, James went back to Ireland and Bee Anne remained on her own.

I can't imagine what life was like and the many challenges she faced along the way without having any family support. At an early age, Bee Anne found employment as a nanny and I'm sure those children were well cared for.

In 1941, Bee Anne married an Irish man, Thomas Clarke, at St. Mary's Cathedral in Winnipeg. The couple lived in southwestern parts of Manitoba, eventually settling in Amaranth, Tenby and Glenella. There were six children in this family, and I ended up marrying one.

Thomas passed away in 1968, leaving Bee Anne with her three youngest children in their teen years at home to raise and care for on her own. Sadly, the only contact Bee Anne had with her family in Ireland was letters or the occasional phone call. Growing up, her children never knew aunts, uncles or grandparents.

Bee Anne returned to Ireland the first time in 1976 at the age of 68 years and, due to failing health, was never able to go back. Her six children all live in Canada, but only two have been to Ireland to visit family.

Bee Anne was a hard-working woman who never came—who overcame many hardships but never lost her Irish accent or her strong Catholic faith. She loved her family dearly and she was loved by all who knew her, and I was very proud to call her my mother-in-law.

This story has a new and exciting chapter this past week. A cousin, Carmel Williams of Kilkenny, Ireland, and her son Steve are here visiting the Clarke families. Bee Anne would be so proud to know her family has stayed connected and now united with family from Ireland.

Thanks to the wonders of social media, now we'll all have the ability to stay connected to families and friends.

Best be the tie that binds.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to welcome Carmel and Steve to Canada, and I ask all members to welcome them and all my Clarke family to the Manitoba Legislature today.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations.

Ms. Clarke: Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of my guests entered into Hansard.

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

Jaclyn Barkhouse, Bob Clarke, Kingston Clarke, Marie Clarke, Pat Clarke, Rob Clarke, Sheila Faxon, Brad Mclean, Hugh Mclean, Mary Mclean, Brock Sigurdson, Clint Sigurdson, Julie Sigurdson, Carmel Williams, Steve Williams.

Filipino Heritage Month

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I am proud to recognize the upcoming Filipino Heritage Month in June. It is nearly 70 years since the first Filipino people settled in Manitoba—doctors and nurses who came to work in Manitoba's health-care system.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the arrival of 1,200 Filipinos to Manitoba, recruited by the federal government to work in Manitoba's garment industry.

Today, Manitoba's Filipino population has grown to 83,000, with Tagalog the second most common language spoken in Winnipeg, surpassing even French. Manitoba relies on immigration to strengthen our province, and Filipinos are involved in all aspects of social, political and economic life.

It is therefore sad that this government has created more barriers to immigration by imposing a \$500 fee under the Provincial Nominee Program. Madam Speaker, 70 per cent of all immigration to Manitoba comes from the Provincial Nominee Program and 86 per cent of nominees stay in Manitoba.

We should be doing all we can to celebrate diversity and encourage immigration. I encourage all members to attend one of the many events being put on in June, including the opening ceremonies and flag raising at the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba on June 8th, a cultural night held at Tyndall Park School on the 13th and the Independence Day ball on the 22nd.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Glenlawn Collegiate's Bocce Team

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize Glenlawn Collegiate's unified bocce team as they recently competed in and won at the Special Olympics Invitational Youth Games held in Toronto on May 14th to the 17th.

This team of high-school students, led by coaches Kellie Milloy and Colin Holowachuk, bested the four other teams in their division to win the top spot and bring home the gold medal.

What makes this opportunity to show off their athletic talents even more unique was the fact that this was the first time Special Olympics brought together student athletes to compete against other teams in an international competition.

Teams competing in the unified division are made up of athletes with and without an intellectual disability in the hopes of promoting inclusion through shared training and athletics.

With these games and then this statement falling just before the Special Olympics Awareness Week, it is an honour to have the athletes, the coaches, the staff, family and the president and CEO of Special Olympics Manitoba with us in the gallery today.

* (13:40)

Although this team was formed a few short months ago, that has not slowed down this bocce team. Their ability to bring together to combine dedication, excellence and hard work is what has put them above the rest, all this while continuing to focus on academics and everyday activities that are such a commendable achievement.

I'd like to personally thank the staff at Glenlawn Collegiate, the Special Olympics Manitoba team, for continuing to enrich the lives of those with intellectual disabilities. Whether it be through sports and through the creation of open-minded environments, or simply providing encouragement to achieve whatever dream an athlete may have for themselves, you are all contributing to the success of our youth and future generations.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate Josiah Brothers, Michael Caryk, Ella Leclerc and Eniola Odeleye, and many others for being—becoming the gold medalists in the 2019 Special Olympics international youth games. Thank you for ensuring

the community of St. Vital and Glenlawn Collegiate are so well represented.

Thank you, and go Lions.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Crown Services.

Mrs. Mayer: I ask for leave to include the names of my guests that are in the gallery with us today, entered into Hansard.

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

Josee Bertrand, Duane Brothers, Josiah Brothers, Keziah Brothers, Lois Brothers, Jennifer Campbell, Michael Caryk, Dylan Clement, Emma Filmon, Rebecca Fleming, Lauren Hanna, Colin Holowachuk, Melanie Jobb, Diana Leclerc, Ella Leclerc, George Leclerc, Joel Leclerc, Sandra Leclerc, Kellie Milloy, Duga Novick, Eniola Odeleye, Romoke Odeleye, Timothy Odeleye, Peter Robertson-Stovel, Rose Sewanich, Christine Stephenson, Jackie Sutherland, Ashley-Marie Young, Kim Warkentin, Karen Webster, Peter Zacharko.

MS Awareness Month

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): May is MS Awareness Month. It gives us an opportunity to reflect on how the disease affects Manitobans and brings attention to the ways we can support those who are struggling.

For those who are unaware, MS is a chronic autoimmune disease that impairs the central nervous system. Symptoms can manifest as lack of co-ordination, fatigue, vision problems, cognitive impairments and mood changes. After being diagnosed, people's lives change dramatically as they have to adapt to the challenges of having a body that behaves in different ways.

It's incredibly important that we take the time to raise awareness about MS and the challenges of those struggling with it because Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world, with 11 Canadians being diagnosed with the disease every day. And of course, we know here in Manitoba there are many of our friends and relatives who are stricken with this condition.

Given the prevalence of MS, we need to accelerate the pace of treatment breakthroughs and learn about how we can be more accommodating to those who are struggling. Bringing attention to

MS will hopefully mobilize people to get involved with fighting it.

Hardworking members of the Manitoba division of the MS Society of Canada are in the gallery today. The MS Society of Canada provides information, resources and support for people with MS. Their work is aided by the generous donations and volunteer hours of concerned Canadians. If you can spare either, I encourage you to lend your money or your time to the organization so we can all create a future free of multiple sclerosis.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Kinew: And I would just ask for leave that we could include the names of our guests into the record?

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

MS Society of Canada, Manitoba division: Darell Hominuk, director, government relations and stakeholder development; Melissa Kuhn, Manitoba division council government relations co-lead; Tara Mamchuk, co-ordinator, community connections.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Madam Speaker, I spent two hours of the recent May long weekend in a course on aquatic invasive species, or AIS, with 30 other boaters. This course is now a requirement this year if you wish to have a seasonal boating pass in Riding Mountain National Park. The park staff have been very successful in keeping AAIS–AIS out of the national park, and this is the latest change to increase awareness.

Madam Speaker, we have 17 known forms of AIS in Manitoba. In the Great Lakes and the lakes and rivers in the Midwest states, there are over 100. The most common here are zebra mussels, spiny water flea, rusty crayfish and black algae.

Madam Speaker, AIS are not transported by birds or other animals. They don't move upstream. They're transported by us and we need to do a better job preventing further contamination.

It takes about 30 minutes to decontaminate a boat with water heated to 60 degrees. Clean, drain, dry, dispose and, if necessary, decontaminate. We all need to be ambassadors and advocates to stop the spread of AIS. The Department of Sustainable

Development has details on locations and hours of decontamination sites.

Madam Speaker, last year, national park staff decontaminated over 500 watercraft. They seized three boats for noncompliance. Those boats were impounded for the season and the owners can be fined up to \$100,000.

When staff tested the decontamination area, they found DNA from zebra mussels. That means without the work of park staff in conjunction with provincial staff, there would now be zebra mussels in Clear Lake and the Riding Mountain watershed.

I encourage all Manitobans to become an ambassador and advocate to protect our lakes and rivers from aquatic invasive species.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

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

Seated in the public gallery with—we have with us today the law enforcement class from the University College of the North, who are the guests of the honourable member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin).

And we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Also seated in the public gallery from Carberry Collegiate we have 44 grade 9 students under the direction of Raegan Dyck, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke).

We also welcome you here.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And as is our tradition, we have a page that this is his last day with us today, and I just want to tell you a little bit about Kolton Brazeau.

Kolton will be graduating from Murdoch MacKay Collegiate in 2019. He would like to become a car salesman following his graduation to pursue a career centred around his lifelong passion of cars. Kolton hopes to start up his own property development and real estate management company within the coming years with no current plans to attend post-secondary.

Kolton will be visiting his family over the summer in the Ottawa Valley and hopefully

travelling to Australia or Japan at the end of the year. He plans to spend lots of time at the beach and in his car singing horribly off key to his favourite songs.

He will miss the camaraderie and faces of the Chamber as well as the over-exaggeration of the word urge.

The page program is one of Kolton's most cherished and memorable experiences. He never took this opportunity for granted, always in belief once he arrived for his shifts that he got to work in this magnificent building which he first set foot in four years ago.

His appreciation for the democratic system and the work of the MLAs has been taken to new heights as a result of his time in the Chamber, getting to witness the unglamorous side of politics and the resilience of the members who truly embody the spirit of democracy. His time at the Legislative Assembly has shown him that the pen is indeed mightier than the sword. It was a nervous experience at the beginning, but truly humbling and gratifying one at its conclusion. He will be very sad to leave, but he hopes to one day return to this Chamber as an MLA. He would like to thank—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: He would like to thank all the members for making this an unforgettable experience and for their kindness and appreciation throughout his time here, and he wishes everybody all the best.

Our other page is also leaving us after today. Ravneet Brar will be graduating from West Kildonan Collegiate in 2019. She will be attending Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba in the fall to pursue a post-secondary education in business followed by law.

Ravneet spends the majority of her time volunteering for local non-profit groups in Winnipeg such as SEVA, Siloam Mission, West Broadway Youth Outreach and many other organizations. She enjoys helping out in the community and enjoying—enjoys seeing others smile, as that is what drives her passion to pursue a future career in law.

The page program is one of Ravneet's most valued experiences. Her appreciation for democracy has been strengthened as a result of her time in the Chamber. She will forever cherish the memories made here at the Legislative Building as well as all the exceptional people she has met along the way.

Ravneet's passion for change falls hand in hand with her passion to help others, and the page program has allowed for her to see that change happen first-hand and will continue to inspire her to promote change as she grows older.

On behalf of all MLAs here, we welcome and wish the two pages here the very best in their future endeavours.

* (13:50)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Concordia Hospital ER Closure

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I'd like to begin by thanking Kolton and Ravneet for all of their hard work and, certainly, to wish them well in the journey that lies ahead.

I would like to continue by condemning the terrible decision of this government to close the Concordia emergency room on Monday. The NBA gave us more warning about game 1 of the finals than this government is giving warning to the people of northeast Winnipeg that they're about to lose an emergency room and they're about to lose an intensive care unit at a hospital which provides surgeries for people.

This is a completely irresponsible move. It is one that is indefensible and will indubitably lead to worse health-care outcomes for people in Manitoba.

How can the minister justify this completely irresponsible decision and how can he insist, when he can't even tell us how many doctors work at this hospital, that he knows that the ER needs to close on Monday?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, members on this side of the House also want to extend good wishes to Kolton and Ravneet for an enjoyable summer and all the best in their future endeavours.

I thank the member for the question.

A number of weeks ago now, Dr. David Peachey returned to this jurisdiction to conduct a review on the transformation of our health-care system. It was Dr. Peachey who had first described Manitoba's system as being—lagging other jurisdictions, who had said for years and years in Manitoba it took longer for Manitobans to see their doctor, to see their

specialist, to wait in an urgent care or an emergency room, and Madam Speaker, that's why we're making the changes we are making to strengthen the system.

We have confidence that our plan is working to get better care sooner for all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: What the consultant that the minister refers to told him was that nobody is ready to close the Concordia emergency room. That is a fact that has been carried in all the media outlets. Everyone is aware that the consultant said no one is ready to close the Concordia emergency room, and yet, in defiance of that advice—in defiance of the advice of front-line workers and physicians who work at the hospital the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or—and the Minister of Health announced today, shortly before question period, that they're going close that very same emergency room in just a few days.

No wonder health care is in such a crisis. This government was not even able to organize a meeting to let the staff know that the ER is going to close. Now they say that they can pull off a plan to close an entire emergency department.

Will the Minister of Health stand in his place and resign today for this completely terrible plan for health care?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, the same hyperbole, the same misrepresentation of the facts, the same desperate maneuvering of a leader of the opposition who really has only one plan for Manitobans.

His plan is go back to the past. He says to Manitobans one thing. He says, I have no courage to act; I only invite you to go back in the past to the same longer wait times than all other Canadians, the same waiting for doctors, waiting for nurses, waiting for care, waiting for ER.

