

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 7, 2017

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

MADD Red Ribbon Campaign

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I rise today to recognize two incredibly brave Manitobans who are fighting to end impaired driving in our province.

Last year, Kelly and Leah Fright experienced the worst tragedy anyone can possibly imagine: the death of their 29-year-old daughter, Shea, at the hands of an impaired driver. Madam Speaker, Shea Fright was killed suddenly and senselessly.

On June 26, 2016, she was driving home from a shift at the Royal Manitoba Yacht Club in West St. Paul when she was hit by a pickup truck driving recklessly down the highway. Her last text message to her parents said that she would be home to see them in 20 minutes. They never saw their daughter alive again.

But rather than let their grief overwhelm them, Kelly and Leah Fright have courageously decided to volunteer their time with their local MADD Canada chapter to help end impaired driving in our province.

Madam Speaker, impaired driving remains a leading cause of death on our roads. According to the 2016 Manitoba Public Insurance Traffic Collision Statistics Report, 107 Manitobans were killed in traffic collisions last year. Impaired driving was a factor in at least 38 of those fatalities, by far the highest contributing factor to deaths on our roads.

As we begin the holiday season, it is important to remember the long-lasting and tragic impact that

impaired driving has on our province. Last month, MADD Canada once again acknowledged that impact by launching its annual red ribbon campaign. For the last 30 years, the red ribbon campaign has been an important education tool to reduce rates of impaired driving over the holiday season. By encouraging Manitobans to tie one on, affixing the red ribbon to clothing, cars and key chains, MADD Canada helps foster a culture of sober driving in our province. In addition to encouraging sober driving, the red ribbon is also a powerful symbol to honour the fallen and injured victims of impaired driving in Manitoba, including Shea Fright.

I can think of no better way to honour Shea's memory and support her parents than for us to wear the red ribbon and encourage everyone to commit to driving sober this holiday season and every other day of the year. In short, I hope that all my colleagues and all Manitobans will tie one on for the holiday season and proudly display their red ribbon as a symbol of their commitment to fight impaired driving in our province.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members of this House join me in thanking Kelly and Leah Fright, MADD Winnipeg president Denise Elias, treasurer Rene Lussier and volunteers Trevor Ens and Lindsay Polgar for all they do to help make our roads safer for Manitobans.

Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, approximately four Canadians are killed daily and 174 are injured in impaired driving crashes, affecting another 63,500 annually. In Manitoba, we lose one person to impaired driving every seven days. These are needless deaths which can be prevented by smart decisions.

When someone dies in a road accident, it devastates the lives of victims and families forever, forcing them to live with the consequences of someone else's decision to drive while impaired. This is what makes the work of Mothers Against Drunk Driving so critical and so important.

Project Red Ribbon is MADD Canada's longest running life-saving campaign. Every year, through the months of November and December, we wear red ribbons or tie them to our purses, backpacks or

keys to remind us that driving impaired is not an option. This small but powerful ribbon symbolizes commitment to sober driving and serves as a reminder of all the 'preventable' deaths lost to impaired driving.

On behalf of our NDP caucus, I want to thank MADD for their commitment and dedication to end impaired driving and making our streets safer for everyone.

As the holidays approach and Manitobans celebrate, let us work together to ensure that roads are safe. Let us all each do our part to help family and friends take a cab, a bus or have a designated driver at the end of the night.

On behalf of our NDP caucus, Madam Speaker, I hearts go out to Kelly and Leah Fright, who lost their daughter, Shea Fright, in an impaired driving accident last year. No parent should ever go through that, and I lift up their courage and determination and very important work in respect of MADD.

On behalf of our NDP caucus, I also wish Manitobans a safe and happy holiday.

Miigwech.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak in response to the ministerial statement.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to the MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Canada Red Ribbon campaign 30th year.

Losing people because of drinking and driving is horrific and one hundred percent avoidable.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving have been a leader in educating Canadians about the risks of impaired driving, so much so that, in the past 30 years, instances of drinking and driving have declined by 65 per cent.

I want to thank the countless volunteers of MADD Canada for the work they do. This group is making a huge difference and deserves to be recognized.

In closing, I'd urge all Manitobans to be safe and responsible this season. Take a taxi, or call Operation Red Nose if you choose to drink.

Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Firefighters Burn Fund

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to recognize Ainsley Gosselin and the East St. Paul firefighters.

Four-year-old Ainsley Gosselin wants to be a firefighter when she grows up, so the summer when Ainsley's homemade lemonade stand generated some hard-earned cash, Ainsley's life goal definitely influenced her decision on what she should do with her money.

Ainsley had a lot of good choices for her \$186, but in the end, she decided on the Firefighters Burn Fund, which is a cause that is also near and dear to all firefighters. Donations to the Firefighters Burn Fund supports exceptional burn care, treatments, rehabilitation and research. East St. Paul firefighters were, of course, delighted with Ainsley's choice, and they went out of their way to drive the fire truck to her home and pick up her donation. They also gave Ainsley and her family a tour of the truck and let Ainsley dress up as a firefighter. They were happy to do this because, to firefighters, there is no greater measure of courage than burn patients struggling to survive devastating injuries, so they were proud to support Ainsley in her choice of a charity.

Some people run from problems. Firefighters run to them. And they save more than homes; they save memories, dreams, and most importantly, they save lives. A hero is an ordinary person facing extraordinary circumstances and acting with courage, honour and self-sacrifice. In East St. Paul, we count our firefighters as some of our heroes.

Besides actually fighting fires, these men and women also create and update pre-fire plans for new or existing structures, undertake fire prevention inspections, engage in fire and rescue training, maintain regular physical fitness training, provide public education including in our schools, and they do maintenance for their fire halls, apparatus and equipment.

Since 1992, firefighters in East St. Paul have increased their training to include emergency medical responder or primary-care paramedic training, which is same level as paramedics who serve on ambulances. These firefighters can now provide first aid and pre-hospital care to people who are sick or injured.

Please join me in welcoming and honouring Ainsley Gosselin, her mother Elyse Gosselin and Fire Chief Ray Riddolls and Deputy Chief Sig Zieba of the East St. Paul Fire Department to the Manitoba Legislature.

The Red Ember Common

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and inform the House of an impressive and flourishing local business.

Steffen Zinn from Starbuck, owner of The Red Ember food truck, celebrated the opening of his first permanent restaurant, the Red Ember Common on October 25th. The Red Ember Common is located at The Forks and is now open for all to enjoy. It features 18 seats, a large marble countertop and a Forza Forni pizza oven imported from Naples, Italy. Impressively, the oven fits 10 to 12 pizzas at a time and can bake a pizza in just 90 seconds.

* (13:40)

Steffen started working in the culinary arts when he was just 16 years old. Through hard work and dedication, he eventually became the executive chef at the Pine Ridge Golf Club. Eventually, he decided it was time to embrace his own entrepreneurial spirit and open a restaurant of his own.

Combining 'industriousness' and creativity, he designed and built the iconic Red Ember food truck that can be seen parked in various locations around Winnipeg during the lunch hour. This pizza truck is one of the largest pizza—or, food trucks in the world, measuring in at 32 feet. The foundation is a 2002 Freightliner FL7, while the surface counter is fashioned out of modified storage containers. On any given summer afternoon, Steffen and his colleagues can be found inside making pizzas with locally grown, organic ingredients and cooking them in a wood-fired oven. For example, his pizzas feature dough made from organic mill—flour milled in Elie, pork toppings source from Berkshire pigs raised by his own family and san 'marizano' tomatoes from St. Norbert market.

The opening of the Red Ember Common is a shining example of what can be accomplished with entrepreneurial spirit, hard work and dedication. Local businesses like the Red Ember strengthen the Manitoba economy by employing workers, providing good products and sourcing their ingredients locally. It is important that we recognize the accomplishments of those who have the courage to start small businesses and contribute to our economy.

Thank you, and merry Christmas.

Indigenous Women in Media

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Storytelling is an 'intergal' component in transmitting indigenous peoples' teachings, cultures and ways of being from generation to generation. Indigenous women have always played a quintessential role in our storytelling. That is why I am so honoured to acknowledge Tina Keeper, Lisa Meeches and Rosanna Deerchild for their leadership in advancing the presence and representation of indigenous women in media through storytelling.

Tina Keeper is an active member of Canada's film and television industry for well over 30 years. Best known for her award-winning work on the show *North of 60*, Tina utilizes her skills and profile to develop and produce films by indigenous artists through her company, Kistikan Pictures. They work on raising awareness from issues on indigenous teen suicide to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Lisa Meeches is one of the most respected producers in the film and television industries. Lisa Meeches has devoted herself to opening the door to media produced by and for indigenous peoples. She is a part of Eagle Vision, a company whose productions range from *Ice Road Truckers* to *Tipi Tales*.

A broadcaster, author and cofounder of the Indigenous Writers' Collective of Manitoba, Rosanna Deerchild has raised awareness on indigenous issues and culture for well over 20 years. Rosanna's book, *Calling Down the Sky*, is the story of her mother's own residential school experience, and her CBC radio show, *Unreserved*, is a radio space for indigenous community, culture and conversation. Rosanna offers listeners a calm, joyous interaction and draws you into the story being shared on a very intimate level.

Madam Speaker, every gain made by women, in whatever field, was always made by pioneering, courageous, determined women who commanded their space and place in a realm more often than not occupied by men. Similarly, Tina, Rosanna and Lisa have done so.

I offer my deepest love and respect to my sisters and say *miigwech* for their storytelling abilities, and I ask everybody to rise and honour them today.
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Oh. Order, please. Order. Order. Order, please. Order, please.

I would remind members in the gallery of no participation in the proceedings of this House.

Order, please.

For the members of the House, I am going to call a five-minute recess, and at that point we will ring the bells and if I have to call a longer recess I will, so please listen for the bells to ring.

The House recessed at 1:45 p.m.

The House resumed at 2:03 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

We will now resume with members' statements.

Winnipeg Nomads Football

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): The Winnipeg Nomads is a North End treasure that makes us all proud, and I'm particularly proud because it's in Burrows.

Nomads football is a tradition that has been passed on from generation to generation. You want to talk about a village that takes care of each other, it's the Nomads, and a big part of this is their field.

They do everything in their power to make sure anyone who wants to play can. Those on low income are assisted financially so that they can afford to get gear. Teams have created—teams have been created so now girls can competitively play as well.

Madam Speaker, the Nomads are on track to become Canada's largest amateur football club. A club—a football club where players from all over—members in this very Chamber have constituents who play at the Nomad's field, but unfortunately, this amazing team is being jeopardized and could lose their field.

I stand today urging any member of this House and anyone listening who believes that the Nomads should keep their field to write and call to their local city councillors and help us save our field.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: I'm not sure about this one, but the honourable member for Transcona.

Fall Sitting Address

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): 'Twas weeks before Christmas, and the House now will end / for some time with our family and friends we will spend / but before we do go, let me tell you a story / what I've seen in this place from an upper-bench Tory.

The Minister of Seniors, Active Living and Health / answers questions in this House with sardonic stealth.

River Heights often asked when the cuts they will stop. / Deficit, red tape, wait times—chop, chop, chop.

Point Douglas filled their seat with a new member, / the same old rhetoric, and it's only December.

PST we won't raise at the doors they did talk. / Then they flipped on that pledge like a fish on a dock.

To reduce greenhouse gasses our green plan will strive, / but the NDP leader wants a Tesla to drive.

And then there's more news from the Official Opposition, / a new chief of staff—what a costly decision.

It's Christmas—make amends. You could always say sorry. / Not the member from Assiniboia—hashtag, the lost Tory.

The member from Fort Garry, when he performs in this show, / likes to rant and to rave and then say yes or no.

With the member from Burrows, due to a technical glitch, / saw the brass ring slip away. Oh, life's a—struggle.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister), it is said, likes to head to the sun, / to read and to work and to also have fun. / But the member from Wolseley, when he heads to the sand, / gifts to all of the taxpayers a cell bill for five grand.

Mr. Premier, on your hike a nasty fall you did take. / It's not funny; or is it? Your humerus you did break.

Madam Speaker, I now will end this year's Christmas rhyme—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Yakimoski: Madam Speaker, may I ask for leave—

Madam Speaker: Oh, is there leave to allow the member to continue with his statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Yakimoski: Thank you, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*—as I ask for leave for some time / to quickly find an end to my Christmas rhyme.

Madam Speaker: Apparently, leave had been denied.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions we have seated in the public gallery from Neepawa Area Collegiate 26 grade 9 students under the direction of Michelle Young, and this group is located in the constituency on the honourable Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to Health Care Impact on Manitobans

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): In the last election this Premier (Mr. Pallister) promised that he would protect front-line services and the people that provide them.

The Premier's failure—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: The Premier's failure to keep his promise is made clear over and over again by the cuts to our health-care system.

The Premier's appearance today at the state of the province address makes it clear that it's going to be full steam ahead with cuts to the health-care services Manitobans depend upon and deserve.

The Premier delights in laying off public employees like those who provide health care. In fact, the Premier called it exciting just a few weeks ago.

Does the Minister of Health, tasked with carrying forward the Premier's broken promise on health care, also get excited by firing health-care professionals?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, of course, Madam Speaker, none of which the member has said was true, but I am excited about today, to recognize my friends in Saskatchewan, who I do consider to be friends, but we don't always celebrate them, particularly on Labour Day and when they're playing the Bombers, but today is Premier Brad Wall's last opportunity in the Saskatchewan Legislature—his nearly 14 years as leader of the Saskatchewan Party. He's overseen significant growth and increased population in Saskatchewan.

He is my fifth cousin, so I'm a little bit biased on this issue, but I do know that all of us in the Legislature want to congratulate Mr. Wall on a successful political career and wish him well in the future and thank him for his service to Canada, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, I know the member for—the Minister of Health might be excited about private MRIs, but New Democrats and Manitobans aren't.

On this last day of this Legislature sitting in 2017—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —the minister is still hiding most of KPMG's health-care report and the rest of his plans to put Manitoban's health at risk in the hope of saving dollars, and Manitobans fear what's next.

* (14:10)

Will it be more deletion notices at Manitoba hospitals, throwing health-care employees and families into chaos, or the closure of more ERs and clinics, making Manitobans travel farther for care, or delaying more long-term health-care beds, personal-care-home beds or even nickel-and-diming Manitoba patients?

Does the Minister of Health also find these cuts to be exciting?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I know why the member for Minto is still so angry: this has been a tough session for him.

After watching the number of kids in care grow, Madam Speaker, we've seen a real plan from the member—the Minister for Families on how to reduce the number of kids in care and get solid homes.

After a scathing—a scathing—auditor's report on the inability for the former government to meet any targets when it came to climate change, we've seen the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) bring forward a real plan to reduce the carbon footprint of Manitoba.

Of course he's angry, because his government couldn't achieve any of those things that we've done in 19 months, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: You know, it's amazing the Minister of Health gets here, driving in from Steinbach, hand on the horn, eyes fixed on the rear-view mirror, the locked KPMG report in a briefcase in his trunk. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: He's plowed ahead with massive cuts for our health-care system in spite of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) clear promise to Manitobans. He's ignored the concerns of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and, most of all, Manitoba patients. He cut front-line services Manitobans depend on. He even threatened them with a health-care tax.

But it's Christmas. Even Ebenezer Scrooge had a change of heart, although it took some dramatic measures over the holidays.

Will the minister reverse his position on health-care cuts before this House reconvenes, or, like Jacob Marley, will his decision not to listen haunt him forever?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from the ghost of NDP past.

And I'm also pleased that he started his question by talking about driving on a road. It's our Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler) who's moving forward on Freedom Road. And it was the Minister of Finance who this session was able to say that, for the first time in a long time, not only was Manitoba on track with its budget, it was actually beating projections and reducing the deficit.

Madam Speaker, of course, he's angry: he could never do any of those things. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Just a reminder to all members, when referring to other members it is by their constituency names or their portfolios.

Changes to Health Care Request to Reverse

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): You know, things are getting—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —a little bit harder in Manitoba. Things are getting a little bit more difficult for families in this province. And I just returned from the state of the Premier address, where we got an update on how things have been going, and there is no economic development plan in place. There is no jobs plan for the future—*[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —of this province. The Premier spoke for over an hour in front of the audience at this—*[interjection]*—

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —private event, and the best that he could come up with was a reintroduction of the Premier's Economic Advisory Council that existed in past governments.

Now, we know that, after 19 months, this government is already out of ideas. Well, here's a new one for them to consider: back off their harmful health-care cuts and get back to the business of serving the people of Manitoba.

Will the Minister of Health do that?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question, but I'm wondering if perhaps he went to the wrong venue, because the Premier's address was all about the fact that after only 19 months things in Manitoba have become a little easier for Manitobans: a little easier because of indexing tax brackets, a little easier by taking the lowest income wage earners off of the tax rolls altogether, a little easier with the promise of new spaces for child care coming on the horizon.

Madam Speaker, the address he heard—I don't know where he heard it—we are focused on what matters to Manitobans in getting better value for their dollars.

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

Mr. Kinew: Things are getting a little bit harder in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

We know that property taxes have gone up as a result of this government's decision to issue a de facto cut for education funding in this province. We know that bus passes are getting more expensive in the city of Winnipeg because of this government's decision to slash funding for municipalities. We know that this government wanted desperately to start charging a health-care tax on Manitoba families until we forced them into a yes-or-no, up-and-down vote on health-care premiums and they were forced to back off that plan.

Madam Speaker: I'm having considerable difficulty hearing and we have a lot of guests in the gallery, and I'm asking for everybody's co-operation.

I know it's the last day of session and everybody's excited about Christmas and everything like that, but I think it's important that we still have business to do here, and I would ask everybody to show respect for each other. Let's have some civility in this Chamber so that questions could be properly heard, answers could be properly heard and that we are all acting in the best interests that we were elected here to do by our constituents.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation. I'm sure everybody wants to make the best impression they can for the guests in the gallery, particularly all the students that are here.

And the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition still has about 20 seconds.

Mr. Kinew: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I appreciate that interjection.

You know that the government understands the damage that their health-care cuts are causing here in Manitoba because every time we call them to account on it all their backbenchers start to heckling. They know how upset their constituents are about this and they know that this government is offside with the people of Manitoba.

So will the Minister of Health cancel his plan for cuts and commit to doing something they haven't done in 19 months so far: listening to the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, it would almost appear like the Leader of the Opposition has had an Ebenezer Scrooge-like conversion to a sudden interest in affordability for Manitobans. Well, Manitobans understand that this government

has done more to put the focus on affordability for Manitobans in 19 months than that former government did in 17 years.

Madam Speaker, if he's standing for affordability, it means that he is standing with this government and its focus on leaving more of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars in their own pockets.

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

Mr. Kinew: What the Minister of Finance is saying is simply not true. The overall net tax burden on Manitobans is higher now, under this government, than it ever was under the NDP, and that's because they've consistently downloaded their cuts onto other levels of government, be they municipalities, school divisions, regional health authorities, all of whom are going back to Manitobans and asking them for more and more of their hard-earned and—money.

The worst of all, though, is that at a time when we should be encouraging Manitobans to switch to green energy, they are dead set on locking in 7.9 per cent increases to hydro each and every year, meaning that those impacts will be compounded year after year after year.

If they're not going to back off this plan to increase hydro rates, why won't they at least ensure that health care remains strong and back off this harmful plan for cuts?

Madam Speaker: I'm just going to issue a caution to all members that when using the language, not true, that it is coming very close to the line of being unparliamentary because, by inference, people are being accused of lying, and as everybody knows that is not acceptable language for this House. It is not parliamentary, so I would encourage everybody to watch their language very, very carefully.

* (14:20)

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, Manitobans know that, despite the jargon today, the former NDP was no friend of Manitoba taxpayers. They were no friend of poor-income earners. They raised the PST from 7 to 8 per cent. They doubled the debt. They left Manitobans saddled with enormous debt.