Manitobans say they don't want to go back to the same failed approaches of the NDP that failed for 17 years to get better care for Manitobans.

We are committed to that course. It's why we've announced today urgent care will be in place in Concordia starting next week.

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

Mr. Kinew: So let the record show that all of the members on the Conservative side just cheered for

the closure of the emergency room at Concordia, and specifically, members from the northeast quadrant chanted more, more, more.

How many more emergency rooms does this government want to close, Madam Speaker?

While they were busy—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —hatching a plan to close emergency rooms, I was at Seven Oaks talking to a nurse. Unprompted, do you know what the nurse came up and told me, Madam Speaker? She said, I have been working in health care for 37 years and this is the worst that it's ever been.

Has the Premier (Mr. Pallister), has the minister taken the time to listen to these nurses? Have they amended their plan? No. With five days' notice they announced that a major emergency department in the city of Winnipeg must close just because they want to save money.

I will repeat my question: Given that terrible track record, will the minister simply—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I understand that the desperate, you know, tactics of the leader of the opposition are familiar to them. They, indeed, called for their own premier to resign. The member for Minto (Mr. Swan) did that. The Finance minister, the Health minister, they turn their guns inward and shoot at each other. What we are doing is aiming for a stronger health-care system.

That member can raise his voice all he wants, but he knows that the plan to get better health care sooner means listening to experts. That expert who came into our jurisdiction two weeks ago said the plan in Manitoba is the right plan for this province to improve wait times. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: And, indeed, only half an hour ago in Winnipeg we had clinical and site leaders stand up and say that plan is working in areas like surgery, in areas like indigenous health, in areas like psychology—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Just a reminder to members. And there is starting to be yelling across the way which is way beyond heckling. It's very disrespectful. It's not serving any good purpose. And we have a lot of guests in the

gallery, including students, and I think students expect to see—they're here to learn, and I think we want to ensure that they're going to learn the right things.

Topics may be passionate, but there is no reason we can't have respectful debate, and I would urge all members to please adhere to that as we continue on through oral questions.

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

Health-Care Reform Nurse Consultations

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, of course, I am raising my voice to stand up for health care for the people of Manitoba, Madam Speaker, and the reason that I have to raise my voice is not only because this Premier and this Health Minister are closing emergency rooms, but also because none of their members are speaking up against this terrible plan. In fact, today they come into the Chamber only to yell, more, more, more. That's the wrong approach.

This government had a choice. Nobody in the last election voted to close emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg, and yet—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —this government marched in here and they made a choice to close these emergency rooms.

We say that's the wrong approach. We say that Manitobans deserve more health care and not less, that they deserve to be seen more quickly. It will take a generation to repair the damage that this Premier and Health Minister have made in just the last three years.

Can we get on with it? Will the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I didn't hear a question, but the reason the members on this side of the House are saying more, more, more is that they know that the urgent-care centre will provide more health care to the people of that area of Winnipeg.

So, Madam Speaker, when it comes to today, I mean, that member—I will take the advice of the chief medical officer for Concordia Hospital over his advice any day. What she said today is that this is the

right path for Concordia, that they are open for business, that they are looking forward to serving with a robust level of care in that part of Winnipeg going forward.

Madam Speaker, we're proceeding on the basis of evidence. We're proceeding on the basis of what has worked in other jurisdictions. We will not go back to the failed approaches of the NDP.

* (14:00)

Better health care sooner for Manitobans is what our goal is.

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

Mr. Kinew: He can keep talking to management. He can keep talking to consultants. I'll keep talking to nurses, patients and doctors, Madam Speaker.

And while hundreds of people rallied to save the Seven Oaks emergency room just a short time ago, one of the nurses pulled me aside and they said, you know, this report that they've met with us, the nurses at Seven Oaks, it just isn't true. You have to let people know that this government is not meeting with nurses. This, of course, only a day after the nurses from Seven Oaks wrote an open letter saying they are concerned about the safety of patients, given the terrible cuts that this government is making.

How is it that this Minister of Health cannot even organize a meeting with nurses, and yet he stands here today and insists that he knows that he has the expertise necessary to close an entire emergency room?

Mr. Friesen: Well, once again the leader of the opposition is wrong. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: Only yesterday—leader of the opposition is wrong, Madam Speaker.

Yesterday the chief operating officer and the chief nursing officer of Seven Oaks hospital met with nurses in a long conversation to talk about the nature of the concerns that they were raising. I understand that that was a positive engagement. System leaders tell me that there was a lot learned and that there's ways to rectify the concerns being raised.

So when he says not listening: not true, Madam Speaker.

But, also, he should remember that that same Dr. Peachey who came back to—jurisdiction, first that member howled that Dr. Peachey wouldn't—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —meet with nurses, and then he was embarrassed to discover that, actually, Dr. Peachey had met with 20 nurses as part of this very extensive investigation into our review in health care in this province.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Kinew: Actually, the number was 17, and those 17 nurses had to put out a letter the following day clarifying that this government was blatantly misrepresenting what they said in those meetings. Furthermore, in that letter, in black and white, another nurse said that after 30 years in the health-care system this is the worst that health care has ever been in the province of Manitoba.

Another thing that I heard from a nurse today is that we were just starting to fix the damage that had been done by Filmon in the '90s before Pallister was elected, and—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —now it will take another generation to fix the damage that this government has made—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —in only three years.

Madam Speaker, it's clear that they do not have a plan for health care.

Will they simply resign en masse today, dissolve the House and call an election?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: The Speaker has been standing, and when the Speaker stands members are to be respectful and not make any sound, and that is a long-standing tradition of this House and it is meant to be a tradition that we respect and adhere to because of what this House is supposed to stand for and what the Speaker represents in a legislative democracy.

So when I stand I do expect that members here will adhere to that long-standing tradition and show

the respect to the Chair. Very disrespectful—very disrespectful—when I am standing and then members are still having a conversation at the—with colleagues.

So I would urge members to be very, very careful because it is not something—a line we want to cross here in showing disrespect to this Chair.

The honourable Minister of Health, to respond to the question.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, speaking of 17, 17 is the number of years that the NDP failed to improve the health-care system in Manitoba.

I can tell that leader that I spoke to a nurse last week who said keep going. These are the kind of changes that will strengthen our health-care system. She said that nurses want to live and work in a system that works for them and their patients.
[interjection]

And while those members howl on and won't listen to the response, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that is our goal. That is our focus, and that is why we are proud to announce that as of Monday urgent-care centre will be operational and serving 24-7 hours in that community to serve Winnipeggers.
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: I'm afraid I'm going to have to call the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) to order.

I know it's a passionate topic, but there are still rules and traditions and practices here that are allowed and not allowed; and while we can debate with passion, I think we have to all be careful that we are following the rules in doing that debate.

And I hope I don't have to stand anymore this afternoon, because I think that would give a very, very poor message to all of the guests that we have in the gallery, especially students.

Seven Oaks Hospital Request to Retain ER

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Today, for the second time this month, hundreds of individuals—youth, seniors, nurses, doctors and front-line workers from north Winnipeg—stood up to protest this government's cuts and closures to our health-care system. They gathered in front of Seven Oaks emergency room to demand that this government not close their ER, and I can still hear the chant: save our ER.

Maybe today the minister will listen to these members, but I doubt it because we hear that now he's closing Seven Oaks—or, Concordia ER. It's just a matter of time before he closes Seven Oaks.

Will the minister commit to keeping Seven Oaks ER open so at least people in north Winnipeg could have an emergency room?

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

On one hand, we have the NDP, who ran the health-care system into the ground in 17 years: the worst wait times in Canada at Concordia Hospital and Grace and Seven Oaks. On the other hand, we have other provinces who have meaningfully brought together their systems to be more evidence-based and coherent, and what they've done as a result is get shorter wait times.

Madam Speaker, while those members continue to howl, we are focused on getting better health care for all Manitobans. We're going to keep going. We know that change is tough and we know that it demands engagement. We thank all front-line workers for their engagement during this transition.

Madam Speaker: I'm just going to remind members that might be using their cell phones during oral questions that that is not allowed in this Chamber during oral questions. Members should clearly understand that cell phones are to be turned off.

And if anybody is actually thinking of timing how much time I'm allowing questions and answers, let me be very clear about that. I'm very fair in what I allow, and sometimes if I'm allowing somebody to go a few seconds longer, I will make up for it with another party to allow them to have that same amount of time. So at the end of the day there is fairness in the amount of time allocated to members and the clerks at the table time everything very clearly. I time everything very clearly and I do give some latitude occasionally depending on the topics, but I also am fair in allowing it to work both ways.

So for members that are using their cell phones, I would ask them to please adhere to the rules and put their cell phones away.

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

Mrs. Smith: Nobody believes anything that this minister says.

He says that wait times have gone down. He said that surgeries are getting done in a more timely manner. We're listening to nurses, and nurses and doctors are telling us the opposite.

They are misrepresenting, day after day in this House, what nurses are telling them, what doctors are telling them and health-care professionals. And even patients. Patients are telling them: I go to an ER and I have to sit there for 20-plus hours and not even see a doctor. And he says the wait times are going down? Well, they're not. And he's closing two ERs?

Will he commit today to at least keeping Seven Oaks emergency room open so that people in northwest Winnipeg have a hospital to go to?

*(14:10)

Mr. Friesen: Again, the member makes the debate clear.

On one hand, we have the member for Point Douglas who says wait times aren't going down. But on the other side, we've got CIHI, the Canadian Institute for Health Information, who says that Manitoba is bucking the trend, with wait times that are falling while other jurisdictions see their wait times going up. And the member asks us who we would believe. Well, her credibility is lacking.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to Concordia we had doctors say that they needed a broad provision of service in place; urgent care provides that. I understand that they're very pleased with this decision to transition to an urgent-care centre at Concordia.

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

Mrs. Smith: Well, I can tell that member that thousands of people that were gathered today at Seven Oaks ER are not happy with this decision. They included nurses. They included doctors. They included community members that have used that hospital for years, and this member says that people are happy about it?

Well, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, they've told us their numbers have gone up. So who are we going to believe? We're going to believe the front-line workers. We're going to believe the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority over this minister.

He said—yesterday when we brought the nurses' letter asking for an apology—said, oh, they are meeting with them tomorrow. Well, guess what, Madam Speaker? He didn't meet with them, another misrepresentation.

Will he keep Seven Oaks emergency room open?

Mr. Friesen: Well, I'm not exactly sure what point the member was trying to make, but let's be clear. Yesterday the chief operating officer and the chief nursing officer met with the nurses who raised concerns at Seven Oaks.

I instructed them to mate—meet and engage, and they did so. I understand that there was a productive conversation that they had together.

Madam Speaker, there is an issue of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen:—credibility on the side—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen:—of the NDP. They have none. They say go back to the past. They say go back to failed attempts. They say change nothing. But, Madam Speaker, Manitobans know our system was broken.

We're fixing it and we are committed to the path of getting lower wait times. Better patient outcomes, patient safety and system stability will always be the focus of our system as we transition Concordia to an urgent-care centre starting Monday.

Provincial Finances Request to Call Estimates

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, what a tangled web this Minister of Finance is weaving.

Yesterday we learned details of the report his Treasury Board employees prepared full of anonymous interviews and zero actual factual evidence.

Today we learn the Minister of Finance intends to set aside all other business in this Legislature and introduce yet another interim appropriation bill, even though this government has called Estimates exactly once in the 31 sitting days since the budget debate, with 93 hours of Estimates time remaining.

Why is the Minister of Finance demanding authority to spend billions of dollars of taxpayers'

money while refusing to allow taxpayers to know what his government's spending it on?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): We know that the opposition member is passionate about his new career which he'll be entering to as he's leaving politics; so we encourage him to do that.

Our government has been faceted with some of the longest delays that happened from opposition members—not just the NDP, but the Liberals. In fact, they went a step further where close to 40 per cent of the time debated here in the legislative was faceted with delay tactics by the NDP as well as the Liberals.

Our government—they clearly 'dunna' want to work, Madam Speaker. Our government wants to get things done for Manitobans, and that's exactly what we're doing.

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

Mr. Swan: One word for that, Madam Speaker: nonsense.

There is no good reason for this government to introduce a third interim appropriation bill this session. It's in this government's power to call Estimates, but they refused to do so all but one day in the 31 days this Legislature's been sitting.

The only reason is their plan to hide their mismanagement and hide their failures until they call an illegal early election.

Will the Minister of Finance stop playing games, make sure his government follows what every government of all political stripes has done in Manitoba and proceed with Estimates so we can ask him and his ministers questions about this Province's finances?

Mr. Fielding: Clearly, the member is full of caffeine today, which is good about—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Fielding: What I can say is the NDP members know a lot about nonsense. That's what we heard from the previous leader of the NDP when they said they were going jack up taxes on Manitobans.

We know what the NDP are like. We also know that the NDP and Liberals are currently the only opposition parties to jeopardize the pay of public servants by 'filibusting' the interim appropriations act to allow for routine business to happen.

The people that establish this—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —the labour unions that are part of this, the MGE supported us.

It's the NDP and the Liberals who were trying to black-block the pay for civil servants. We think that's shameful.

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

Mr. Swan: Two words for this minister: double nonsense.

What is this Minister of Finance hiding? How much vacancy—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —mismanagement is he trying to cover up? How much money allocated for important priorities is not being spent? How much money does he think they're going to save by closing two emergency rooms in Winnipeg? How many more agencies, how many more organizations are going to have their funding cut or withheld? How much revenue is this government taking in from cannabis sales?