Today, the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Pallister) announced an economic development blueprint with a six-month mandate to bring back a complete refresh on how we grow the economy, led by Dave Angus and Barb Gamey. And we were very pleased to be at the announcement today when the Premier

said it, if they care about affordability, if they care about the economy, why won't they get on board and support this government.

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

Changes to Health Care Government Plan

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Why did it take them 19 months to figure out that they needed an economic development plan?

Why don't they have labour at the table? And if they want to pursue economic development, why are they continuously attacking and undermining Manitoba Hydro, which is an important generator of economic growth in our province?

But perhaps the most damaging course of action that this government has taken so far is their repeated attacks to the health services that Manitobans rely on so that they can stay healthy at home or at least healthy close to home.

They have reduced physiotherapy services. They have issued a plan to close emergency rooms in the province. They are shutting clinics, and they have rural EMS stations in their targets next.

Will the Minister of Health take the winter break and the intervening break between sessions to reconsider this plan and come back in the spring with a new plan that doesn't involve cutting health care?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I don't know what kind of break the member is going to be getting, Madam Speaker, maybe he'll be getting in a Tesla and driving around.

But I am shocked that there's a New Democrat in this House—in this House, Madam Speaker—who could actually utter the word hydro and not turn crimson red in this Christmas season. After what they did to Hydro: building a hydro line on the longest possible route, wrapping all around the province, longer than Santa's sleigh ride around the province. And Manitobans have to pay for it. He should be ashamed and should never utter the word hydro out of a New Democrat mouth again.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, it's no surprise that the Minister of Health wants to shout around, that he wants to

recycle the member from Minto's Christmas material, that he wants to cry shame across the aisle, because he knows that his cuts to health care are indefensible. And that's why he's trying to change the subject.

We know that these cuts are short-sighted. We know that these cuts to physiotherapy—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —will only cost our health-care system more in the long run. We know that as they remove health-care services from communities that those communities will be impacted both in the medium and in the long term. And finally, we know that this wholesale gutting of the health-care system in Manitoba will take a generation to fix. Again, short-sighted cuts.

Will the Minister take the holiday break to reconsider and come back with a new plan that actually sees them invest in keeping people healthy at home and backing off their harmful plan for health-care cuts?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the member opposite needs Rudolph to guide his questions.

You know, he asked about Hydro in his last question, and then he's offended that I actually refer back to Hydro. I guess he felt the shame that he should have felt when he actually asked it, Madam Speaker.

When it comes to health care that is a government, the former government—for 17 years wait times grew and grew and grew every year. It was like the Christmas present that they gave to Manitobas: CIHI would report every December, and it was worse every year. That was their gift to Manitobans.

Finally we have a good report that wait times are going in the right direction, and that member has nothing good to say about it. Manitobans know them for their record, and they won't forget as quickly as the leader wishes they would, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Minister of Health wants to go shout around, grew and grew and grew. I hope, like the evil villain in *Despicable Me*, that he actually goes from a negative to positive and, instead of continuing this harmful plan for cuts that, like Gru, he decides to remake himself as a champion for the people of Manitoba and returns with a new plan that

will return physiotherapy to outpatient patients who don't have private insurance, who will commit to reinvesting in community health and keeping people healthy close to home, that will make real investments in health care that Manitobans can be proud of for the long term. And, instead, back off this harmful plan for cuts and bring back a real plan for health care in Manitoba that everyone in our province can be proud of.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, clearly the member has seen the movie, Madam Speaker, and he'll remember that Gru in *Despicable Me* was trying to steal the moon.

Now, the NDP didn't have that big of a plan to steal the moon, but they were trying to steal every penny out of Manitoban's pockets, Madam Speaker, just like the Grinch. Just like the Grinch before he had his conversion, they swooped down on Manitobans, went to the home, tried to take everything out of the stockings, raised the PST—every penny.

Now member—the—maybe the member opposite's had a conversion like the Grinch. Maybe his heart has grown three sizes too big instead of three sizes too small, Madam Speaker. I hope and I wish that that is what he gets for Christmas.

Women's Health Care Access to Services

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The Pallister government is more concerned about money than women's health care here in Manitoba. They've made this clear over and over again by cutting critical programs that support women's health care.

At the Women's Hospital, new mothers are facing increasing difficulty accessing breastfeeding support because lactation consultants have been cut. The Mature Women's Centre, which served 5,000 women last year, has been closed. We heard from this minister that they are not interested in fully supporting Mifegymiso after Health Canada eased restrictions on the abortion pill.

These millions in cuts are on—not only failing Manitoba women, they are sending a strong message that this Pallister government is not interested in advancing gender equity.

Will the Minister of Health reverse course and commit to supporting women's access to health care here in Manitoba?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I

thank the member for the question, although I don't agree with the contents of the question.

When it comes to health care—when somebody goes to an ER, when somebody calls for an ambulance, that is not gender specific, Madam Speaker. Those who are going into an emergency room, whether they be women or men, need service, and they need it in a timely fashion. That is why investing, in the ways that we have, to ensure that our ERs are going to have a reduced wait time, there's early results that those wait times are going down. We're pleased by that, but we know there's more work. That will help all Manitobans, whether they are women or men.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Access to health care is a right that every woman should enjoy here in Manitoba, but in today's sad reality the Pallister government has created, this is simply not true. Women and girls in Manitoba do not have adequate access to health care, nor do we have full control over our reproductive health.

While other provinces have committed to covering—fully covering the abortion pill, the Pallister government has failed to expand accessibility to the abortion pill and makes women outside Winnipeg and Brandon pay for it, further marginalizing women in rural Manitoba, in First Nations and in isolated communities.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or this minister commit to covering the abortion pill fully and robustly so that all women in Manitoba have access to it?

Mr. Goertzen: We certainly continue to make women's health a priority, in fact, a priority of health for all Manitobans, regardless of where they live, regardless of who they are, Madam Speaker.

* (14:30)

We also know—and I was concerned when I heard yesterday about the delays of the Women's Hospital. We obviously would like to see that project completed more quickly. We know that, under the former government, there were challenges when it was launched, Madam Speaker. In fact, it was reported in CBC that one of the reasons for the delay was that the former government, the NDP, postponed the call for requests to have the—have that centre built.

So while the member opposite speaks about being concerned about women's health, we've seen different actions when they were in government, Madam Speaker.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Contrary to the—what the Minister of Health is saying, this Pallister government has made it perfectly clear to women that when it comes to our reproductive health care, they are simply not interested in making our health a priority here in Manitoba.

Closing the Mature Women's Centre will create a bigger burden on our health-care system, as women will not be able to access the services that keep them out of significantly more expensive operating rooms. According to the doctor that ran the mature women's health centre it is, and I quote, an attack on women's health.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or this minister stop their attacks on our health and reverse these harmful cuts?

Mr. Goertzen: As I mentioned in the last question, or the answer to the last question, Madam Speaker, I was disappointed to learn that the former government had delayed the request for proposals, the tendering on the Women's Hospital, and that's an unfortunate—that that project will be delayed. There are a number of different reasons, but that was certainly one of them.

Madam Speaker, we have been pleased, as a government, to invest in a number of different areas when it comes to women's health, not the least of which is digital mammography, where we've invested \$15 million in that particular program and \$2.3 million on an annual basis for operating.

Interesting the member opposite decided to vote against that investment. I'm not sure why she wouldn't want to support that important issue of women's health, Madam Speaker.

New Fishery Regulations Industry Consultations

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, this morning I was honoured to join a meeting of the Winnipeg—or Lake Winnipeg Co-Management Board. The fishers in that room collectively have over 1,000 years of experience fishing, and they asked me to read the following resolution on their behalf into the official record: Whereas

new fishery regulations have been implemented without industry input and full consultation, and whereas the Lake Winnipeg Co-Management Board represents approximately 80 per cent of the Manitoba commercial fishery, therefore be it resolved that this board require implementation be suspended pending proper consultation.

I would invite the Premier to voice his response to Manitoba's fishing communities.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Madam Speaker, I want to welcome the fishers that are here today and I also—I'm hearing updates from the conference that is going on right now. My officials are there.

We did broad consultations with fishers right from northern Manitoba all the way down to the south basin, and we consulted broadly about moving towards a open marketing system.

We certainly do not support the bullying practices of the monopoly of Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and on behalf of the corporation who sent out a notice to all of the fishers in Manitoba threatening to withhold their final payments if they did not sign a five-year contract with them, I say to them I find those—the bullying tactics of that monopoly very despicable.

I know members opposite support those despicable bullying tactics, but we do not.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, Madam Speaker, I would invite the minister to take her Premier along and sit down face to face with members of the Lake Winnipeg Co-Management Board. That is what they have been asking for. Their voices are not being heard, and this government's heavy-handed approach to their industry, putting their very livelihoods at risk, is simply unacceptable.

Fishers are voting on their own. Over 90 per cent of them have now signed long-term contracts with the very same corporation that, for ideological reasons, only this government is set out to destroy.

Will the minister commit today to sit down with the fishers face to face, hear their concerns, and do her best to address them?

Ms. Squires: Madam Speaker, I'd like to table this letter that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation had sent out to all the fishers that

this member opposite refers to, where they are threatening to withhold their final payments and offer—and threatening to charge 25 per cent higher prices to fishers who do not sign with the monopoly.

Those are bullying tactics that are well used among members opposite. That is their approach to marketing. Our approach is to open up the marketing. Manitoba fishers deserve more than bullying tactics, and we're going to deliver on offering them more for their fish.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: I, in turn, would like to table a copy of the official resolution that the fishers passed this morning, which the minister could read and give, hopefully, a copy to the Premier (Mr. Pallister).

The minister knows full well that FFMC is a federal Crown corporation. She should be working with the feds to improve practices in conjunction with what the fishers want. Long-time fisher—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer:—Robert Kristjanson today informed me that several semi-truck loads of Manitoba fish have already crossed the Canada-US border to be processed in the United States. This government's policies are literally exporting jobs from Manitoba.

Will the minister please do the right thing and promise to sit down with the fishers one on one, hear their concerns and do her best to make a better future for them, not a worse one?

Ms. Squires: Well, Madam Speaker, we consulted broadly with fishers, including constituents from the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin), who had told us that they were ordered by Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to dump 22,000 pounds of whitefish back in the lake because their offices were closed to those species of fish.

We do not believe that our fishers in this province are getting fair value for their product. We want to open up the market so that they have more buyers and greater value for their product.

And I know members opposite, they're used to having scathing reports from the federal—or from the Auditor General, but here's three scathing reports from the federal Auditor General on the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. They may get behind that kind of business practice, but we do not.

Changes to Health Services Impact on Patient Care

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, yesterday we learned after the closure of the Victoria hospital emergency room in October, a woman living nearby had to go to the Grace emergency. Because of the long distance, she died before she could be helped.

Today, I mention the death of a man from St. Theresa Point in November. It is possible that a contributing factor to his death was the under-resourcing of Lifeflight, leaving it with fewer pilots than it should have.

While the government is playing bumper cars and musical chairs with health professionals, Manitobans are dying.

Will the Premier call a pause to his reckless cuts to restore some stability, trust and hope to health care in Manitoba?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, these sort of questions are unbecoming of any member of the Legislature. The member opposite is speculating on a medical outcome on the floor of the House—not provided me any information.

Yesterday he did the same thing and said that something might have happened or this could be, wasn't able to provide information. Later, I understand he provided information to my office which was then checked by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and the facts, not surprisingly, were not as the member had presented, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Wait for the full report.

Jan Wold *[phonetic]*, who is in the gallery today, needs intravenous immunoglobulin once a month. She has very difficult veins. The Premier has cut the IV team at the Health Sciences Centre, so the nurses now are less experienced and having more difficulty putting in IVs on difficult patients like Jan.

More than this, it is very painful to have multiple pokes and bruises because the Premier has cut out the use of local anesthetics to save money. This, quite frankly, is barbaric, and it reduces care to the lowest common denominator rather than the

aim-higher approach the Premier (Mr. Pallister) had promised.

Will the Premier restore the use of local anesthetics—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, I can't speak to the specific case that he references because I've not been presented with the facts specifically.

* (14:40)

I do know that when it comes to peripheral IV insertion, Madam Speaker, that at the Health Sciences Centre, which I think where the member is referencing, duty nurses are trained to do peripheral IV insertion, and in fact, as a result of ensuring that they're doing the IV, it'll now be a 24-hour service where it wasn't a 24-hour service before.

When it comes to the anesthesia, there's been no change in the policy.

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

CancerCare Manitoba KPMG Report

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, in the government's accountant-run approach to health care, the KPMG comments, which I table, on CancerCare Manitoba are ignorant and wrong. CancerCare Manitoba has the best integrated approach to specialist service delivery in the province, including epidemiology, prevention of cancer as well as superb diagnostic and treatment services, a province-wide network of 15 outreach centres connected by shared electronic records and high-quality standardized protocol.

I ask the minister: Will he fact-check the incorrect statements made by KPMG on CancerCare Manitoba before making any changes in its situation?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I've fact-checked the member opposite. He was asking questions yesterday on EMS in Grandview and wondering why we were proceeding with the Reg Toews report.

On May 24th in this House, so hardly a year ago, the member stood up and said: There was an excellent review conducted by Reg Toews of Manitoba's EMS services with a report released three years ago in 2013. Very few of the recommendations have been fully implemented to date. Urgent action

is needed. As Liberals, we will be watching the new government carefully and we'll be pressing for action. Paramedics of Manitoba deserve no less.

That's what he said a year ago. If he wants to be a weather vane and twist in the wind, he can do that; we'll stand on principle, Madam Speaker.

Federal Legalization of Cannabis Health and Safety Considerations

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): I'm kind of getting sick and tired of this doom and gloom, so how about for a good question? So, the clouds may be overhead of us this afternoon, but it's always beautiful blue skies above Manitoba, and to be part of a government that believes in a bright, 'prostous' future for all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, the issues relating to legalization, regulation and taxation of cannabis are complex. Public safety remains a top priority for the government of Manitoba. This means eliminating the illicit market and protecting our youth.

Next week, Finance ministers will be meeting in Ottawa and the federal government will be seeking a formal agreement on cannabis taxation.

Can the Minister of Finance update this House on how he will advocate the best interests for Manitobans? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, Manitobans know that the federal Liberal government is legalizing cannabis. Our government remains focused on safety. We need to keep our children safe. We need to keep our roads safe. We need to—Manitobans to understand the clear dangers.

As it pertains to the federal government's proposal to share excise tax at 50-50, our Premier has been clear and Manitoba will continue to make clear that it is primarily the provinces who have all the responsibility and the risks when it comes to cannabis legalization.

We are responsible for health care, for mental health care, for education, for justice issues, roadside safety. Madam Speaker, the federal government needs to recognize this. The federal government needs to direct its own revenues to cannabis-related health and enforcement. We will be standing up for Manitoba interests.

**Indigenous Athletes
Indigenous Games Funding**

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): This government says one thing and does another. On Monday, the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage refused to invest in a new recreational complex for south Winnipeg while claiming to support Manitoba sports.

This government has also refused to live up to that claim by refusing to help fund the 2020 North American Indigenous Games.

Why has this government refused to fund an opportunity that would create jobs, promote indigenous athletes and draw thousands of tourists to Manitoba?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Thank you to the member opposite.

I would like to take this moment and this opportunity to wish everyone in the Chamber and everyone in the building today a merry Christmas as we prepare for the Christmas break. Also to your families and to all of your friends, I'd like to extend that Christmas wish and also just remind you that it is the spirit of giving right now, and if you have a charity that you would like to donate to, I would encourage you to do that.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Let's get back to focus and talk about the North American Indigenous Games.

We know what happens when our province holds major sporting events like the Canada Summer Games, pan app–Pan American Games: it creates jobs, it creates tourism, and it shines a spotlight on Manitoba and Manitoba athletes.

As a former athlete, a co-ordinator and a volunteer for the North American games, this experience will have a profound effect on our young people.

Will this government prove its support for Manitoba sports and help fund the 2020 North American Indigenous Games?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you again to the member opposite.

I'm absolutely thrilled to let the House know today that we actually have four Manitoba teams participating in the Roar of the Rings in Ottawa, and I certainly encourage all of the members to watch the

playoffs this weekend. It's going to be a very exciting competition. And hopefully we will have two teams, one Manitoba women's team and one Manitoba male team, participating in the Olympics this year.

So I'm very proud of that and just encourage everybody to get out there and to hurry hard.

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

Ms. Lathlin: Okay, third time: North American Indigenous Games.

Five of the truth and reconciliation calls to action, from No. 87 to No. 91, draw a direct connection between sport and reconciliation. Call to action No. 88 specifically calls upon all levels of government, I quote, "to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games", end quote.

Madam Speaker, what an incredible opportunity to entirely fulfill a TRC call to action. Will they hear the call, or are they ready—or are they already out of the game?

Mrs. Cox: Thank you, again, to the member opposite.

I would like to just speak in the House today about the proud relationship—or, the relationship that we have developed with the indigenous people. Our government has engaged with indigenous leaders more than members opposite ever have in the 17 years that they were in government.

In 17 years, the members opposite, they failed to even transfer one Treaty Land Entitlement land transfer. Our government has done more than they have done in the last 19 months, and we will move forward, Madam Speaker. Where they have failed, we will make sure that we move forward and we have success.

Madam Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

I would remind all honourable members, that once it's been announced that there is a ruling for the House, that members are to stay seated.

* (14:50)

During debate on second readings on Thursday, November 30th, 2017, the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) rose on a point of order regarding comments made by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) during debate.

The member for Assiniboia indicated that the member for St. Johns used, and I quote, a very serious term with very serious implications—end quote—and that the term used was allegedly defamatory in nature.

The Deputy Speaker took the matter under advisement.

I reviewed the Hansard transcript from that afternoon. The member from St. Johns's comments were made in reference to a previous point of order raised by the member for Assiniboia which was not ruled as a valid point of order.

The member for Assiniboia mentioned that, in previous instances, words of similar magnitude were spoken, and members have apologized for any misrepresentation.

While some comments made by both members that afternoon could be perceived as disrespectful, I do not find them to be unparliamentary in that context.

The Chair has latitude when it comes to ruling on language to consider the context in which those words were used. O'Brien and Bosc's House of Commons Procedure and Practice states on page 619, and I quote, the codification of unparliamentary language has proved impractical, as it is the context in which words of phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not they should be withdrawn. End quote.

In consideration of these factors, I would rule that there is no point of order. I understand that there are issues debated in this House which members feel strongly about, and sometimes they take issue with words spoken in debate. Nevertheless, as I have noted in a ruling I delivered on November 27th, it is not appropriate for divergent opinions to lead to accusations and the exchange of harsh words, and I would like all members to be mindful of their words and actions in this place.

I thank members for their attention to these words and to this ruling.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: And I have a statement for the House as well.

As the House is expected to adjourn later today for our winter break, and as Youth Parliament will be using the Chamber later this month, I would encourage all honourable members to remove the contents of their desk today.

I would further encourage members to recycle as much of the material as possible. The blue bins here in the Chamber are designated for recycling of Hansard only. Any other material you would like to recycle may be placed in the larger recycling containers in the message rooms located just outside the Chamber.

Thank you.

PETITIONS

Access to Health Care

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients,

such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

This petition has been signed by Ainsley Cloutier, Caintlin Allan, Oliver Hanlon and many other Manitobans.

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

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:

Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Allum: (2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line, failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

And this petition was signed by Kenneth Schwartz, Ophelia AVECILLA, Ken Werbish and many other fine Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units and an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for a public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) Urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba health facilities.