And, above all, when will this Minister of Finance remember that we're still—as far as we know—living in a democracy, and when will he carry out his duty to be accountable to Manitobans?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I wish that the member showed this much passion when he was in Cabinet. When he left Cabinet we know—*[interjection]*—he's on his way to a new career, Madam Speaker, but we know the delays of the opposition were in place were real.

We had over 20 matters of privilege and points of order put forth by the opposition members all together. We had challenges to the Speaker more than 10 times, Madam Speaker. We had slow reading of petitions. That was a joke to the members of the opposition. They wasted 40 per cent of the time of Manitobans.

You know what we're doing as a government? We're investing \$414 million more in health-care system. We're investing more than \$400 million in the education system and almost \$300 million in the social-service system and we're not done, Madam Speaker. We're cutting the PST on July 1st.

City of Winnipeg Permit Reserves Use for General Revenue

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Yesterday the Premier (Mr. Pallister) released a preliminary report into permitting. It was really disgraceful that this is an official publication of the government of Manitoba. It has pages of anonymous, unsubstantiated attacks. It has rumours and speculation. For example, on page 23 it says: We heard speculation that municipalities may have grey books; then goes on to say: We have not uncovered any evidence that these exist.

But on page 55 the report faults the City of Winnipeg for using its permit reserve to fund general revenues. I table a document showing that in 2013, when the Finance Minister was a councillor, he called for the City to do just that.

Was the minister wrong then or is he wrong now?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): Certainly, I thank the member for the question.

And I'll have the member turn to page 63 in the document, Madam Speaker. I assume that he has read the entire document and hasn't cherry-picked. But, you know, the bottom line is this side of the House is very concerned about economic development not only for Winnipeg, but for the entire—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton:—province. Page 63, Madam Speaker, shows investment in the City of Winnipeg has gone from 82 per cent to 67 per cent in a year and a half. That's not the direction the City of Winnipeg needs to go.

We are working collaboratively with our partners at the City and across Manitoba to get it right.

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

*(14:20)

City of Winnipeg Budget Use of Utility Dividends

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): The report says, and I quote: There is a general perception the City of Winnipeg has a

broken system and culture. End quote. This is off—this is the way I've often heard this government described as well.

The report is so badly executed it would seem the minister who oversaw it has had multiple lapses in memory. The minister also seems to have an issue with how—the way the City relies on utility dividends to balance their budget to the tune of \$38 million last year.

Did he forget that that was also his recommendation and decision in 2011 or that the Province pulled \$383 million from Manitoba Hydro, accounting for 2.4 per cent of the Province's total revenue?

Can the minister explain to the House how he believes these to be different or, perhaps, whether he's had a change of heart?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): What we have found out from the report and what we know is that it's important for economic development to ensure that permits and inspection fees happen in a robust way. We know that the provincial GDP could grow by \$17 million by just cutting down the permit inspection time frame by one day.

We also know that municipal tax base could increase by over \$400,000 just on an annual basis if you're cut down one day in terms of delays. We also know that provincial revenues could increase by over 1.7 per cent.

We think with working municipalities and all these bodies we can be more efficient; in fact, if it can grow the Manitoba economy which is so important for Manitobans.

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

Municipal Development Deals Request for Public Inquiry

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): It's amazing that anyone who reads this report could understand how the Minister of Finance could possibly be neutral on the projects it names and some more that it notably doesn't.

The report completely glosses over that the City has called over—called for a formal inquiry into the police headquarters project, the fire halls that were built on land the City didn't own and some 33 other civic real estate deals, all of which happened while the Finance Minister sat on that council—an inquiry

the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his Finance Minister have said they won't call because there's a criminal investigation involved.

It does mention its concerns for the lack of development at Parker Lands, which is also currently before the courts due to a rushed land swap deal that was part of the audits which the minister also sat on the council for.

Will the minister and the Premier and this government call for a real public inquiry into the development deals he oversaw as both the chair of the finance and property development committees?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations): First off, I'd like to commend the independent civil service in the Treasury Board Secretariat, Madam Speaker, for doing some great work in a very short time and demonstrated that they are focused on outcomes, as this side of the House is for all government.

I know the member opposite enjoys quotes. Let me leave him one for today, Madam Speaker. This report will send a tone for all of us, municipal and provincial, to better streamline our process and practices to attract more development and investment throughout this great province.

Who said that? Mayor Chrest from Brandon.

Safe Consumption Site Request for Government Support

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, as the Premier gets ready to break the law after he's, literally, callously destroyed our ER infrastructure, the number of needles distributed for harm reduction in Brandon is on track to be double what it was in 2018. That's just in Brandon alone.

Here in Winnipeg, the Bear Clan has said that they're on track to recovering 60,000 needles discarded among Winnipeg streets in 2019, a fraction of actually what will be distributed.

Will the minister and the Premier look at the cold, hard facts and commit to opening a safe consumption site today?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): First of all, I want to acknowledge our students from UCN in the gallery today, and I'm hoping—if they have some time after question period, I'd love to have a conversation with them.

Certainly, we recognize that criminal and criminal activity does not—does transcend municipal boundaries. That's why we brought forward our Policing and Public Safety Strategy, Madam Speaker. This strategy clearly lays out a path forward where all police across the province can work together to combat the illicit drug trade here in Manitoba, and we're investing in that—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: —strategy as well to provide success and provide positive outcomes for Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: What the minister doesn't realize is we're not going to police ourselves out of a meth addictions crisis in Manitoba.

And so while this Premier continues to toss reports on the ground, alter reports that he's commissioned and dismiss his own departmental findings simply because the Premier doesn't care, Manitobans at the forefront of this crisis, the Department of Health, the WRHA, Addictions Foundations of Manitoba and local non-profits have identified a safe consumption site will save Manitoba lives.

Will the Premier set aside his archaic and uncaring views and commit to opening a safe consumption site for those struggling with addictions?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, the member opposite is completely wrong, and really, what is archaic was 17 years of NDP and mismanagement.

Now, we can reflect and look at what other communities have done in terms of bringing in so-called safe injection sites for meth. The reality is there's no such thing as a safe injection site for meth. We realize the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: —opposition, they're proponents of providing more meth to people around Manitoba. We don't believe that's a proper solution.

We look at what Calgary—what happened in Calgary: massive 'spikes' in crime. In fact, a 276 per cent increase in drug-related calls when they brought in a meth injection site.

Those are not the solutions that Manitobans are looking for.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The minister should stop looking elsewhere and actually look at the crime rates and stats in this province, in this city, right here, right now.

And, Madam Speaker, the key barrier to tackling the meth crisis is the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his minister. In the Safer Consumption Spaces report, the government's own report, one service provider said, and I quote: We don't have a Province that is particularly interested in harm reduction or prevention for that matter. End quote.

When will the Premier and his minister and all of his ministers on that side of the House actually start to start caring about Manitobans who are struggling with addictions and commit to a safe consumption site?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, you know, clearly, there's no easy solution to the meth situation here in Manitoba. That's why we are working across government to seek solutions to the issue. Certainly, we've committed to injecting money in the fight against illicit drugs, \$2.3 million in this year's budget alone, and certainly, we're bringing forward a strategy in terms of how police can work more effectively. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: Certainly, from a health perspective we introduced—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: —more treatment beds than before. We have five RAAM clinics in Manitoba, and I will tell you, Madam Speaker, there's more good news coming.

Health Capital Projects Funding Announcement

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Madam Speaker, Manitobans expect and deserve consistent and reliable health care where and when they need it. This means ensuring that our health facilities are built to high standards and are properly maintained. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bindle: Unfortunately, the NDP left a legacy of deferred maintenance and disrepair.

Our government is committed to the highest quality of care in our health-care facilities and is taking action to deliver on that commitment.

Can the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living please tell the House about our government's latest investment in Manitoba's health-care facilities?

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

Yesterday, we were pleased to announce \$28 million of new funding for important capital project investments across the province of Manitoba. The investment includes a total of 117 projects. They include a redevelopment of the emergency department at Pine Falls, installation of a new roof at Thompson General Hospital, systems—new sprinkler systems at Arborg health centre and personal-care home, fire suppression upgrades to Seven Oaks General Hospital.

These are all investments that the NDP did not make, leaving a legacy of capital deficiencies and deferred maintenance.

Nevertheless, while they heckle and chirp—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —and yell away, we're making the investments that will make a difference in improving health care in Manitoba.

Echocardiograms and Ultrasounds Wait Times for Manitoba

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, the wait time for elective echocardiograms, important for imaging the heart, has ballooned to 70 weeks at St. Boniface Hospital and 63 weeks at the Health Sciences Centre.

* (14:30)

In contrast, at Regina's advanced echo lab, a patient can get a provincially funded echocardiogram within one week.

Ontario cardiologist and vice-dean of medicine at Queen's University, Dr. Chris Simpson, says, I don't know of anywhere else that has this sustained problem with this degree of magnitude in echocardiography access.

Why has the Minister of Health so poorly managed health care in Manitoba that the wait time

for an echocardiogram is more than 60 times longer in Manitoba than in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, the member for River Heights should have done a little more research, because what it would've showed him is where those gains have been made in places like Saskatchewan and Ontario it is because the system has been able to, in some cases, procure those tests from private sources on the outside.

That member's own federal government prohibits that, as a matter of fact, is enforcing these rules very vigorously in places like Saskatchewan—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —and Ontario.

If that member wants to see the kind of change, perhaps he should pick up the phone and dial 1-800-Justin and have a conversation about how to build a better, more rigorous, more robust health-care system across Canada.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, sad the minister doesn't know how to get results.

Most governments when elected have a plan for action for the first 100 days. This government has had more than 1,000 days in office, and the wait times for echocardiograms and ultrasounds are much worse instead of better. The mean wait for an ultrasound in Winnipeg is 16 weeks, while in Saskatoon an ultrasound can be done within a week. Ultrasound waits in Manitoba are only 16 times as long as those in Saskatchewan. The minister should be embarrassed that he can do no better than this in more than 1,000 days.

Will the minister please stand up and apologize to Manitobans for the mess his government has made in health care?

Mr. Friesen: I'm pleased to give the report and indicate that in the last eight weeks, seven new echosonographers were hired to fill vacancies. This investment will add 7,000 echocardiogram tests to the system within one year. We've increased the number of these tests by 90 per cent over what the NDP ever did in this province since 2016, and we believe that these measures will be effective.

On the issue of private procurement, we've asked our officials to also look out.

We're not ideological. We're looking for solutions to get better health care in Manitoba. If that member really wanted to see the change, he would talk to his federal cousins about giving a more significant and sustainable health-care investment in Manitoba from the federal government, going forward.

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

Intensive Care Units Overcapacity Plan

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, if this government were to continue in office, in another 1,000 days we'd still have long wait times.

But it's not just wait times. With surgery at Victoria and Concordia hospitals now, if a significant problem arises during surgery there is not the ICU capacity at these hospitals. Instead, patients have to be transferred to ICUs at the Health Sciences Centre or St. Boniface. But if these are already full there is a problem, and such problems are now occurring.

What is the minister's backup plan when ICUs at St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre and the Grace are full?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I thank the member for River Heights for actually making our point about the need for health-care transformation to better co-locate resources within the system, not in silos as was done under the NDP, but meaningfully and coherently making services in places that will be robust enough to serve the public. That is exactly our plan. That is exactly the path forward.

The NDP's history was marred by transfers between—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —hospitals that were leading the nation. We need to drive down the number of transfers interfacility and be able to get better results for Manitobans, and that is exactly our plan.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Yes. During question period the Finance Minister blamed the NDP and Liberals for a delay in the Interim Supply motion. But at the time, they blamed me.

Really, the fact is they have to look in the mirror and blame themselves.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I appreciate the member opposite pointing out that mistake. We should've blamed the member as well, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (Second Opposition House Leader): Yes, Madam Speaker, it is too bad that the government really can't get things rolling in this House, that they are arguing among their own selves about where they're going.

And it's—we should be—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard:—farther and farther along, in terms of Estimates, but we've done less than seven hours because this government doesn't even know how to manage the Legislature.

Madam Speaker: I have listened very carefully to all the comments made, and, in my view, this is a dispute over the facts and is not a point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on another point of order?

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, the government is intending to introduce Interim Supply this afternoon. This is problematic and, I believe, in violation of the rules of this place. It's problematic because we did not do the Estimates after the last Interim Supply. We haven't been able to check the appropriation and—to see if what we're voting on, even today, is appropriate.

And the—where this violates the rules, if we go to rule 76(1) it says: the business of supply for the fiscal year consists of (a) motions to concur in Interim Supply, main Estimates and capital Estimates and supplementary or final Estimates—well, we haven't done any of those; (b) motions to vary, delete

or restore or reinstate any item in the Estimates—well, we haven't done Estimates, so we can't do that; (c) motions to introduce supply bills or pass them at any stage—well, we can't do that either.

And then, if we go to rule 76(2), Estimates referred to Committee of Supply: when the Estimates and the accompanying messages from the Lieutenant-Governor are tabled to the House, they are referred to the Committee of Supply. Great, but we haven't done that because it goes right into the next one: 100 hours limit for business of supply, 76(3)—each session no more than 100 hours should be allotted—allocated for the business of supply. And then it goes concurrence under rule 78, and so on.