And this petition is been signed by many Manitobans.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

* (15:00)

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

**Corydon Primary Care Clinic and
Misericordia Urgent Care Centre**

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislature.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The current patients of the River Heights Corydon Primary Care Clinic, located at 1001 Corydon Avenue, and local residents are very concerned and dismayed with the plans to move and merge this incredibly important, centrally located clinic to Plaza Drive in St. Vital.

The clinic is valued for its accessibility, superb staff and quality service. Removing the clinic from this area will have a negative impact with serious, far-reaching, negative repercussions which would outweigh any theoretical monetary savings that may result from its relocation.

This clinic is on a major bus route, within walking distance for area residents and is easily accessible for the elderly, as there are many non-congested routes for Handi-Transit, care workers and taxi services to pick up and drop off patients.

The proposed Plaza Drive location in St. Vital has a lack of any direct or consistent access by public transportation, is typically compounded by massive, ever-present traffic congestion and will result in the payment of costly taxi fees for people on limited incomes.

This move, combined with the closure of central Misericordia Urgent Care, which serviced the needs of downtown, Wolseley, River Heights, Fort Rouge, Spence neighbourhood and Polo Park, extremely downgrades access to the health-care system in areas populated by many seniors and others with limited means.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to cancel plans to close the Corydon Primary Care Clinic.

(2) To urge the provincial government to reopen the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre.

Signed by Liam Karp, Artemis Schroedter and Elliot Rhodes and many more.

Access to Health Care

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

This petition was signed by many, 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) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

This petition is signed by Brenda Empey, Joy Soder, Paulo Santin and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with

front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

* (15:10)

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba health facilities.

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units and an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) These health cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had at its main—has had as its main focus the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

Signed by R. Chastko, A. Creaser and C. Creaser and many more Manitobans.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Direct cuts to front-line health-care services, including the closure of emergency departments, intensive-care units, an urgent-care centre and more, are occurring across the province.

(2) The health-care cuts—sorry—these health-care cuts will drastically reduce the ability of Manitobans to access timely, quality health-care services.

(3) The provincial government made these decisions unilaterally, failing to consult with front-line health-care professionals who provide direct care to patients.

(4) The provincial government has had its main focus on the bottom line and failed to present a clear and detailed plan for the public health-care system that will actually improve and optimize patient care for Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will improve—sorry—that will provide a direct benefit to patients, such as: increasing access to primary care, the development of a provincial health human resource plan, increasing publicly funded personal-care homes across Manitoba and increasing the efficiencies of diagnostic testing in Manitoba's health facilities.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I have a matter of urgent public importance.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a matter of urgent public importance.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, I believe you have the written—oh. Oh.

I move, seconded by the member from The Maples—it's called The Maples—that, in accordance with rule 38—yes, I need that—that, in accordance with rule 38(1), the 'regularly' scheduled business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the refusal of the provincial government to agree that the government—or that the provincial government agree to take immediate action to enhance democracy in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable member for Assiniboia, I should remind all members that under rule thirty-two—38(2) the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member from the other recognized parties in the House are allowed not more than 10 minutes to explain the urgency of debating the matter immediately.

As stated in Beauchesne's citation 390, urgency in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not of the subject matter of the motion. In their remarks, members should focus exclusively on whether or not there's urgency of debate, and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate will enable the House to consider the matter early enough to ensure that the public interest will not suffer.

Mr. Fletcher: The urgency of this is quite evident. One just needs to look at Hansard. However, specifically, we have a boundary review commission coming forward where the boundaries are going to be reviewed. There's legislation I introduced that would reduce the number of seats in the Legislature. It would be very helpful, I think, for Manitoba democracy to reduce the number MLAs and hopefully improve the competition for this place—*[interjection]*

And, Madam Speaker, as the government members are heckling is the exact reason—another reason why this place needs—we want to improve

democracy and the heckling is not a example. And even yesterday, when the government was counting down you remember the—nine, eight, you know, to an opposition member who is simply asking a question, you know, or making a statement. That's not really respectful nor is it using unparliamentary language.

Madam Speaker, before I get into all my remarks in the 11 minutes that I have, or 10, eight minutes, I just want to refer to some documents which are on public record.

The first document is the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, edition two hundred—or edition 2000, pages 1 to 1,172; the treatise on the law, privileges, proceedings and the usage of parliament, Thomas May, pages 1 to 906; the next reference is Constitutional and Administrative Law by Phillips, third edition, pages 1 to 855; Thomas May, the legal treatise—this is a really interesting one—between pages 1 to 898. I will be referring to—and I have all these books right in front of me for those who will be reading this—'Ernstin' May: Parliamentary Practice, 24th Edition, pages 1 to 1,097. I'll be referring to Parliamentary Privilege, pages 1 to 252. I'll be referring pages 1 to 172 in the classic reprint series of the Federal Government in Canada.

* (15:20)

The next one is Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, Maingot, QC. That is well-represented and I'll be referring to items between pages 1 and 290.

The procedure of the House of Commons, volume 3, pages 1 to 170, the Selected Decisions of Peter Milliken, pages 1 to 1,020. I will be referring to Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, a different edition, pages 1 to 405. I will be referring to the selected decisions of John Fraser, pages 1 to 352. I will be referring to—and, hopefully, there'll be time to refer to all these—I will be referring to a second edition. This is part 2, so pages 1 to 653 in the second volume of John Fraser's edition. I will also be referring to Parliamentary Procedure and Practice With an Introductory Account of the Origin and Growth of Parliamentary Institutions in the Dominion of Canada, published 1884. I'll be referring to The Procedure of the House of Commons, a study in history and presence, eight—1960, 1988.

I will be referring the occasional papers on parliamentary government, No. 28, February 2005. I'll be referring to a forum on parliamentary form,

dated the year 2004. I'll be referring to the Ethics, Responsibility, Accountability: an Action Plan for Democratic Reform, 2004. I will be referring to Parliamentary Procedure and Practice in the Dominion of Canada, 1916.

Madam Speaker, again, on the urgency of this—of improving democracy in Manitoba, I will be referring to the Canadian 'electoral' system, published by—the authors are Robson, James, Spano and Sebastian. And that's a very good review. That's 2008.

Another—well, this is from a Manitoban, Tom Axworthy, the brother of Lloyd Axworthy. And I actually had the pleasure of working with him on a issue on creating democracy abroad. I was the Minister for State for Democratic Reform and, anyway, he's a great guy. Everything Old is New Again: Observations on Parliamentary Reform, that's a recent book, relatively recent.

The number of House of Commons—the Members of the House of Commons, and their roles, that's 2011 by Barnes.

Madam Speaker, to make my case, I've already alluded to Hansard, but we probably should refer to Question Period in the Canadian Parliament and Other Legislatures. Yes, that's a really good one. It's the Library of Parliament, 2011. And, again, these can be found at my office or my 'consit' office or online.

I—like to continue on: party discipline and parliamentary policies; the delegation of accountability in parliamentary democracies; Strengthening Parliamentary Scrutiny of Estimates and Supply, of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, 2012. Madam Speaker, we really have to improve our committee process.

And, Madam Speaker, I only have a moment left. If there was a guy named, you know, we'll just say Costa, who would be spending the next three months on a tropical beach, I would recommend all these readings. But perhaps first Costa would—should start out with introduction to democracy. His grandkids probably have that in their grade 5 textbook. But if Costa got through that and the other material suggested, he can read about a great Conservative, great Tory, Edmund Burke.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on the matter of urgent public importance.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Just briefly, I certainly appreciate the member bringing forward the matter of urgent public importance. Clearly, in his mind, he views this as an important discussion to have today. I don't think that's our view from this side of the House. We do have some important legislation we would like to debate today in the name of, quite frankly, Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act, and certainly it's something they—the federal government has signalled.

We, as a province, a government, have to respond to the rules. We have to put some rules around the use of cannabis in place and we want to have the opportunity to debate this important legislation in the House, and that's certainly our government's proposal today.

The member opposite talks about respect, and I think it would be respectful that no one holds up the business of the Chamber, and certainly we've seen that happen in a number of cases, and hopefully they—all members would be respectful and we can move the agenda forward in the House.

I know the member's raised the issues around rules, and certainly the rules committee will be meeting in the near future and we look forward to having a robust discussion about potential changes in the rules.

Madam Speaker, I just don't think the motion brought forward by the member today is a matter of urgent public importance.

Madam Speaker: Is there any comment from the official opposition?

I thank the honourable members for their advice to the Chair on the motion proposed by the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher). The notice required by rule 38(1) was provided. Under our rules and practices, the subject matter requiring urgent consideration must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention. There must also be no other reasonable opportunities to raise the matter.

I have listened very carefully to the arguments put forward. Although the subject matter is one that some Manitobans could be concerned with, I do not believe the public interest will suffer if the issue

is not debated today. I would also note that there are other opportunities available to raise concerns regarding this issue.

With the greatest of respect, I therefore rule the motion out of order as a matter of urgent public importance.

The House will now—yes, the House will now proceed to grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): On House business.

Madam Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Cullen: I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting on December 19th, 2017 will also consider the Auditor General's Report, Follow-up of Recommendations, dated March 2017, Accounts and Financial Statements.

* (15:30)

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting on December 19th, 2017, will also consider the Auditor General's Report, Follow-Up of Recommendations, dated March 2017, Accounts and Financial Statements.

Mr. Cullen: Would you call Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 11—The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended)

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 11 this afternoon. So we will move to Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended).

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen), that Bill 11, The Safe and

Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, that Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm pleased to rise in the House today and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act.

Madam Speaker, the federal government's decision to legalize recreational cannabis in our country is a historic public policy change that will directly impact many generations of Manitobans.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

As a province, we have many concerns about the federal government's approach to this, and its arbitrary deadline of July 2018 has put significant pressure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on law enforcement and other agencies that are concerned about the public health and safety of Manitobans and indeed of all Canadians.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police have said that homegrown cannabis would be an incredible enforcement challenge, adding that it would be, and I quote, impossible for police to be ready in time for the federal deadline of July of 2018. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their report to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health states that home cultivation would result in diversions to the black market and would, I quote, place a greater demand on police resources, including increased calls for service and investigations.