But how can we go to the second allocation when we haven't done the review of the first allocation? And, Madam Speaker, if there's ambiguity we just need to look at the tradition of this House and there, not in the 150 years of this place is there an example of this type of thing ever happening.

If you go to the House of Commons handbook they have a slightly different procedure on supply. But the gist is the main estimates go through the House and are debated in their equivalent capacity before the second—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I think the member has made his point fairly clearly already once.

The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I—while I'm interested in how the House of Commons works generally, that's not where we are today.

And the member opposite, I know, is trying to find his way back to the House of Commons and I won't comment on what his odds might be. But when he gets to the House of Commons, if he's lucky enough to get elected and that'll be up for the people to decide, he can raise his point of order there if he'd like.

Here we're in the Legislature, Madam Speaker. They have delayed. The cabal between the independent member, the Liberals and the NDP have delayed this House for 40 per cent of the time that we've been sitting since March. If they wonder why business hasn't moved as quickly as they would like, it's because they have stopped business from moving quickly.

Madam Speaker: The honourable House leader for the second opposition, on the same point of order.

* (14:40)

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, the opposition parties have been waiting for the government to call Estimates and, instead, the government has been wasting time by calling all sorts of other things. And surely it is the government's fault that we are behind. It is the government's role in terms of managing the activities of the Chamber. It is the government's fault that we haven't got as far as we have because this government won't call Estimates.

Madam Speaker: The honourable House leader for the official opposition, on the same point of order.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): I do want to just concur with the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) that we have repeatedly attempted, on this side of the House, to encourage, to persuade, ever kindly, to do Estimates. And government has repeatedly brought forward other business that they felt was really important at that time.

So I think it's imperative that Manitobans know that on this side of the House, we have repeatedly tried to attempt to go through Estimates and see and find out and discover what this government is hiding and what they're so scared of for us to find out in Estimates.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate to the House that the scheduling of House business is not the subject of a point of order and should be discussed behind the scenes and not debated on the floor of the House. That is a longstanding tradition of this House.

The rules that the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) is referencing do not say that Interim Supply cannot be done now. In fact, the rules he is referring to do not deal with Interim Supply at all, so I would indicate that this is no point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The—petitions.

The honourable member for Kewatinook—*[interjection]*

Point of Order

Mr. Fletcher: A separate point of order, Madam Speaker.

Okay, in the spirit of democracy and in the intent to do our jobs as MLAs, I'd like to seek unanimous consent to have the House sit until the Estimates are passed, even if that includes extending the Legislature session 'til September.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate that the member, in that comment, did not raise what I would have deemed to be a point of order. And while the member may have some reason for wanting to do this, I would indicate at this point in time—it's a busy day—the member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And I would like to go now to petitions and the honourable member for Kewatinook, who had stood.

Mr. Fletcher: I ask for leave to ask for unanimous consent that this House sit until the 100 hours of Estimates is complete. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: There is a request on the floor for leave to allow the House to sit for 100 hours until Estimates are done.

Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

PETITIONS

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.

This has signed by many Manitobans.

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): 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.

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.

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 Warren Jameson, Marie Jameson, Brittany Branson and many others.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

One—or, no, not one. To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Hamish Varshney, Ruimin Wu, Dean Hildebrand and many other 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.

* (14:50)

(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.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

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

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 this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Sandra Riesz, Steven Riesz and Crystal Butler [*phonetic*] and many other Manitobans.

ACCESS Bursary Program

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) All Manitobans deserve the opportunity to pursue a university or college degree.

(2) The ACCESS program was introduced by the provincial government in the 1970s. It provided grants to Manitobans who were historically under-represented in professions such as teaching and social work.

(3) Under the ACCESS program, northern, indigenous and low-income students were prioritized with significant and targeted assistance of up to 60 per cent of a student's needs, including living

expenses, to counter the effects of historic and systemic barriers to education.

(4) In 2018, the provincial government cancelled the ACCESS Bursary Program as it existed and the ACCESS students will now have to rely much more heavily on student loans.

(5) This situation presents a barrier for many under-represented students who may choose not to pursue an education due to debt concerns. This change is especially unfair to students who are already in the midst of completing multi-year degrees and did their financial planning anticipating a long-term commitment from the program.

(6) The provincial government has already made it harder for all Manitoba students to afford post-secondary education. It cut the tuition tax rebate, cut funding to post-secondary institutions and lifted the cap on tuition fee increases, leading to the highest tuition fee increase in the country.

(7) The provincial government's cuts are making school a debt sentence and placing more barriers to education in the way of disadvantaged Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge—last one—the provincial government to immediately restore the ACCESS Bursary Program to ensure targeted funding for northern, indigenous and low-income students to help reduce barriers to access and ensure all Manitobans have equal opportunities to pursue post-secondary education.

And this is signed by Dawn Marie Cote, Dakotah Read, Justin Lambert and many other Manitobans.

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition was signed by Joey Senft, Dru Boux, Patrick Michalishyn and many, many more.

* (15:00)

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 Marnelli Villarante, Tristen Sanness and Catarina Raposo and many Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit

child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by Jenna Miller, Rob Frank, Devin Miller, all of Glenboro, Manitoba, and many other Manitobans.

Daylight Saving Time

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The loss of sleep associated with the beginning of daylight savings time has serious consequences for physical and mental health and has been linked to increases in traffic accidents and workplace injuries.

According to a Manitoba Public Insurance news release, collision data collected in 2014 showed that there was a 20 per cent increase in collisions on Manitoba roadways following the spring daylight savings time change when compared to all other Mondays in 2014.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

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

(4) There is no conclusive evidence that daylight savings time is effective in reducing energy consumption.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to amend The Official Time Act to abolish daylight saving time in Manitoba effective November 4, 2019, resulting in Manitoba remaining on Central Standard Time throughout the year and in perpetuity.

And this petition has been signed by Jared Schroeder, Mary Diplock, Dan Diplock and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Concordia Hospital Emergency Room

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 has announced that Concordia Hospital's emergency room will be closed by summer of 2019.

(2) In addition to the closure of the Concordia ER, Seven Oaks General Hospital's ER will also be closed in the fall of 2019, leaving families in northeast-north Winnipeg without any point of contact with front-line health-care services.

(3) These closures will result in patients in need of travelling 20 minutes or more to emergency rooms at the St. Boniface Hospital or Health Sciences Centre to receive care.

(4) In recent years, a nearby QuickCare clinic was closed and plans for ACCESS centres and personal-care homes were cancelled.

(5) The forthcoming closure of the Concordia ER, in addition to the cuts in health care that have already been made, will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in north Winnipeg and visit the emergency room frequently, particularly those who are unable to drive or who are low-income.

(6) The chaos from the provincial government's health-care overhaul is resulting in a nursing shortage, with staff vacancy rate at Concordia being 40 per cent. Nurses have expressed concern for their patients because the shortage is increasing overtime hours and thereby creating an environment in which quality patient care cannot be guaranteed.

(7) The provincial government failed to consult with families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg regarding the closure of their emergency room or to consult with health-care officials and health-care workers at Concordia to discuss how this closure would impact patient care in advance of the announcement.

(8) Access to emergency medical care on a 24-7 basis is essential for people living in northeast Winnipeg.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the decision to close the Concordia Hospital emergency room so that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): History is something that is ingrained in all of us, something we pass down from generation to generation. Not all of it is positive and not all of it belongs on the front page of a newspaper, but it is woven together like a quilt that we carry throughout our days.

I'm proud to represent the Emerson constituency which was created in 1879. The town of Emerson carries history. Its founders decided it was to be the gateway of the New West, the Chicago of the North, a centre for commerce and trade on the banks of the mighty Red River.

Dating back to 1872, it was the home for creating the Canadian-US border, the home of the famous Northwest Mounted Police and, to this day, a landing place for new immigrants from around the world.

When history is discarded, however, it's easily forgotten. A group of individuals, whom no one elected, has decided that the name of Emerson belongs in the waste bin-basket.

* (15:10)

They have decided without consultation to change the name of the constituency to a new one: Borderland, a term nobody identifies and a term that carries no history of its own.

As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, Emerson has the shortest part of the US border and—not like the other two ridings that border the US border, they also border Saskatchewan and Ontario borders.

Emerson is one of the first communities of the province and has a unique history. It belongs in the Manitoba Legislature, and it belongs to the people. I'm asking that a change to that report be made in the interim and that a long-term change can be considered to allow the people of the province a voice in the names of their constituency. I do not question the need for the independence of the process of creating and identifying the divisions of constituencies and the present process. But the names can be and should be held sacred.

I would also make a suggestion that section 10 of the 'electoral' division act be changed, striking out 10(1) and replacing it with a new section asking for a special House committee with representation from all parties and all independent members to be struck to consider names for new boundaries to be

considered by the public. I ask that this change be considered immediately.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I am humbled by the support that I've had from the Emerson constituency. One highlight in—is—in particular as being declared elected within five minutes of closure of the polls.

An Honourable Member: Only Kelvin beat you.

Mr. Graydon: Pardon?

An Honourable Member: Only Kelvin beat you.

Mr. Graydon: That's because—never mind. He's older than me.

I owe a great deal of my success to my wife and family who have had to step up to come—comfort—to cover for me at many events and have faithfully supported me throughout my 12 years of service to the riding.

Looking back at nine years in opposition and three years of being in government, there have been some challenges. The floods of 2009 and 2011 certainly stand out as challenges. Also, the NDP government blowing up the bridge on the Red River at St. Jean Baptiste which the Infrastructure minister assured me that it wasn't about to happen, at the same time knowing full well he fully intended to do it. He also had full intentions to remove a similar bridge in Selkirk, but as I was advised by one of his staff, under the table, that the bridge now remains there today.

When I was elected, there was a bridge at Letellier on the Red River in bad repair and needed replacing as it was down to one lane of traffic with controlled lights at each end. And Highway 201 was used at the time as an alternate flood route, and this impeded the ability of highway traffic.

In 2008, thanks to MP Vic Toews and the Stephen Harper government putting \$17 million into the bridge, the NDP matched it and a new bridge was constructed. Now it was possible to lobby for RTAC access to the Rural Municipality of Franklin.

And after the demolition of the St. Jean bridge, Steve Ashton did agree to upgrade 201 Highway to Dominion City with RTAC and one mile up 200 Highway north. In 2016, the newly elected government took over the project and hopefully—hopefully—the current Minister of Infrastructure

(Mr. Schuler) will keep his commitment to complete the last mile this year.

I was able to, while in opposition, work with many of the ministers. One of them was Kerri Irvin-Ross, who was responsible for personal-care homes and seniors homes: one of them in Grunthal, one in La Broquerie, one seniors home in Sprague, repairing of the Shady Oaks home in Vita and contributing to the completion of the fire alarm system and the Chalet Malouin in St. Malo and also an upgrade to a seniors home in Altona. She paid attention to what you brought to her.

The NDP closed more than 25 ERs in rural Manitoba, but we were able to maintain the ER in Altona after a significant confrontation and also get an ambulance garage built there.

One other thing: when the Chalet Malouin was attempting to be—to build a personal-care home in St. Malo, we found an error in the NDP bookkeeping which resulted in the government owing the St. Malo facility over a quarter of a million dollars, which they paid.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank all of the fine people of the Emerson constituency for their unwavering support. Even with the boundary changes partway through my tenure, I have made many new friends of all political stripes, which in itself is very humbling, and also some great memories.

Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would urge you to please call Interim Supply 2019 (2).

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider Interim Supply this afternoon. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Interim Supply

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

We have before us for our consideration of two resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

The first resolution respecting the operation—respecting operation—operating expenditures for the Interim Supply reads as follows:

RESOLVED that a sum not exceeding \$10,480,775,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount to be voted as set forth in part A, Operating Expenditures of the Estimates, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 2020.

Does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) have an—opening comments? No?

Does the official opposition Finance critic have opening comments?

* (15:20)

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm, frankly, embarrassed. I'm embarrassed to be in the Legislature this afternoon, to have a government which is either unable or unwilling to conduct even the most basic, basic responsibilities of a government, and that is to bring in a budget and go through the various steps of the budget.

This government, of course, brought in the budget, and then, since then, has called Estimates, in which opposition members—the official opposition, the Liberals, independent members—have the opportunity to ask the government about its spending, about its plans, about vacancies, about cuts. And this government has chosen—and it's been their own choice—has chosen to call Estimates exactly once in 31 sitting days.

Despite the fact that members from the opposition parties, the independents, have asked, have demanded, have pleaded with the government to get on to Estimates, this government has steadfastly refused.

They want to blame everybody else. They'll blame the opposition parties. They'll blame the federal government. I expect this minister will blame the City of Winnipeg. They're blaming everybody else, when all they need to do, as the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) pointed out appropriately this afternoon, they just need to look in the mirror.

It is absolutely embarrassing that this minister is now coming back for not just the second, but the third Interim Supply bill in this session, which, as far

as I know—maybe the Minister of Finance will enlighten us—is unprecedented in Manitoba history.

It is unprecedented that we have a government that is either so disorganized or so afraid—so afraid of putting on the record their cuts, their mismanagement, their failure to look out for the people of this province, it is an absolute crying shame.

So, instead, we have this Finance Minister, of course, who has a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who tells us he's all about transparency and he's all about accountability. This afternoon, this Minister of Finance is asking this House to approve authority for him to spend 10 billion, 480 million dollars without having to account for how the money is being spent.

That is the exact opposite of accountability. That is the exact opposite of transparency. That is the exact opposite of what this Premier and other members of the Conservative Party promised people as they went door-to-door and knocked on doors and told their story.

People that voted for this Progressive Conservative government—and there are a lot fewer of them now than there were three years ago—those people would be absolutely shocked to know that this afternoon, the Minister of Finance is coming here asking for authority to spend more than \$10 billion of taxpayer funds.

And, as my friend, the member for Concordia's (Mr. Wiebe), pointed out, this minister couldn't even put 10 words on the record to try to explain why he feels it necessary to come and try and get authority to spend this money without subjecting himself and other Cabinet ministers to a process which has gone on in this Legislature for decades.

I don't know the procedure at the start of this Legislature, maybe for the entire history of the Manitoba Legislature. It is a basic tenet, though, of our Westminster system of government that ministers are responsible for their departments.

Opposition parties have not just the right, we have the duty on behalf of Manitobans to put questions to the government, to ask about things that are important. And yet this government has completely failed to allow that to happen.

So, you know, we're going to have, I guess, 93 hours or so. And if we won't call Estimates, then this Minister of Finance is going to sit here and he's going to have questions from the opposition, from the NDP caucus, I presume from the Liberal

caucus. I think the member for Assiniboia's going to have some questions. I think the member for Maples is going to have some questions. Maybe the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) will have some questions. Maybe some of the members from northeast Winnipeg, who we saw conferring around the doorway, worrying about how they're going to go out in the doors and show their faces with the Concordia ER closing on Monday and with the Seven Oaks ER ready to close.

You know, there's going to be a lot of questions that, I guess, this Minister of Finance is going to have to answer if they won't call Estimates, and he wants a blank cheque to go and spend 10.8—or, sorry, \$10.48 billion.

So we are not happy about this. This is embarrassing, and the Minister of Finance should be absolutely ashamed of himself.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I ask for leave for a statement.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it—ask for leave for the member from Assiniboia to speak on this opening statement?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear a no.

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Minto, on a point of order.

Mr. Swan: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understood that this was a Legislature where opposition members, where individual MLAs have the right to put their concerns on the record.

And, you know, I may not agree with everything that the member for Assiniboia says, but, you know, when this Minister of Finance comes in here and wants authority to spend \$10.48 billion without Estimates having been called, I think it's absolutely reasonable for any member of this House, whether they're a member of the official opposition or the second opposition, maybe a member of the government caucus, or an independent member, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they should be permitted the right to speak on this bill, and I think it's extremely, I guess, typical, that the government caucus would refuse the right of the member for Assiniboia to ask the question.

I'm asking you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to please call the Conservative members to order, allow the member for Assiniboia to put forward his question, and—or make his statement, and certainly to be able to have an open debate in this House, even if this government seeks to take away the rights of Manitobans to know how they plan to spend more than \$10 billion.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable Government House Leader, on that same point of order.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Chairperson. I don't know if the member's shouting is causing his own voice to be ringing in his ears and clouding his judgment, perhaps, but he spent the first 10 minutes screaming in this House that things should be done by the rules, and now he's asking us to not follow the rules.

So perhaps if he could at least be consistent in his points, we would move this along a little bit more quickly, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: On that point of order, I just want to explain to the House here that the—every official party has a chance to make opening statements. In this case the member from Assiniboia has asked for leave and the thing was it was denied by this House.

So the thing is, the member has a right to ask questions after—once we get into the question of this bill—okay—the resolution, okay.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: So I hear—I see that the honourable member for—does the second opposition critic have an opening statement?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I just want to emphasize that we should be doing Estimates and that we have not been doing Estimates. We've done less than seven hours so far of Estimates and we await the government to bring us back to Estimates so that we can get on with one of the major jobs in this Legislature.

So, with those few remarks, I'm going to let this move forward and we'll follow the procedure and have questions and so forth.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member for his opening statements.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Swan: Well, here we are, for the first time probably in the history of this Legislature, now debating a third Interim Supply bill, which is unprecedented.

Why wouldn't the minister provide a bill briefing for these, I suppose, remarkable circumstances, which I expect he's going to have to explain?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): The member is free to look at the budget document Estimates of expenditure, interim appropriation.

Interim appropriation—there has—we provided a budget bill briefing last time. That isn't the tradition for interim appropriation. He's probably—probably making—talking about The Appropriation Act.

Mr. Swan: I don't think anybody in Manitoba who will listen to or read the minister's answer will find that to make even the slightest bit of sense.

Can I ask again: Why hasn't the minister offered up a briefing so we can understand what is so emergent about having to debate a third Interim Supply bill when this government has only chosen to call Estimates once in 31 days?

* (15:30)

Mr. Fielding: Well, I answered the question.

To the member, I would suggest that you look in the mirror because it's your fault that there are so much delays that happened in this Legislature.

We know that there's been over 20 matters of privilege and 20 points of order, challenging the Speaker more than 10 times. Slow-reading 'perditions,' we had the opportunity to hear the member from Concordia, the member from Minto—talk about urging the nay chirp.

So I would suggest that the NDP, clearly, are—don't want to work—that aren't here. We're here looking to debate things, and we know the NDP's track record being one of the only parties that has tried to jeopardize the salaries of civil servants by delaying the implementation of particular government money bills.

Mr. Swan: Yes, well, it'd be very helpful this afternoon if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) would stop putting absolute garbage on the record.

You know, when I stand up in this House—

Mr. Chairperson: You know what—Order. Order.

I just wanted to make sure that persons in the Chamber here use parliamentary—proper parliamentary language here, caution here on their language.

Mr. Swan: I'm disappointed the Minister of Finance is putting absolute nonsense on the record this afternoon.

And let me just tell the Minister of Finance, when I get up on my feet or the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) gets up on his feet or the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) or any of my other colleagues get up here and read a petition on behalf of our constituents that they have brought to us to bring into this Legislature, that is not a waste of this Legislature's time.

And every day this session I have read a petition that people in the province of Manitoba brought me about daycare, and about how this government and this Minister of Finance have been cutting daycare. And I would love to be able to get into Estimates and ask questions of the Minister for Families about daycare. But, of course, I haven't been able to do that.

Could the Minister of Finance, then—because he's decided to take this bizarre approach—could he explain, then, how we have somehow prevented his own House leader, when his House leader has gotten up 31 times in this Legislature to call government business and has only called Estimates once, how is that any opposition member's fault?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I would suggest to you it's because you won't pass bills.

But let's talk about the NDP track record in terms of child care. We know that the NDP took an ideological approach to child care. You couldn't have a balanced approach under the NDP.

We came in, we've created over—thousands of different spaces for child care. Not just in the ideological approach, we think it's important for people to have home-based child care. We—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —think it's important to have child care that's delivered by facilities. We've had agreements with the federal government for over \$47 million of child care, and what did the NDP do just with their red tape that they're so addicted to, Madam Speaker? The NDP had child-care red tape that made it impossible to start child-care centres.

That's not this approach of this government. Our approach is taking a balanced approach to child care. We wish the NDP would quit being so ideological driven by everything that they do. The government is not in charge of everything, doesn't do everything better than individuals. And so I think that just wrong.

We've put a comprehensive child-care plan together and we're investing substantial amounts of money not just in child care, but in health care, in education and things like social services, Madam-Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Swan: Well, I didn't—of course, didn't hear an answer to my question, which is how have any opposition members forced the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) to call something other than Estimates 30 of the 31 times that he's got up in this House to call the—to call government business.

So I'm not—you know what, we're not going to get an answer because this Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) has no answer.

Let me ask him a very important question: Does this minister—is he actually committing to passing every phase of the budget that he stood up and delivered in this House a couple of months ago?

Mr. Fielding: Our government has made important investments in things like health care, over \$414 million more. We invested more in things like families—in Department of Families where vulnerable children are supported, as well as Education.

But you know what's more important about that, Madam Speaker, is understanding the past. So I'm going to take a little trip down memory lane and see what the minister, Jennifer Howard, said—who was the minister of Finance and government House leader on Interim Supply debate.

You know what she said, Mr. Deputy Speaker? She said the pay period could be missed. We don't have the PIN for a bank card after July 31st. I don't know why they want to wait. I don't know how that services Brian Pallister's political agenda—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. Order.

I just want to remind the member just to make—well, even with quoting, you should—the member—use the First Minister or the Premier (Mr. Pallister).

Okay, the honourable member for—honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Fielding: You don't wait until a catastrophic to act, and these guys want to be government. I shudder to think about how in this—how that. This is just a example how there's hypocrisy coming from the other side. The other side talks about this.

What this government is doing is introducing a budget, a budget that's going to have dramatic impacts for Manitobans in a very good way. We're making investments in health care. We're making investments in social services. We're making investments in economic development and we're making investments in education.

And you know what we're also doing, Madam Speaker? We're making tax cuts for Manitobans, something the NDP know nothing about because all they're about is raising taxes on middle-income individuals.

We think that's wrong. Our approach is making important investments in important priority areas for Manitobans and putting a little more money in the pockets of Manitobans.

Mr. Swan: Well, I'm glad that the minister put that quote from my friend Jennifer Howard on the record because, of course, he will know that quote was from the summer of 2013, the summer of 2013 when this House continued to sit.

So, indeed, if the minister's not going to provide us some answers, we've got 93 hours of questions that we'll be asking this minister. So I suppose, then, if we get into July or August, then I suppose we'll have some real concerns.

But I would like to know once again, and I think this is a very reasonable question, is the minister committed to passing the budget he read in this House a couple of months ago?

Mr. Fielding: Well, it really depends on if the opposition stops stalling. We know that on numerous occasions, which is made up of the Liberals, the NDP and other members of the opposition, that they raised over 20 matters of privilege, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 20 points of order. They challenged the Speaker. They challenged the Speaker more than 10 times. They slow read petitions.

The NDP is all about delay. The NDP is about not getting anything done. Our government is about getting things done for Manitobans and that's exactly what we're doing.

Mr. Swan: Then, perhaps, let's just have the Minister of Finance ask one simple answer, one simple question this afternoon. The government, instead of calling Estimates, has called the Interim Supply bill this afternoon. Can the Minister of Finance just tell us how does that advance him passing his budget in any way? And we'll wait for the answer.

Mr. Fielding: Well, we've been waiting for the NDP to stop delaying, so we can actually introduce some of our bills, our legislation that's there. It's unfortunate that the NDP and Liberals and some members of the opposition that have been delaying things. In fact, they took the step of actually going against public sector employees, threatening public sector employees for this weird chess game that they are playing, a political chess game, how they thought they could increase their political chances.

Everyone knows what the NDP's like, and I rather doubt many Manitobans will vote for them after the track record they have, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But it was a weird political strategy that we think is counter to anything productive when you use public servants as some sort of pawn in your game. We don't think that's responsible. We're taking the responsible steps. We want to make sure that legislation passes. We also want to make sure our budget passes, but it's because of the NDP delays that that's not happening.

Mr. Swan: We got 93 hours of questions, but I'm going to share some time with some of the other members of this House.

Could the minister just please go back to the last question that I asked him? The government has decided, of all the things it could've done this afternoon, the government has decided to now introduce Interim Supply. How does the minister believe that is getting him any closer to passing his budget, unless the minister has no intention of passing his budget in the first place?

Mr. Fielding: Well, in this spring sitting, opposition parties have wasted more than 15 days of debate time by ringing the bells for hours, by challenging the Speaker for no reason other than to delay.

That's approximately 40 per cent of the time we've debated important bills and the budget. And this really doesn't include the time they spent filibustering and holding the PST cut hostage in order to get a subsidy for their political party.

The third interim appropriation act bill in 2020, it's meant to end the NDP's ability to irresponsibly block the routine legislation that ensures civil servants get paid. We've gone through a history lesson over the last three months of the delay tactics that the NDP have done. We think that's shameful.

* (15:40)

We think that the NDP should try to work with other parties to get things done. We think that Manitobans want politicians to work together to get things done, and that's exactly what this government is doing and has done by getting the job done.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Thank you for the member of Minto for sharing some of his time—and we're going to have a lot of it, apparently.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to just clarify some of the things that have been said earlier.

The rules of this place are the rules, as the House leaders pointed out, and matters of privilege and points of order are part of those rules and part of the process. That are—that is the rule. To complain about rules is a strategy to deflect from the actual issue, which is the expenditure of taxpayer money.

Now, when I finish my remarks, I am sure that the Finance Minister is going to talk about everything under the sun except the actual finances. He's probably going to talk about matters of privilege, points of order, stuff like that.

But what he won't talk about is the fact that the government, with its super-duper majority, was unable to meet the rules, the deadline, to get the first Interim Supply motion passed. Now, then the government—which is a procedural thing in this place; it doesn't affect the operation of the government.

But yet they seem to impose the American-style, you know, government shutdown rhetoric that has nothing to do with our parliamentary system, and when they do that they just make themselves look foolish to serious people, because serious people know that in our system the public service will always get paid. In fact, I—there could be a nuclear war and I—public service would get paid. They—there is almost nothing that can stop that from happening. But yet they say it.

Now, I know the Finance Minister has a fondness for Trump and retweets his tweets and so on, but that is no reason to bring that kind of Trumpmentality rhetoric into Canada, please.

So now let's—and then the government, recognizing that error, tried to bring an Interim Supply bill for next year, which is against, you know—for another fiscal year—which is against the fiscal administration act, the constitution and a dozen other things. How that could even make it on to the Order Paper is beyond the pale. But they—yet they did it.