The Canadian Medical Association also expressed concerns about youth consumption between the ages of—certainly under 25.

They reported that the harms the drug can cause to the developing brain are significant.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans have also expressed similar concerns about public health and safety. In a recent survey commissioned by the Liquor and Gaming Authority, almost 32 per cent of madam-Manitobans cited rules to prevent underage consumption and purchase of cannabis as top public safety priorities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 67 per cent of Manitobans who completed our online prebudget survey said that getting criminal gangs out of the cannabis business is important, and, Madam Speaker, we're listening to the experts and we're listening to Manitobans.

That's why our government has put public health and safety first with our phased-in approach to the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis in Canada. The first phase was the passage of The Cannabis Harm Prevention Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which implements measures to get high drivers off our roads, keep cannabis out of schools and protect Manitobans from second-hand cannabis smoke. The second phase of our approach deals with the safe and responsible retail and distribution of legalized cannabis. The third phase, which will come in the next legislative sitting, will deal with additional road safety sanctions and other outstanding concerns like taxation and so on.

Madam Speaker, the second phase of our approach is what we are here to discuss, and I'm proud to tell this House that Bill 11, The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act, responds to the concerns of the people of Manitoba and experts on the front lines. It will help keep cannabis out of the hands of our kids, away from the black market, by establishing a minimum age of 19, banning home cultivation and establishing a hybrid retail and distribution model that empowers municipalities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know there has been a great deal of discussion and debate about the appropriate minimum age for cannabis. The Canadian Medical Association says 25 would be an ideal age, and MADD Winnipeg had said 22, but while we agree that cannabis consumption between 18 and 25 is harmful to the developing brain, we also recognize that setting a high minimum age will drive young people into the black market. By setting the minimum age at 19, Bill 11 finds the right balance between protecting our youth and eliminating the black market for cannabis.

The Manitoba School Boards Association has assured Manitobans that setting 19 as the minimum age will also help keep cannabis out of schools. According to their president, Ken Cameron, it will ensure, and I quote, safe and healthy school communities where students can continue to grow and learn through to graduation, end quote.

Madam Speaker—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, sorry—keeping cannabis out of the hands of our youth and away from the black market is also why we chose to prohibit home cultivation of cannabis. Prohibiting home cultivation is supported by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, MADD Canada, the Manitoba Real Estate Association and many others. They support this decision because they know that home cultivation will result in increased access to cannabis by youth and greater risk of the product being diverted into the black market. It's simply just not worth the risk.

In addition to these important restrictions, Bill 11 also establishes a hybrid retail and distribution model that will protect the health and safety of Manitobans.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that other provinces have chosen to sell cannabis out of government-owned Crown corporations with a limited retail network. In Ontario, there will be 40 government-owned cannabis stores next year, compared to 660 government-owned liquor stores. Each province will handle this challenge differently, but we believe that strictly limiting the retail network over the long term will drive too many Manitobans into the black market. Manitoba is at the forefront of this issue, and we are providing the leadership required to strike the right balance.

That's why we are taking a responsible approach that will eventually ensure a wide retail network with privately owned stores while protecting our youth with strong regulation. Under the hybrid model established in Bill 11, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all cannabis stores will have to purchase their inventory from the Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries Corporation, which will ensure compliance with federal Health Canada rules and requirements.

Each cannabis store, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will also require an agreement and a licence in order to operate. And after securing an agreement with the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen) or the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation, a cannabis store can apply for a retail licence from the liquor, gaming and

cannabis authority, which will establish training and education, including proper age verification. The liquor and gaming and cannabis authority's licensing process will also protect our children by prohibiting youth under 19 from entering a store where cannabis products are displayed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our hybrid distribution and retail model is the best of both worlds. The private sector will do what it does best in providing choice, service and competitive pricing, and the public sector will do what it does best by providing public protection through regulation, oversight and licensing.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to discuss fair say for municipalities. Our government knows that municipalities are frustrated by the rushed timeline and significant enforcement challenges posed by the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis. We are also frustrated. But just as we're taking meaningful action to protect Manitobans, we believe that municipalities should be empowered to protect their communities.

*(15:40)

The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act respects the authority of municipalities to establish zoning bylaws for retail cannabis stores. The legalization gives them the further ability to hold a community option plebiscite at any time over the next four years.

Madam Speaker, our government is proud to have the support of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities for these provisions of the bill. We will also work with them and with communities across this great province of ours as we manage this significant public policy change together.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to say that our government is listening to the people of Manitoba and experts on the front lines, and I hope that all members of the House will do the same. I ask them all to join our government in protecting the public health and safety of Manitobans for generations to come, and I ask all members of this House to support Bill 11.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition

critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds. Time for questions.

The honourable member for St. Paul–St. Johns.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): One—*[interjection]*—sorry, sorry.

Could the minister explain what efforts the government has planned to put in place for anti-gang and prevention programs for youth?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank the member for the question. And, certainly, we believe that we've taken a responsible approach and we've always looked at the public health and safety of Manitobans when the federal government announced its decision to legalize cannabis in our country.

We have worked with law enforcement. We know that the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police have some concerns about the deadline that has been arbitrarily set by the federal government. We agree with them. We want to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the public health and safety of all Manitobans, and we will continue to work with law enforcement in those areas.

Ms. Fontaine: Would the minister be so kind as to tell us what type of consultations were done with municipalities on the retail selling of cannabis before the bill was drafted up and introduced into the House?

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank you very much, Madam—or Mr. Deputy Speaker, sorry.

I want to thank the member for the question, and we did a very robust consultation prior to—it was a part of our prebudget consultation with all Manitobans. We reached out, gave everyone the opportunity to fill out our online survey. From that, we were able to reach out to more than 60,000 Manitobans, one of the most robust public consultation processes that has ever taken place in the history of Manitoba. And, indeed, those municipalities had the chance to be there as well and to participate in that.

I know at our—at AMM, we had very robust discussions with members of AMM—

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

Ms. Fontaine: Would the minister tell the House if she plans on providing more resources to municipalities for enforcement and mental health and addiction services?

Mrs. Stefanson: I thank the member for the question, and it's an important one.

The public education process of this to ensure the safety of all Canadians with this decision is very important. We have spoken to the federal government, and we need to ensure people in the municipalities are safe as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's why we have called on the federal government to indicate what their plans are with respect to educating Canadians on some of the harms associated with, in particular, young people using cannabis. We will continue to work with municipalities. We will work with the federal government to ensure that we keep Manitobans safe.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, does the minister believe that marijuana is more harmful than alcohol?

Mrs. Stefanson: What we do know is what we have heard from experts in the field that feel that there are some harms with respect to the use of cannabis, in particular, our young people. And so we've—I know the member opposite has seen those studies as well—and so we do have concerns there.

We're not here to really discuss alcohol today. I mean, there are certain—I'm not a doctor and I'm not sure, you know, how I would answer that but, certainly, you know, there are some harms associated with alcohol as well, and we need to ensure, again, the public health and safety of all Manitobans.

Ms. Fontaine: I want to kind of go back to the question that I just asked before the member for Burrows. And I asked about, in respect of resources to municipality, and the minister mentioned public education, which I think is, certainly on this side of the House, I think is a very important theme, and we brought that up in question period.

So I would like to ask the minister what are her plans. I know that she's kind of discussed waiting yet again for the federal government to do something, but what is the minister doing in respect of public education for Manitobans in this province?

Mrs. Stefanson: We have concerns, you know, as many other provinces have concerns, with respect to

the public health and safety with this, the passing of the legalization of cannabis bill by the federal government. We have continued to have discussions with the federal government. It's important that we all work together on this, and I think the member opposite understands that. Certainly, locally, here, we have a working group that is comprised of many different government departments as well as MPI, other—the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. We have gotten together regularly with various groups and organizations to ensure that we have a collaborative approach with respect to this.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister her approach, as I understand it, is that for anybody who grows even a single marijuana plant that that would be a criminal offence. Is that correct?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, under the federal legislation, which hasn't passed yet, there is the ability to grow up to four plants in your home. And that will be allowed through the federal legislation. And then the Criminal Code would kip-pick-would kick in after that, after the four plants.

We have said that we don't want any home grow. There are other provinces. I know Quebec has said this as well, that we don't believe that there should be any home grow. And so, obviously, there may be some sort of a ticketable offence with respect to if there are a few plants in a home. But we, again, will take the side of public health and safety for all Manitobans on this very important issue.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I know the minister is familiar with The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act. I know that because I saw her press release when she turned over criminal property forfeiture funds to police departments and victims and victims' groups. That act is effective in dealing with large grow-ops. What direction will the minister or department give the Criminal Property Forfeiture branch on the number of plants that would still cause an application for criminal forfeiture?

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank the member for the question.

And, obviously, the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund has done many good things. We've made investments in many different organizations to help in crime prevention in communities. I know we had the opportunity to be out in Selkirk not so long ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we offered some money to the START program, which is incredible program, that it's a—that is—allows police officers to divert

people to this program to help these people to ensure that we reduce the number of people in our jail system.

So these are the types of programs that the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund is invested in, and we will continue along that approach to find programs such as these that help and benefit Manitobans.

Mr. Swan: If I could just follow with that, and I know The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act does work well, but maybe I can be a bit more focused for the minister. Will the minister direct, and just confirm for this House, that someone who has four cannabis plants in their house will not face an application for criminal forfeiture?

* (15:50)

Mrs. Stefanson: These are important discussions that we will continue to have and my department will have with Manitobans and, certainly, you know, we want to ensure that we—the protection and safety of all Manitobans. That's why we've made this decision to ensure that there will be no home grow allowed in our province, and that's primarily for the public health and safety, particularly of our children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is—any other questions? The time—no other questions.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): Certainly, in the spirit of Christmas, hopefully, we'll have an opportunity to adjourn the House early. And I just want to say—wish everyone a very merry Christmas, and we certainly appreciate everybody's indulgence. I know there's going to be healthy debate on this bill when the House resumes in the spring.

And, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm seeking leave for a willingness to call it 5 o'clock. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There's been a point of order with the member from Assiniboia.

Point of Order

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, during the discussion and the Q and A, I sent a note directly to you indicating that I wanted to speak after the Q and A. So that is the right of an MLA, and to adjourn is—I suspect the other independent MLAs here are also interested in speaking on this very important public policy matter. Yes, it's Christmas in a couple weeks, but we're supposed to be doing our job here.

And, Mr. Speaker, I did give you notice way ahead, like, probably 10 minutes before—well, five minutes before it was done, that I wish to speak. And I do that because I can't stand. And I can see the other independent members keen to speak on this as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on the same point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I just want to indicate that the MLA for Burrows is ready and wanting and eager to speak to this, and I think it would be very premature to cut off debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does anyone else want to speak on that same point of order?

At this point, the debate on the bill has not been adjourned, so the members can still have an ability to speak unless someone moves to adjourn the debate.

* * *

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), that the House be adjourned. *[interjection]*

Adjourn debate first? Okay—the debate be adjourned.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboine, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Fletcher: Oh, well, Mr. Chair, we have an opportunity to move ahead. The member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) is ready to speak, prepared documents. We have the time. *[interjection]* The—even though the—even in this time, the government member is heckling. Isn't that ridiculous? During a point of order.

Mr. Speaker, just let the conversation happen. Is this the way it's going to continue forever? I just went through a whole thing about how to improve our democracy with all sorts of references, and they're already—it's like no one's ever read them.

That's my point of order. We should continue the debate and those—and to have the Speaker cue the House leader to adjourn debate when the member from Burrows was clearly standing up to speak, as am I, is completely inappropriate, in my view.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on the same point of order.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it has been quite common practice in the past for the House to allow people to speak by leave without their—even when the debate is adjourned, and we have done this many, many times while I've been here over the last number of years, and so I would ask if we could have leave for the member for Assiniboia and the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) to speak to this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member has not indicated if their rules have been breached.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is a question before the House that needs to be decided, and that is the motion for the Government House Leader to adjourn the debate.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboine, on a matter of privilege.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, to conduct the proceedings in such a way where a motion can be brought forward to cut debate off, that's not the first time that—it's—in 24 hours that's happened several times, and the—in fact there was no ruling on the matter of privilege that I raised before. There were other issues discussed, but nothing dealing with the issue at hand other than it was dismissed on prima facie case, but what is more urgent or immediate than immediately? Because it was at the end of one day and brought up at the beginning of the next day. That's prima facie. There's no way of getting around that. Now, is it a valid point? I don't know, because we don't have a ruling on the Speaker on that.

So, if this is how the House is going to conduct itself, like why do we even bother showing up? I can see why, Mr. Speaker, some members on the government side want to get out of here, they want to go on their holidays, so why—so go. Go. Don't have to stick around for the debate or the discussion, but some of us want to do the people's work here.

Thank you. That's my motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the matter of 'privilege' raised by the honourable member for Assiniboia, I would like to inform the House that a matter concerning the methods by which the House

proceeds and the conduct of business is a matter of order, not privilege.

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

On this basis, I would therefore rule that the honourable member for Assiniboia does not have a prima facie matter of privilege.

SECOND READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 11—The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended)

(Continued)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Back to the question of the honourable House leader on the—that he—it has been moved by the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen), seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), that the debate be now adjourned. Agreed?

* (16:00)

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the debate being adjourned, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it—Nays have it.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote—oh, sorry. The honourable House leader.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader): I can speak to the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader on the—speaking on debate.

Mr. Cullen: Yes, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Speaking briefly in debates of Bill 11, obviously, this is an important piece of legislation going forward. We do look forward to having a wholesome debate on this particular legislation, recognizing now there is some members, independents, that want to talk to this bill today, so we will allow that debate to happen 'til 5 o'clock.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We're now speaking on the debate? Okay.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I promise this will be worth it.

Our caucus has a lot of issues with the way this government is handling the legalization of marijuana. They've been telling us endlessly that they didn't have enough time, but unlike this government, our federal government kept its election promise to legalize marijuana and nothing prevented this government from preparing a year and a half ago.

It's quite obvious that this government is attempting to recriminalize marijuana use, particularly with youth, and attempting to make the argument that marijuana is more dangerous than alcohol.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that this isn't true. Alcohol poisoning, alcohol withdrawal, liver disease, chronic alcohol abuse, and other conditions that are a hundred per cent caused by the harmful consumption of alcohol accounted for about 77,000 admissions to hospitals in Canada last year alone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if people choose not to go to the liquor store, that is absolutely fine. What is not fine is when our Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen), when asked about section 101.9 of the bill, "a person must not consume cannabis in any manner in a cannabis store," he responded and said he didn't believe that was permitted at liquor stores with alcohol in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is—this news is not new. Many liquor stores permit for tastings and the fact that this government didn't know this, well, you

just can't help but wonder what other obvious factors may not be accurate or considered.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, were just here with us today, and we need to be concerned about drug-impaired drivers. However, we should equally and arguably even more be concerned about alcohol and opioids, which are also legal and being found in schools on daily basis.

And yet these other, arguably more harmful substances, do not enforce a year of incarceration and a \$1,000 fine. Youth who drink heavily can have trouble with attention, memory and decision making and can experience social, emotional and behavioural problems. Problems with alcohol can lead to poor academic performance, dropping out, poorer job possibilities and social isolation.

By grades 10 to 12, almost 60 per cent of teenagers reported having had a drink in the previous year, while about 46 reported having undertaken binge drinking.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, about 60 per cent of students in grade 6 to 10 think about drinking once in a while carries little to no risk. These kids get education and treatment. Kids found with marijuana go to jail. We already know that our facilities cannot take more people, and I don't know how many times I can tell this government that the answer is not to be tough on crime, but the answer is to be smart on crime.

Another issue with this bill that this government does want to allow people to—doesn't want to allow people to grow marijuana at home. You know, it baffles me that it's legal to brew wine or beer at home, even though the substance is a lot more harmful.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, giant grow-ops, which the minister referred to, will still be illegal under federal legislation, and this is reasonable and actually realistic. I also don't see this government charging parents whose teenagers get into liquor cabinets with \$100,000 fines and a year in jail. How is this fair? It's a double standard.

You know, I'd like to quote Solomon Israel from the morning Free Press: After this law passes, an 18-year-old Manitoban will still be able to stroll into liquor stores and buy enough alcohol to drink themselves to death, but they'll have to wait one more year to legally buy a joint.

This is nonsense. People under 19 years of age are already using marijuana, and this legislation will

force them to keep buying from the black market. And for those that take opioids and other prescription medications from the bathroom cupboards: not a word. It's silence. It's overlooked.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government should focus on education. They should focus on treatment, not on-through sentencing and hefty fees. It teaches nothing, and it's so backwards.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd also like to touch on the government's request for proposals for private sales on marijuana which shuts out small businesses and should be withdrawn and reissued to ensure that all local businesses get a fair shot. The RFP suggests that while they'll may be many retail outlets, only four applicants will be considered to run them, favouring large chains and completely shutting out Manitoban small businesses, including existing ones. This RFP is a bait and switch from what the government promised the other day and is a gift to big weed while Manitoba entrepreneurs are shut out. There are local business owners who are basically ready and willing and able to sell federally approved products right now, but this government shut them out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will end my comments here and urge the government to consider some big amendments before passing this bill, and I would ask them kindly to consider working 'til 5 o'clock on the last day of session. It's the least they could do right now.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this important issue.

And given what led up to the opportunity to speak, it is ironic that I am going to speak and compliment the minister for the work that she has done on a very complicated file.

The minister has been put in a impossible situation, won't be able to please all the stakeholders. So what do you do? I think what—the balance the government's trying to establish is a good first step, provided that they're open to listening to the public as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, just to give some context to the difficulty that is associated with this issue, I was the Health critic for the Conservative Party of Canada in Ottawa in 2004 'til 2006, then parliamentary secretary for Health from '06 to '08. So this is something that I have had a fair amount of

exposure to, and I recall the public debate. And, of course, I have a lot of friends in the general population and people who have disabilities who use medical use of marijuana. So I get it from all sides. So I want to empathize with the minister on this.

* (16:10)

In early 2000, when the Supreme Court legalized or forced the federal government to loosen up the rules around marijuana, one of the strongest arguments for the proponents was that there was no empirical evidence about the negative health effects that marijuana would have on individuals. So there's no empirical evidence, so therefore it must be okay, was the way the logic went. And I remember sitting in meetings with no-smoke Canada, which is a national group against smoking, I—the Cancer Society and many other NGOs on this issue, because on one hand, we're loosening the rules on smoking marijuana, but, on the other hand, we have strong public policy initiatives to stop people smoking—from smoking tobacco. So there's a public policy clash there.

Mr. Speaker, there was no empirical evidence, and how could there have been? There—how will you get a study on marijuana smokers, because it was illegal? So no one's going to volunteer to go into a study with the fear of being prosecuted under the law. So there was no empirical evidence, but, in spite of that, we have the law that's coming down the pipe. The Supreme Court argued at the time, and so did many of the proponents, that since there's no empirical evidence to say it's bad, then you have to fall on the side of it being good. But that was 20 years ago, and now we have—[*interjection*] you know, it's funny. You know, we talk about procedure, and now I can barely hear myself speak—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: —and I'm right here. So I don't know how anyone else can hear, given this environment, and again, it just goes to who's who and when it comes to respect of this place. You know, in spite of what you just said, Mr. Speaker, the people are still talking. [*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fletcher: Oh. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, you know, it's interesting, in the 11 years that I was a Member of Parliament, and the entire time I've been here, I did not heckle—not once—not once. So why it's tolerated here, I'm not sure—

or at least why people who don't heckle are heckled. If you're a heckler, I think you can expect to be heckled. But, if you're not a heckler, like, common decency.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, on marijuana, we have this public policy clash between the empirical evidence, of which there was none, but now there is, because we've had 20 years. And there's a growing amount of evidence showing, demonstrating that marijuana is very—can be very harmful, especially for young people and people who are developing—right even from conception. And I find this interesting, because there is no empirical evidence at present that marijuana smoking harms an infant. *[interjection]*

You know, Mr. Speaker, again—again, it's chatter, chatter, chatter. Are we going to—are you going to do something about the noise, or are we just going to let it go on and on in the background like there's no respect for this place? What's your—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Well, I just want to say that there is a lot of conversation in the House, but I don't think they're heckling you. And so it's just that there's conversation here. So the thing is, there was no heckling, so I can still hear you speaking. So, if I can't hear you, then I would interrupt the conversation in that Chamber.