So now we're talking about the second appropriation for the year when we haven't been able to examine the expenditures of the previous—or of the budget, and that is a fundamental issue here. The consolidated fund is funded by the taxpayer. The government gets its ability to expend that money from this place, and upon approval the government is able to spend the money. But that hasn't happened.

Now they—this place is supposed to scrutinize the expenditures, and we can't do that; and the problem is, Mr. Chair, is if we can't scrutinize—and when the member has a record of being involved with other levels of government that have poor spending records, by this government's own admission, there raises more questions. So what is happening is the government's dodging accountability? Why won't this government just bring forward the Estimates and do the Conservative thing? Stand up and be responsible.

Mr. Fielding: I don't think we need to go as far as the Speaker's ruling on the member opposite, where she had to talk about the amount of points of privilege and delay tactics that you did—the member from the Assiniboine used. In fact, the member Assiniboine had to go back and he had to, in fact, apologize to get let back into the House for his work.

So, to be fair, the member of Assiniboine has been a big problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because he's been involved in massive stall tactics—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), on a point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: Yes, what the minister said, on a procedural issue, just a second ago, about not being allowed—that is blatantly false and everyone in this place knows it and it's of the public record. So either the minister misspoke, or he should apologize.

Mr. Goertzen: The member is reflecting on a incident that he had in the House where he was

required to leave the House. The member, who I consider a friend, has a distinguished parliamentary record. That was not his most distinguished parliamentary moment, though, and I don't imagine he'll want to shed any further light on that time in this House.

Mr. Chairperson: On that same point of order, like—of—brought by—forward by the member from Assiniboia, it's not a point of order, but it's a dispute.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: We'll continue with the questioning and we'll have the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) continue his answer.

Mr. Fielding: Sure. Well, I'll yield to the member of Assiniboia. If that wasn't what happened and I'm misphrasing it, then I encourage him to let the House know exactly what happened. He can phrase exactly what the Speaker had said and what her ruling was to make sure the accurate—the record is accurate.

But turning the page on the finances, we know something that's very—been important, that under the former NDP government, the deficit would have been at \$1.7 billion because of the spending problems that NDP had. Not only is—and that's a budgetary matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what's important.

But what's important—what's even more important is the fact that they were getting horrible results with the money that they were spending; the fact that they were spending, in some ways, double and sometimes triple, in terms of some departments, in terms of the rate of inflation with these things; and they're getting some of the worst health outcomes; the amount of children in care that's there.

This government has done a number of things: No. 1, we committed to a number of items that we have committed to and we've attained. That'd be reducing the PST to put a little bit more money in taxpayers' items, and we've reduced the deficit by upwards of 80 per cent from where we started: went from around \$900 million to about 360.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, a clarification from the minister: the Interim Supply that was passed earlier this year was for about a third of the budget and should have taken us 'til about the end of July, I would have thought.

And how long will—if we pass this Interim Supply, how long would that fund the government for?

Mr. Fielding: It would fund the government 'til the end of December.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, the minister, as is well known, served at the City of Winnipeg for a number of years, and we are dealing, from time to time, with matters which the minister himself dealt with when he was at the City of Winnipeg.

I would ask the minister whether he's ever recused himself from Cabinet or other meetings due to his involvement in government of the City of Winnipeg with items which are being dealt with here.

Mr. Fielding: I don't understand how that is a budget-related question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I mean, it's very clear when we're dealing with the budget, and the budgets deal with many different matters, including some matters which are closely related to what the minister dealt with when he was at the City of Winnipeg. So I think it's a fair question.

* (15:50)

Mr. Fielding: I have not recused myself from any matters that I can recall from the provincial government.

Mr. Fletcher: Okay, well, that's—so the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) is recusing himself from anything to do with the City of Winnipeg or the time that he was there. But the report that was just released yesterday had nothing but condemnation about the culture at the City of Winnipeg.

Now, culture is developed over years, so eight years as a city councillor in some key positions, like finance chair and charge of property and development. And now he is the Finance Minister, and that's great—for him. But it also allows him to cover up a lot of the mistakes and blunders that occurred in the previous time while he was a city councillor.

Now, has the minister recused himself from the \$86 million in the budget that bails out the football stadium? Did he—or the football consortium or whatever the heck happened there. Like, it was a—obviously, a financial disaster. The Minister of Finance was part of that decision-making process at the time and now he's using public money to fix that mistake.

What about any other transfer from the Province to the City from—to compensate for the police station,

which that member was a member of city council when that decision was made. Or fire stations on land that the City doesn't own, how is that? Is the member recusing himself from that?

Or how about when he was city councillor and he put the Vimy Arena site on the block, and then as minister of Families signed a letter telling the City that he wanted—that—demanding a government-to-government transfer—and then, through—and then only offering \$1 for that land when it's worth millions. And all done behind closed doors, months, a year, maybe, before it became public. It's all in writing, tabled it the other day. Did he recuse himself from that? Sure didn't. We know that because his name is on it, on the letter. So why didn't he recuse himself from that letter, March 31st, 2017? Follow that logic, but no.

And the Minister of Finance touches everything, including the Crown corporations and the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation, which is really a cover to—for the Vimy project. There is no transparency, no due diligence, yet his name is on the document. Is that how he conducted himself when he was city councillor, just approving projects, doing what the mayor said? Or was he actually part of that culture that was condemned yesterday? Obviously, he was. He was there. He didn't do anything to change it. And we don't—how can we expect that it will be changed now?

Will the minister follow his earlier logic and recuse himself from the finances of Manitoba?

Thank you.

Mr. Fielding: Well, the member obviously shows his true colours when he brings up this. This is clearly—has an issue with the Bruce Oake Foundation and he's obviously opposed to addiction treatments. I know that's a community that I share in St. James, and I can tell you there's probably just as many people in St. James that think it's important to have—addiction treatment centre that's there.

This process went through city hall, where there was some public hearings that were associated with the zoning. Clearly, that has run its course and the project is important to go forward.

If you're asking my opinion on it, do I think it's important for Manitoban to have addiction treatments, I'll say yes. If you ask me, do I support this from the community of Kirkfield Park that I represent, I think yes.

In fact, I think if you look at all areas, we've heard in this Legislative Chamber the importance of addictions treatments and how there's—you know, how people feel that there's a crisis, whether it be meth or other things. To somehow come here to the Manitoba Legislature and block addiction treatments that are going to help individuals, quite frankly, I think, is deplorable.

Mr. Gerrard: The issue of the amount of money that was written down, the stadium costs, I'm just trying to get clarification of exactly how much was written down and how much was in last year's budget and how much was in this year's budget.

Mr. Fielding: Well, we are—of course, are dealing with the interim appropriations for 2019.

The money was written off last year. It was reported in Public Accounts, so I'm not sure what the member is referring to in terms of that.

What I do want to put on the record that the money was spent a long time ago. And that was with the former NDP government that concocted an extremely bad plan to somehow try and hide the true cost the stadiums. Our government did not spend a dime. We—you know, part of this, we took steps to address this. We know that the financial situation that has risen from it and the—whether—the ability to pay it back. And so we essentially wrote it off in last year's budget.

Mr. Gerrard: I'm going to pass to my colleague, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont).

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for—I'll go to the honourable member—the honourable—the Leader of the Second Opposition, then I'll go to the member for—after—with—Assiniboia.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Just the question for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding): Was he not a city councillor at the time of the agreement between the City of Winnipeg and the Province regarding Investors Group Field, or what became Investors Group stadium?

Mr. Fielding: The deal with the Province—the former NDP government is one that concocted the loan agreements that were in place. From a city point of view, it cost \$5 million for the City of Winnipeg at that point. And, no, I was not directly involved in any of the negotiations for the stadium deal.

Mr. Fletcher: You know, the—everyone in this place supports rehabilitation—addiction rehabilitation and allowing people to have a second chance. But it's important that the people who are making these decisions for support put the location—put these facilities in locations that are appropriate.

For example, the minister—who is a former city councillor—put this facility on the auction block, but it wasn't auctioned off. No, he—when he became a federal minister, he transferred—forced the transfer of this property for \$1. That is the issue.

It could be an orphanage on that spot. The issue is how this minister treats public assets and how he is flipping back and forth, trying to fix or destroy what he did before. That is the issue.

And this—there's lots of compounding—so how'd he do—how does the City assess properties around that area? How does the—what is the Province going to pay for tax or what is the centre going to pay for tax? You know, is tax in lieu?

*(16:00)

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

In accordance to rule 2(13), the time being 4 p.m., I am now interrupting debate as the committee must now rise to allow the Speaker to put the questions on the remaining report stage amendments on the specified bills.

Therefore, the committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Madam Speaker: The time being 4 p.m., I am now interrupting debate to put the question on the remaining report stage amendments without further debate or amendment on the following specified bills: three report stage amendments on Bill 2, The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members); and one report stage amendment on Bill 9, The Family Law Modernization Act.

The House will not adjourn until all of the applicable questions have been put.

In accordance with our rules, all matters of privilege and points of order are deferred until after these actions have been concluded. If there are any applicable report stage amendments that have yet to be moved, the member bringing the report stage

amendment forward will move the motion but with no debate.

For each report stage amendment the sponsor will move the report stage amendment and send the motion up to the Speaker who will start reading the report stage amendment back to the House. The Speaker will then rule on the orderliness of the report stage amendment; then the question will be put on the report stage amendment without further debate or amendment.

**Bill 2—The Municipal Amendment Act
(Strengthening Codes of Conduct
for Council Members)**

Madam Speaker: I will now call upon the honourable member for River Heights to move the first report stage amendment to Bill 2 without debate.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for St. Boniface, the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mr. Lamont),

THAT Bill 2 be amended in Clause 2(2) in the proposed subsection 84.1(2.1) by striking out "and" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause b:

(b.1) establish procedures for appeals by members who are sanctioned under a code of conduct and designate a person or body to hear such appeals; and

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition,

THAT Bill 2 be amended in Clause 2(2) in the proposed subsection 84.1(2.1) by striking out "and" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause b:

(b.1) establish procedures for appeals by members who are sanctioned under a code of conduct and designate a person or body to hear such appeals; and

The report stage amendment is in order. I will now call the question on report stage amendment to clause 2(2) of Bill 2.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

An Honourable Member: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division, the—on division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call upon the honourable member for River Heights to move the second report stage amendment to Bill 2.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Leader of the Second Opposition,

THAT Bill 2 be amended in Clause 2(4) by adding the following after the proposed subsection 84.1(4):

No right to vote

84.1(4.1) Despite section 136, a member must not vote on a resolution to sanction the member for an alleged contravention of the code of conduct.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition,

THAT Bill 2 be amended in Clause 2(4) by adding the following after the proposed subsection 84.1(4):

No right to vote

84.1(4.1) Despite section 136, a member must not vote on a resolution to sanction a member for an alleged contravention of the code of conduct.

The report stage amendment is in order.

I will now put the question on the report stage amendment to clause 2(4), subsection 84.1(4) of Bill 2.

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I heard a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

An Honourable Member: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: In terms of the third report stage amendment to Bill 2, it is a consequential amendment that is tied to the first report stage amendment proposed by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) to clause 2(2). Since the first report stage amendment was defeated, the third report stage amendment is now out of order and cannot proceed.

Bill 9—The Family Law Modernization Act

Madam Speaker: I will now call the honourable Minister of Justice to move the report stage amendment to Bill 9 without debate.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education,

THAT Schedule A to Bill 9 (The Family Dispute Resolution (Pilot Project) Act) be amended by adding the following after Clause 39:

Best interests of child

39.1 When taking any action in respect of a family dispute involving a child, the best interests of the child must be the paramount consideration of the director, a resolution officer, an adjudicator and any other person acting under the authority of this Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education,

THAT Schedule A to Bill 9 (The Family Dispute Resolution (Pilot Project) Act) be amended by adding the following after Clause 39:

Best interests of child

39.1 When taking any action in respect of a family dispute involving a child, the best interests of the child must be the paramount consideration of

the director, a resolution officer, an adjudicator and any other person acting under the authority of this Act.

The report stage amendment is in order.

I will now put the question on the report stage amendment to schedule A of Bill 9.

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, could you canvass members to see if it's the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, would you please call for debate on second reading, Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2019?

Madam Speaker: Just for the record, I would indicate that leave to that last request had been denied.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 24—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2019

Madam Speaker: Therefore, the honourable Government House Leader has indicated we will now move into debate on second reading of Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2019, standing in the honourable—in the name of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) who has 27 minutes remaining.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), on a point of order.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): I've been listening very carefully to the debate that's been happening in the House here this afternoon and, quite frankly, over the past number of weeks, and it's become quite clear that members of this House, certainly on the opposition side of the Chamber, have been asking for the government to call the Estimates so that we can get into debate and ask questions about the nature of the expenditures of this government.

* (16:10)

Now, the reason I stand on a point of order is because I feel like there may be—I'm trying to give an opportunity for the House leader and the Finance Minister to maybe get on the same page, because if I heard correctly, I think the Finance Minister was also in agreement that the House should call Estimates.

I think he was maybe giving a bit of a nudge to the House leader to say not only is the opposition wanting to call Estimates but, in fact, the minister wants to, rather than answer all the questions on behalf of every single minister in the process of Interim Supply, that he feels the better use of time of this Chamber, in fact, would be to allow for us to move to the Estimates process, where we can have not only the ministers, but their staff who can sometimes add some clarity to some more technical or complex questions.

And so I'm giving the opportunity here, today, that maybe the House leader could confer—and I'd be happy to give some time before the House leader needs to respond to this particular point of order, but to give them an opportunity to confer, to talk, maybe get the boss on the phone.

I don't know how the process is over there, but to figure out why they're not calling Estimates, why the people of Manitoba won't have their questions about this government's budget answered, and why they—or what exactly it is that they're trying to hide from Manitobans, because clearly, the—they seem afraid to call the Estimates process.

They seem afraid to give Manitobans that opportunity through us, as the opposition members, an opportunity to ask specific questions, to get some detail, to give some context and really, putting the cart before the horse now with the Interim Supply rather than simply just trying to move the Estimates process through.

And, you know, just to build on the point that the member for Assiniboia made, if it's more time that's needed, I think we'd be happy to sit down with the House leader, make arrangements to make sure that we get the adequate time to have that process go through.

So I'm just going to give the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) some time. Maybe he could get together with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), come up with a plan so that we could call Estimates so that the questions that people are

asking us to ask of the government can be posed this afternoon.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I would point out that, as it stands, from what he is saying so far, this is not a point of order but a discussion of the scheduling of House business, which should not be debated on the floor of the Chamber like this, but should instead be discussed between House leaders.

So I would indicate—and I hear the member for Assiniboia would like to speak to that same point of order?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): On the same point of order.

Madam Speaker: On that same point of order, but I would just be—want to be clear that there was no articulation of a breach of a point of order, so the member would need to be very careful in terms of what he is actually saying has been breached, because I have just ruled on this.

Mr. Fletcher: Well, it's clear the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) wants to go home early and not fulfill a fiduciary responsibility here.

And, in respect to the member from Concordia's point of order, the spirit of this place is—and the custom of this place is to deal with Estimates.

And I—Madam Speaker, I think what the member from Concordia is trying to illustrate is that when the government brings up a bill dealing with minor amendments to legislation when the Estimates are—haven't been done, it illustrates the disingenuous attitude that the government has.

And the problem for—and, Madam Speaker, you're right about the House leaders, but the problem for the independent members here, which there are three, and others, is that we're not part of the House leader discussions. So how can we represent our constituents and deal with the important issues of this place when we are not part of the discussion—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I believe I have already ruled on this, and I would indicate that these comments that the member is making are still related to the concept of the scheduling of House business and are not a valid point of order.

So, with all due respect, this is no point of order.

Madam Speaker: I believe, then, I have called on Bill 24, debate on second reading. Bill 24, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2019, which is standing in the name of the honourable leader—[*interjection*] yes, which is standing in the name of the Leader of the Official Opposition, who has 27 minutes remaining.

Is there leave for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for—the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

The honourable member, then, for St. Johns.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Miigwech to my colleague from Concordia, who I can always count on some really good clapping and support.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to get on the—or, take a couple of minutes to speak to Bill 24, which I believe I have unlimited speaking time.

So I'm going to attempt, again—I know it's probably a little bit difficult since we don't have that much time in the House. Who knows, maybe, maybe not. I'm not sure. I'm going to attempt, again, to break the minister for Education—or, the member for Steinbach's (Mr. Goertzen) unlimited speaking time—16 more hours. So let's see how it goes.

Bill 24, Madam Speaker, as you know, also the minor amendments and corrections act of 2019, also notes the path to reconciliation and looks to delay reporting on the path to reconciliation. I'm pleased, actually, to get up on what are the last couple of days of this session, perhaps the last hours of the Pallister government, as the Premier (Mr. Pallister) sets his way, sets his path to breaking Manitoba law and then ceasing to be the Premier anymore.

So I'm pleased to stand up and talk about the path to reconciliation. I think that that was certainly something in the House that we can all be proud of, that Manitoba has a law that recognizes the—recognizes survivors of the Indian residential school system.

And so I know that that was something that I would hope that we would be proud of in this House, that we have legislation in respect to acknowledge and honour survivors. And in that attempt also

ensure that nothing as horrendous or heinous or savage like that ever occurs.

I know that I've had the opportunity to speak a couple of times in the House in honour of survivors of Indian residential school system, and so since we have a lot of time together to discuss this, I do want to acknowledge my—some of my family members that went to residential school.

As you know, Madam Speaker, Sagkeeng First Nation is where I'm from. My family is from Sagkeeng First Nation. I'm actually the great-granddaughter of Joseph and Louise Spence. Joseph and Louise Spence had 18 children. Many of the children died when they were just babies, but they actually went on to adopt six more children. So—for a total of 24. The oldest of Joseph and Louise Spence's children is Agnes, and the baby of the 18 is Nora. Nora is my grandmother; Agnes is the mother of Phil Fontaine.

* (16:20)

And so I begin with sharing that little bit of family lineage because—I begin with sharing that lineage because Agnes gave birth to 12 children, and, as I said, Phil Fontaine was one of those children, and I begin with that because I'm really proud to be cousins and family and relative with Phil because, if you recall back in 1991, Phil Fontaine did an interview on The National, the CBC's National, and actually that was one of the first times that indigenous leadership very publicly spoke about the abuse that occurred in residential schools.

And I—that is an incredibly courageous thing to do and it brought us—that moment of courage on national TV brought us to the present moment today, right now, where we're talking about the Pallister government attempting to make some changes to The Path to Reconciliation Act.

I would suggest that it is, you know, the TRC is predicated on that courage of people like Phil, courage of survivors who actually survive residential schools and the courage of all residential school survivors who actually—who spoke out about the horrendous savagery that occurred in Indian residential schools.

Let me just put on the record that I once heard somebody—well, and we know that there's a senator in Canada that attempts to kind of construct Indian residential schools as not everything that happened there was bad.

Yes, it was. Let's just be honest. There's nobody in this Chamber that would think it was okay for the state to come in and take your child at four and five and ship them off, and you never seen your children, you know, for 10 months or, in some cases, up to 12 or 13 years. There's nothing good about the state taking children away from their family, their parents, their grandparents and their community.

So I disabuse anyone, including Senator Beyak, and, you know, those folks—well, let's just be honest—those racist folks that would actually suggest that there's anything good that came out of residential—Indian residential school system.

I have several family members that went to Indian residential schools. As I said, we had a residential school in Sagkeeng. My grandfather, who I've spoken about many times in this House, Henry Charles Fontaine, went to Indian residential school and actually then went and enlisted in the—with the Canadian military who ended up on the beaches of Normandy and who were—who was captured very soon after and spent eight or nine months as a POW.

And I've shared in this House before how, when my grandfather was leaving, he was being shipped off, and actually he was only about 17. He enlisted; he was only 17.

So I don't know if, at this point, when he's being 'shipped' off—shipped off—he was actually now 18—I'm not sure, but he went to the residential school in Sagkeeng and he wanted to go say goodbye to his siblings, but they wouldn't even let him say goodbye to his siblings.

Even though he was in his uniform, he wasn't allowed to say goodbye. He actually had—who is my Auntie Ellen [*phonetic*] was only five. So his baby sister was only five years old, and he wasn't allowed to say goodbye to her.

My uncle—I've spoken about my uncle in actually many different places and spaces. He has such a special place in my heart. That is my mom's brother—oldest brother—who went to a residential school in Sagkeeng and actually received one of the highest amounts of court settlements, not only in Manitoba, but across Canada.

The Canadian government gave my uncle one of the highest amounts that was ever awarded, and that's not because he had a great lawyer or—it's because the amount that Indian residential school

survivors got correlates directly to the amount of abuse that you suffered in Indian residential schools.

And my uncle suffered just horrendous abuse. My uncle was, from the very beginning, when he was there, 'repeatim'—repeatedly sodomized by someone in the—one of the supervisors or—in the Indian residential school, repeatedly, repeatedly, repeatedly sodomized.

And, you know, I—so I take great offence when certain Canadians attempt to try and construct the Indian residential school system as something good that happened or, you know, not everything was bad.

When a child is taken away from their family and subjected to years of being sodomized, there's literally nothing good about that. And my uncle actually saved my life when I was a little girl, and so he has a very, very special place in my heart, and I love my uncle so much. He's probably 75 now, 76, and he is just a kind human being.

He takes care of his dog. I'm not sure about his dog. His dog's name is Neechi [*phonetic*]. She's kind of crazy, but she's very protective of my uncle. But he's just a kind, kind, gentle human being, and I just, you know, though—the—when I talk about residential schools, I always think about my uncle and I think about my grandfather and I think about what they went through.

So, you know, I want to, for the purposes of, you know, historical record in this House, I would be remiss if I did not disabuse some of that narrative that good stuff happened out of the Indian residential school system.

So, you know, again, I honour Phil Fontaine for taking that first courageous step at sharing his abuse. I honour the relatives in my family for surviving that abuse. And I honour all of—all survivors. I had the opportunity many years ago—where was that? It was in Vancouver. We were at—I think we were at a national ceremony for residential school survivors, but there was a moment where they also were honouring missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and connecting the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls with that intergenerational legacy of the Indian residential school system.

And I will never forget being in Vancouver, in BC, at this gathering, and there was a beautiful, beautiful grandmother; she was so beautiful; she was so humble, so—just so regal and dignified and just beautiful. And she got up to share her story of when

she was in residential school. And she talked about that at the Indian residential school that she was at, one of the forms of punishment that the nurses—or the nuns and priests had come up with was they had constructed—and these were her words. She said it was almost like a dog cage.

She says, and this cage was strung up and you would go in there if you spoke your language, or whatever it was, you would go in there. But she said somehow they were able to electric—electrify the bottom. And I remember everybody in the—and there was hundreds of indigenous people from across the country. And everybody was just crying, listening to this poor grandmother, this, you know, when—and you think back to when she was just a child being treated like a dog, even worse than a dog.

And this happened, you know, with the blessing of the state. This happened. And it can't help—you can't help but as an indigenous person get so upset at the treatment of indigenous children when you think back to Indian residential schools. So, you know, for Manitoba to be able to have a law that entrenches—legislatively entrenches reconciliation, I think is important.

* (16:30)

Whether or not Manitoba is actually doing that work in a concerted, honest, courageous, genuine way is another question that I think that we all have to explore not only in this House—certainly legislatively, you know, within policy—but also just those relationships that we have with one another, work that goes on in, you know, non-profit, those—work that goes on within the health-care system, the judicial system.

Like, all of those pieces requires that we look at what reconciliation looks like, what it means, the path that we need to take. How does that manifest itself? Are we doing enough? Are we not doing enough? And how can we get reconciliation done?

How can we—and, again, I actually would suggest that—and, you know, it is not for indigenous peoples to go out and to make the effort for reconciliation. I had the opportunity in March, the middle of March, I had the opportunity to travel up to the Yukon, in Old Crow. I know I mentioned that in the House here. It was so beautiful. It's beautiful territory. I suggest if anybody has the opportunity, if you're ever invited up, go. It's so beautiful.

And so I was asked to speak at a gathering for MMIWG families that are in the Yukon. So I was

there for a couple of days. And during one of the—you know, we were always in that community hall. And one of the elders got up and spoke about—she said—oh, actually, no, this is when we were actually on the land. We were actually on the land in—literally in the bush in the Yukon in these little cabins.

And so we were getting teachings, and we were getting teachings from this extraordinarily amazing young man who had so much traditional knowledge. It was crazy. He was—I think he was like 31. It was—the amount of knowledge that this young man had was amazing.

And then we heard from this elder, and she was saying reconciliation is not our job to do as indigenous peoples. She said if you imagine it—that—if you're looking at reconciliation, we as indigenous people have already paved the path.

We already constructed half of the bridge. It is now for Canada and provinces and territories and Canadians to pave that path and to build the second part of that bridge so that we meet in the middle and we do reconciliation together.

But I loved that teaching. I loved the way that she spoke about it, because often, you know, when you're doing anti-, you know, racism work or, you know, you're doing decolonizing work, the brunt of the labour is always on indigenous peoples. We've done enough. Like, we've survived this history. It is not incumbent on indigenous peoples.

And here's the piece—is that these calls to action for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, like, this was our work. This is—this is all of indigenous people's labour. This is indigenous people's labour when indigenous people, elders, come and present about what happened to them and what have been the consequences of the Indian and residential—Indian residential school system. We've done the labour. We've done the work.

And so I want to share that with the House. Whether or not anybody's listening, it doesn't matter. I just want to—or I just want to—*[interjection]*—miigwech, Patricia; thank you. I just want to honour that elder who gave that teaching to all of us because it really did, that whole trip to Old Crow—as I'm sure everybody can imagine, this House can sometimes be emotionally and spiritually exhausting and alienating—that trip to Old Crow really rejuvenated my spirit and just spending time with elders and MMIWG families and just being on such sacred land really 'rejuvenated'—rejuvenated my

spirit. But that teaching in particular really just confirmed the amount of work that folks other than indigenous people have to do.

And—sorry. So I want to talk about—a little bit about the calls to action. You know, we're going—or we finished year three of this particular government, of this Pallister government and, you know, we know that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is about to break the law. We've repeatedly said that. We—everybody knows that. That's why, you know, there are things that are being done and not being done.

But I think that, you know, one of the things that I think is problematic and actually quite sad is that we actually haven't seen or heard anything about the government's response to reconciliation. I know that there—and I don't know, I haven't seen her in a while. She is a woman that works in one of the departments. I'm not going to name which department she works on.