Mr. Fletcher: I'm not saying that they were heckling; I'm saying that the conversation can be distracting from the actual debate that the serious members in this House are trying to have. So, if people want to talk, they should go to the outside or in the designated spots. That's all I'm saying, Mr. Speaker. And yet, here we are. Nothing has changed.

Mr. Speaker, the empirical evidence for—so, there is no empirical evidence, and there probably won't be for a long time. But I find it interesting, when my—you know, and she's a friend, you know, a great public servant, Anne McLellan, makes a public presentation, the advice now of the government is, if you're pregnant, do not smoke marijuana, which is probably common sense, and I would support that, but there's no empirical evidence to support. So the argument that was used to initially allow for marijuana has flipped when it comes to pregnant women.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, I would have some questions for the federal government and for the provincial government, and I would like to know how they interconnect. We talk about

empirical evidence, evidence-based decision-making, public policy. That's good, I think we can all agree. A decision has been made, rightly or wrongly, that marijuana is going to be legalized, and the provinces are going to have to deal with it in a practical manner.

So I'd like to know, as this debate unroll—or, rolls out, how the empirical evidence is going to be collected between the province, the—and the federal government. Are they going to be doing 'lognitudinal' studies? Are they going to be doing studies on gender space or based on certain demographics? I think this is an important—this is all important information to have if you—we want to make good public policy decisions in the future.

Again, we have this issue of marijuana being harmful to young people. Well—which raises the question, well, what happens if you're not young? Is it harmful? And does it matter?

I have many—as I—on the flip side, I have many friends and acquaintances, mostly in BC, for some reason, that do use medicinal marijuana, and they say up and down that it helps. Now, some of these—unfortunately, I've lost some of these people in my life. And who are we to deny people at the end of their life what they want, on one hand, but then on the other hand, there's an obligation to society as a whole? How are these things going to be balanced out?

* (16:20)

On the policing, again, I sympathize with the government on this. It's a tough—this is a tough issue because the federal government is in charge of the Criminal Code, and the provinces have to enforce it. And, then, another layer that people may not always realize, the federal government helps pay for the RCMP in most of western Canada and in the—Atlantic Canada. So the RCMP helps with policing. The feds put money into that. But all indications are that policing will—costs will increase, and for public safety reasons and, you know, dealing with automobiles and so on, you know, I think the public understands that there's going to be a higher level of policing and a lot more training required and new equipment. And who's going to pay for that?

Well, we all pay for it. There's only one taxpayer. But, in the great Canadian tradition of our federation, the Province will point to the feds, the feds will point to the Province, the City will point to the Province, the Province will point to the feds, the

feds will point to the cities. You know, like, where does it go? Who's going to pay for it? I'd like to know that. I bet it hasn't been worked out, and if there's things that we can do that are not in the government that would help the Province to ensure that the resources are available so that the policing and public safety can be maintained, I think it's incumbent on us to help the minister cover the expenses. And let's get the empirical data. We should all lobby that.

Now, that might be through the Canadian Institute of Health Research, which is a federal area of responsibility, but it will definitely be an area that must be researched. Do we even know if CIHR is intending to—you know, do we even know if the federal government and CIHR are intending to conduct research? Or is there going to be a research chair? If there is a research chair, where is it going to be? Perhaps it could be in Manitoba. We don't have any research chairs in Manitoba since the current federal government's come to power. I don't know.

And then there's the whole issue around enforcement, policing. And I'm—I think there's questions about home-grown versus production. I understand the direction the government's coming from, but how do you enforce it? I don't know. Or—and how can you tell that a product is made at home or not? These—I don't think anybody knows. These are questions that need to be asked, and, if there are solutions, we need to know them. And, if there aren't solutions, we need to know that too. And the minister needs to know that, and the government, because how are they—how can you make good public policy without proper data?

And, again, that circles back to the feds. Like, there are these secondary issues. The government is steadfast on the July 1st date, rightly or wrongly. But what have they done to the past July 1st on research on health, on—as to the member from St. Johns mentioned—education. Education, prevention. It is ironic that the government, on one hand, is allowing for the legalization of a product that, on the other hand, it will immediately—hopefully—I assume immediately, start public advertising campaigns to stop people from using that product they just legalized. That's up to the feds to explain that one.

Now, do we even know if there is an education prep? Lot of people think marijuana can be good for you. I've never heard that from a medical professional, and I've spoken to a lot. They've never said that. But people swear by it. It's like an urban

myth. Now, again, there are exceptions, and, you know, I have friends, certain types of MS and spinal cord injuries, their—at the end of their lives. They've all, like, our neighbours. That's probably a separate thing from the general public awareness of what marijuana does to an individual. And the fact that there are—there's bad stuff in marijuana that are toxic to the body. Now, is it enough to cause health effects? Again, we don't know. But we need to know for the future, but the train is at the station on legalization.

Another area which is not clear at all is what about edible products. Like, we always think about marijuana smoking, but what about that bran muffin in the legislative cafeteria or the school cafeteria? Yes, what about that? Are there other ways to ingest? I don't know. Can you smell? I don't know. Like, I have no idea. But certainly edibles are something that we need to know about, and nobody is—nobody seems to have the answers for that. And I look forward to hearing what the government's position on edibles will be. Maybe they can explain when—if we continue on with the debate today.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting that the government tried to limit debate on this issue. For what? Because it's two weeks, three, whatever, before—three weeks before Christmas? Lots of people work through Christmas, so why wouldn't we? So now this gets into—and has nothing to do with the minister, nothing—but it gets into why would the government want to head off the debate. I'm not criticizing—not—I'm complimenting the government. I'm trying to find ways to help the government because that's what dialogue does. It helps. Yet the government wanted to cut it off, and the independent members wanted to talk about it.

* (16:30)

I think that when the process is circumvented for no good reason, that raises issues, that raises questions about motivation, about transparency, and we're seeing this in other areas in public policy such as in my area, the Vimy Arena site, which everyone wants, in my area, anyway, would like it to remain green space. On—in another—on the other hand, there's people who really want to have a drug rehabilitation facility. It doesn't have to be on the green space. But they want a drug rehab facility, and we learned yesterday that it's the government that initiated the request to the City for that one specific piece of land.

So what are—what is the empirical evidence about what will happen when this is—when this issue is—when marijuana is legalized? And we don't know because there can't be any empirical evidence because it's not legalized yet. So that, you know, there is a catch-22 there.

But, if you want to use the logic that the government's using for pregnant women, which is no marijuana and that's proven otherwise, that's probably a good rule of thumb for other things. You know, let's try and keep marijuana away from vulnerable groups, young people, because there is no empirical evidence. It's just a continuation of the logic.

Or we can go down the flawed—to demonstrate flawed logic of, well, there is no empirical evidence, so it must be good. Well, even people who said that 20 years ago now agree that there could be very bad outcomes with marijuana use, very bad outcomes. And that logic has demonstrated to be folly.

So, you know, I would say that with the passage of time and, hopefully, the resources are being invested in the studies, both from a socio-economic point of view to a health perspective, that these issues would be addressed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I oppose—I don't—you know, I'm a bit of a teetotaler. I don't smoke, never have. I don't drink, never have. Never. That's my own personal view. I don't impose that on anyone, and that's the other flip side. We don't want to be putting our values or one person's values imposing on another person unless there's a public safety issue or some other larger public policy issue.

And that brings me to the issue of second-hand smoke. If it—if tobacco smoke is not allowable inside, either should marijuana smoke. But, what if it's ingestible, what do you do? Go to your local restaurant. You can't smoke it, but you can eat it. What does that mean? I'd like to know. And, hopefully, through this process, we'll learn from the government, and if we don't know, we'll learn that too. So then we can learn it together as time goes on.

The other issue, which is very important on public safety, is that of automobile safety. We all know about drinking and driving and the societal change. Today we had mothers against drinking and driving here. What is the difference between smoking pot and drinking and driving? Both impair, but one can be tested for and it's not clear if marijuana can be tested for, and I think it's

like nine nanograms is the level? Nine nanograms. That's 10 to the negative—nanogram—that's 10 to the negative nine. That's a very small—that's a really small amount.

Now, if someone is in an environment where there's second-hand smoke, gets into their clothes, is that going to register as someone who's smoking marijuana? I don't know. And will those people be caught or prosecuted for doing something they didn't do? I don't know.

Of course, it's better to be away from second-hand smoke, regardless if it's tobacco, marijuana or fire—forest fire.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we've talked a lot about decorum in this place, and so on, and, you know, I listened as scores of publications about parliamentary procedure and etiquette and so on, and we saw a problem even in the entry to this debate. And, when those things aren't followed, like what I have suggested this afternoon, it undermines the credibility of everything, including whatever the government decides to do.

That's why, yes, it can be painful; yes, we have to sit 'til 5 o'clock, 60 days a year. Big deal. Many people work a lot more than that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think I just heard someone say 'womansplaining'. I'd like to get a ruling from the Speaker's Chair if 'womansplaining' is a parliamentary term. Thank you—thank you.

We live in the best province in the best country, and I look forward to your ruling.

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

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): House business, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm wondering if you could canvass the House to see if it is the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock.

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

Before we all leave, I just want to wish everyone a merry Christmas, and I don't know if the Speaker wants to say something.

Merry Christmas, and the hour being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until March 7th, 1:30 p.m., or at the call of the Speaker.

Merry Christmas, everyone.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

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