I actually have quite a few friends that work in government that I'm really blessed to know and call my sisters, who are actually terrified. Like, we have this thing that if we go out for supper or coffee, like, nobody can take a picture of us together. Like, people are scared that they're going to get fired.

And so I'm not going to name anybody's names but I—and this young woman and I are not—I mean, we know each other. We're acquaintances. We're not friends but we're just acquaintances. But—so I haven't seen her in a while, but I do know that she had shared with me, maybe about a year and a half ago, that she was working on reconciliation for the government.

And—but that's it. I don't know where she is. Maybe—I probably should go on social media and see if I can find her and see if she's still working with government. I don't know. All I know is this, is that I haven't heard anything. I haven't seen anything on reconciliation.

I don't know what the Pallister government—other than, you know, when the Premier took a little bike ride, you know, and the Premier didn't really see anybody and nobody knew that the Premier was doing a bike ride.

And I can't—I, for the life of me, and other indigenous people can't figure out what a bike ride has to do with reconciliation, more than maybe just the Premier getting some exercise. Like, I don't know what that exercise was about.

But we haven't seen anything. And so, three years in—you know, over three years into the Pallister government's mandate, what has been accomplished? What has been offered? If we're looking at that bridge, has any part of that bridge been built in respect of relationships with indigenous peoples?

I know that a little while ago—I mean, even simple things, Madam Speaker, about not calling us our indigenous people. I note that when it does come up, I still hear members opposite call—say our indigenous people.

That's very—that's—language is so important. If you know anything about, you know, the theory of language, the language that we use constructs the way that we understand our surroundings, and those that are in our sacred circle. And so there is so much power in language. It literally informs how you see something and how you understand it, and actually, how you then respond to it.

I've actually asked a couple of times in the House, I've posted it on social media for members opposite and for any Canadian not to say to our indigenous peoples. That language is fundamentally based in colonial understandings of indigenous peoples as wards of state. It is fundamentally embedded in the colonial pursuit of this country.

And we still hear, in this House—and outside this House—but in this House, and I've said it a couple of times, it's very simple. Just don't say our indigenous peoples. The—you know, indigenous peoples, First Nation communities, Metis Nation, like, we don't have to say our indigenous peoples. That's very simple.

That's literally something that every individual can take on themselves. It doesn't have to be decreed by the government. Literally, as an individual, you can think when you're saying—when you're talking, in respect of indigenous peoples, you can just be mindful and cognizant to not say our.

I don't say—I don't go around and say our white people or our LGBTTQ, our—it's disrespectful. People are autonomous in and of themselves.

* (16:40)

So, you know, as we're getting ready to rise again—I don't know, I keep looking at the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen), I don't know—

An Honourable Member: Look again.

Ms. Fontaine: The Government House Leader is saying it's looking good.

I'd just remind people that those are little things that we can do. And, believe it or not, they can go a long way.

So we haven't—you know, we haven't seen much from this government in respect of reconciliation. And, you know, now—you know, I think it's important to recall and remind members of this House and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) what we're talking about when we talk about reconciliation. We're talking about a whole host of things.

And I think the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) spoke about or put on record some of the calls to action. And I know that the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) has put on, for the record, calls to action. I think it's important—we have about 20 minutes today to, again—for history.

I always think about—when I think about the things that we say in this House, if historians ever come back, you know, 100 years from now or 50 years from now and want to know what we were discussing under the Pallister government, I think it's important to put things on the record so that people know what was important to the NDP at the time.

And so I want to put on the record—the official record of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly—that when we are talking about reconciliation—when we as NDPers, but certainly when we as indigenous members in this House, indigenous members of this NDP caucus—so the member for The Pas, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), the member for Fort Rouge and then—and myself—when we're talking about reconciliation, we are fundamentally talking about the calls to action.

And, if anybody is going back in—and looking at what we discussed, that these are the—these are what we need to see. You actually can't even divorce—when we talk about addictions among indigenous peoples, you can't divorce the present crisis that we're under from these calls to action, right? I know that the minister today, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), during question period in respect of my questions on, you know, what is this government doing in developing a plan for the meth crisis, repeatedly referred to policing. And, as I said, you can't police yourself out of this.

I have an individual that I know in the community who worked for the Winnipeg Police Service for, I believe, 19 years—19 or 20 years—an indigenous member of the Winnipeg police force. And I want to acknowledge—his name is Cecil Sveinson. He is retired now. He does teachings and workshops. But, actually, Cecil Sveinson is actually the first one—he used to say that when he was a police officer, he'd say: We can't police ourselves out of these issues. And, at the time, we were talking about other issues, whatever it was.

But—so I do want to acknowledge that that doesn't come from me, that actually comes from a former Winnipeg police officer. And I think that those are very wise words. And so, when we're talking about reconciliation, it is this foundation here, these calls to action—in concert with other things, obviously—but—in—these calls to action that form the foundation to effectively address and deal with the addictions crisis among indigenous peoples.

And so I will take a couple of minutes just to read out these calls to action so that we are all reminded. [*interjection*] I think members opposite are excited that I'm reading these out, because they got a little excited there for a minute.

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action:

Legacy—child welfare.

(1) We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by monitoring and assessing neglect investigations, providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so and to keep families—to keep children in culturally appropriate environments regardless of where they reside.

I think that this second point bears a little for me to spend a couple of minutes on it. If you recall, Madam Speaker—I think it was last year—at the time, the minister of Families, who is now the Minister of Finance, (Mr. Fielding) introduced or was about to introduce a bill that would have offered permanent—expedited and offered permanent guardianship to foster families.

And that—we never saw anything like that, but we certainly did see an immediate reaction from the

indigenous community and indigenous CFS agencies in respect of—first off, that is the antithesis to what this is saying in this call of action, and it is the antithesis to what we've been saying in the indigenous community for years and years, and that is, our children are not to be adopted out outside the community. Our children are not to be adopted out outside the extended family. And this is what this government, under the former minister of Families, thought was appropriate.

And so, obviously, I don't know, in, you know, talking with legal counsel or talking with whoever would come up with some type of legislation like that, you know, adopting out indigenous children in 2000—and I suppose that would've been 2017 or 2018—when there is this framework in Canada and Manitoba.

And what I think is pretty scary, actually, more than the fact that the former minister of Families—and, again, you know, sometimes I feel like, you know, when we say the minister, the minister, the minister, I don't know, quite honestly, how much power the ministers have. I always direct, you know, in question period, I always direct my questions to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) because it seems like there's only one person. There's only one person that is dictating how Manitoba's going to run, and that seems to be the Premier.

And so I'm going to say the former minister of Families, but, actually, Madam Speaker, I'm going to suggest that that crazy idea to adopt out indigenous children from extended family and from indigenous communities, I'm going to suggest to the House, derived at some self from the Premier directly.

Now, I can be proven wrong; I'm good to be proven wrong. If the Families Minister or the former Families minister wants to get up and say that, no, that was his idea, well, that's fine too; somebody can take responsibility for that.

I would hope that somebody would take responsibility for that legislation, that egregious anti-, or colonial, really, legislation that would've adopted indigenous children out. Somebody should take responsibility.

And why should somebody take responsibility for that legislation? Because I think indigenous peoples need to know which individuals in the PC caucus came up with that egregious beyond-crazy legislation that you would adopt indigenous children out.

So there was that piece. But, actually, as well, I think that's—maybe even equally frustrating, disgusting, disheartening, enraging, is that similar to, you know, what we've seen in these last three years, not one single member of that PC caucus stood up and said, hey, colleagues, we can't adopt out children to foster families that are not in First Nation communities or indigenous communities or extended family. Not one single member of the PC caucus stood up and said that. And that is disgusting.

* (16:50)

In whatever year that legislation—and I wish I could find out when that legislation was introduced or about to be introduced.

So whatever year that was—2017, 2018—that not one single member of this most diverse caucus in the history of Canada got up to stand up for indigenous children and say, uh, no, we're not doing that; we're not continuing that historical continuum of shipping off and adopting out and selling off indigenous children; we're not doing that anymore. Not one of them got up and did that. That is shameful. *[interjection]*

And I don't know—I can hear members opposite—as you know, Madam Speaker, I rarely look on that side. I—we—I've said that many, many times, I try not to look on that side. I don't know who's chirping right now, saying that it is shameful, what I'm saying.

But it is not shameful, what I'm saying. I'm an indigenous woman. I'm an indigenous mother. Of course, I'm going to get up in this House when I have the opportunity, as we are getting ready for the Premier to break the law in Manitoba.

Of course, I'm going to get up and talk about how shameful it is that every single member of the PC caucus sat back while legislation was introduced in this House to adopt out our children. Of course, I'm going to do that. Why wouldn't I do that? What am I doing here if I'm not going to do that, as an indigenous woman, as an indigenous mother, as an indigenous legislator? That's what my community demands of me. That's what my ancestors demand of me.

And so I don't know who's chirping over there. I've heard a couple of them saying whatever they're saying. I can't really hear. I try not to pay too much attention. But it is shameful. And, actually, I hope that when I, you know, do my 17 hours of unlimited speaking time here, to finally beat the

Minister of Education, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen)—I hope that once I'm done my 17 hours, I hope that every single member opposite get up and all—this is all they have to do, Madam Speaker. They just have to get up and say, I'm sorry.

The next one can go down the line: Madam Speaker, I'm sorry.

The next one can go down the line: Madam Speaker, I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I was complicit—I'm sorry that I was complicit and a part of a government—*[interjection]*

See, I don't know what's going on here. The member for Morris (Mr. Martin) is chirping—is that the member for Morris?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Ms. Fontaine: Okay. Because I don't want to look over there.

An Honourable Member: The member for Southdale (Mr. Smith).

Ms. Fontaine: The member for Southdale—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —the member for Morris, the member for Southdale are chirping while I'm discussing the fact that they were about to adopt our children out of our communities, when this province has legislation that talks about reconciliation.

I suggest that the member for Morris get up and apologize. I get—I suggest that the member for Southdale get up and apologize for standing by while they were ready to adopt out—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —commodify indigenous children. Get up and apologize. If you're not going to apologize, then be quiet and let me speak. *[interjection]*

And that didn't work. That's not—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —making them—*[interjection]* I really do look forward to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for St. Johns.

Ms. Fontaine: Miigwech, Madam Speaker; I appreciate that.

So, as I was saying, I hope that as soon as I'm done speaking here that every single member of the PC caucus get up and say, I'm sorry. I'm sorry to our First Nation and Metis child and family services, that they were about to put them in the most horrendous situation to adopt out our children. I think that they should get up and apologize.

However, here's another suggestion. If they don't want to do that, if they don't want to 'fose'—face voters, if they don't want to face indigenous voters, if they don't want to face indigenous leaderships, if they don't want to face indigenous children five, 10 years from now when indigenous children know that they all sat there while they were—their lives were in their hands, while indigenous children could have been adopted out; if they don't want to apologize for that, here's what I suggest they do.

I suggest they get their Premier (Mr. Pallister), when he comes to the House—the next time he has an opportunity to stand in the House, I suggest he gets up and apologizes on behalf of all of them. And he can apologize for himself.

So—sorry—Madam Speaker, so I'm looking forward to those apologies on behalf of indigenous children for almost continuing, you know, shipping off our children.

So, Madam Speaker, I'm still just on 1. I'm literally still just on the first call to action: Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.

I haven't heard anything from the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson) or the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) or about where this particular call to action is in respect of teaching and ensuring that everybody has that history on residential schools.

Actually, probably what I would suggest, I do like a sub, you know, subsection of this. I'd actually suggest, and maybe it is—I don't remember seeing it, but we'll get through it, Madam Speaker. I'd actually suggest to this that we do a sub that actually every single person who wants to run for political office in the Manitoba Legislature actually has to know history here in Manitoba in respect of indigenous peoples, and not only beginning from residential schools, but certainly including residential schools, that every single person, every single person that wants to run for political office know the colonial history of

this province and knows the colonial history of Canada.

That way, Madam Speaker, you will—hopefully, you will never have a government that will try to introduce and table legislation that would adopt indigenous children outside their families and their communities—you would never, because if you had that education, you would never even think that it was appropriate to adopt out children.

So I hope, and maybe this is something that we can all work towards in respect of legislation, that we ensure that every single person who wants to run for office—political office—understand the history of this province and understand residential—Indian residential school systems, understands the '60s scoop understands the sexual discrimination within the Indian Act, understands the treaties, understands intergenerational trauma, understands how that is manifested.

I would love to see that be law in Manitoba, that every single person that wants to run for political office understand that history. That way I don't have to sit up here, because I'm literally only on point 3 now of 94 of many, many pages, I wouldn't have to get up and explain to members who are chirping about and saying shame, why it is shameful and disgraceful that the PC caucus would sit by, or any government would sit by, and attempt to adopt out indigenous children. That would save me a lot of time, and I could move on to other egregious things.

So I think that that's something that this government, that we should look at, because they're so concerned about criteria for candidates, that sounds like an amazing criteria for candidates.

So, moving on, Madam Speaker: Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to protect more appropriate solutions to family healing.

You notice that just in the four that I've read, Madam Speaker, nobody has said our Aboriginal communities and our Aboriginal people, so take note to members opposite, take note on how the language is situated here. I think it's a—it's a, you know, it's a good testament for the members to learn, or a good lesson.

Requiring that all child welfare decision-makers consider the impact of residential school experience on children and their caregivers.

So those were just the subsections, Madam Speaker, to Call to Action No. 1.

Call to Action No. 2, Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have unlimited time remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

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