

**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**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Ind.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
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
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 4, 2018

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

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

Please be seated. Good afternoon, everybody.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Committee Reports?

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the following annual reports: 2016-2017 Manitoba Adult Literacy Strategy and Adult Learning Centres in Manitoba and the 2017 Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund report.

**Madam Speaker:** Further tablings?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** I am tabling matters taken under advisement during this year's Estimates process.

**Madam Speaker:** Further tablings?

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and table the matter taken under advisement from the 2018-19 Estimates process.

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Madam Speaker, I wish to table all outstanding information requested during Committee of Supply for Growth, Enterprise and Trade.

**Madam Speaker:** Further tablings? The honourable minister for Brandon West—oh, the former member for the—honourable member for Brandon West.

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I seek leave to table the report of the all-party task force on organ and tissue donation.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to have that report tabled? *[Agreed]*

**An Honourable Member:** The inquiry into organ and tissue—

**Madam Speaker:** There does not need to be any comments made. The minister did indicate that he was tabling—the member has indicated that he has tabled the report on organ donation.

Any further tablings? Are there any further tablings? Might there be one more?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I rise to table the matters under advisement arisen from this year's Estimates process posed by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) on April 16th, 2018.

### 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.

### Special Olympics Awareness Week

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I rise in the House today to recognize Special Olympics Awareness Week in Manitoba. It was an honour and a privilege to introduce and pass private member's bill 209 five years ago, proclaiming the second week of June each year to be Special Olympics Awareness Week in Manitoba.

This year, the week begins on June 11th, but it has become customary for members of this House to celebrate near the end of the legislative session about a week before the formal events. Madam Speaker, I was happy to see many members out playing bocce ball with athletes, coaches and Special Olympics staff on the Legislative grounds on this beautiful Manitoba day.

I was also proud to see members of our law enforcement community participate in the Law Enforcement Torch Run from the Winnipeg Police

Service headquarters in the Manitoba Legislature this morning.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run is supported by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, which has been an active partner of Special Olympics Canada for more than 35 years. Since its inception, the Law Enforcement Torch Run has raised more than \$63 million for Special Olympics Canada.

In Manitoba, the run is open to police, corrections and other law enforcement agencies at all levels of government. Together, they have raised millions of dollars for Special Olympics Manitoba over the last 25 years. This money goes to support an incredible and growing organization of athletes, coaches, volunteers, and staff.

Madam Speaker, Special Olympics Manitoba now has 161 different programs for 18 different sports throughout seven regions of Manitoba. There are now 1,766 athletes, 551 coaches and 1,210 volunteers participating in these programs. Each member of the—of Special Olympics has the opportunity to compete in games at the provincial, national and international levels.

This year, Special Olympics Manitoba athletes from across the province will be competing in nine sports at the Special Olympics Canada Summer Games this August in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Their commitment and dedication in especially—is especially important as the international Special Olympics movement celebrates its 50th anniversary on July 21st, which will be known as the Global Day of Inclusion.

This anniversary marks a turning point for the Special Olympics movement. Beginning on July 21st, Special Olympics is moving, and I quote, from an organization for people with intellectual disabilities to a social inclusion movement led by Special Olympics athletes. End quote.

We all know that people with intellectual disabilities still face stigma, neglect and marginalization in our society. Special Olympics has done incredible work eliminating those barriers, but it's time for us all to step up and ensure that people with intellectual disabilities feel included in our lives and in our society. That work begins by supporting our Special Olympics athletes.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members join me in thanking and recognizing our guests in the gallery—president and CEO of Special Olympics

Manitoba Jennifer Campbell; past board chair Larry Chornoboy, provincial team athlete Philip Bialk, bocce team head coach Joe Grande and staff members Kim Morphy and Darren Hemeryck—for everything they do to make our province and our world more inclusive for people with intellectual disabilities.

Thank you, and I ask all members to join me today in recognizing these individuals.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I am honoured today to recognize the hard work and amazing achievements of our Special Olympic athletes here in Manitoba in support of Special Olympics Awareness Week.

\* (13:40)

Here in Manitoba and across the world, the Special Olympics is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate hard-working individuals as they grow in their athletic activities and to raise awareness for people with intellectual disabilities who participate in sport.

Special Olympics provide year-round sports programs and athletic competition in a variety of sports to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. It gives these amazing athletes the opportunity to showcase their athletic talent, but more importantly, it enriches lives, fosters respect, promotes dignity and supports advocacy in communities across Manitoba.

I would like to thank all the volunteers, staff, coaches and athletes who are involved in Special Olympics for the incredible and uplifting work that you are doing. I look forward to coming out and supporting at the events and promoting this year's theme, which is Accept With No Exception. And I ask that all Manitobans join me in supporting this inclusive and powerful message.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and happy Special Olympics Awareness Week.

Once again, this year, volunteers and athletes have taken over the west lawn for some awesome bocce ball, pulled pork sandwiches and, most

importantly, to teach us MLAs just how important Special Olympics Manitoba are.

Did you know that Special Olympics Manitoba provides 18 sports to nearly 1,700 athletes across our province?

Madam Speaker, Philip, who joins us here in the gallery today, and the member from Fort Richmond and I had a lot of fun playing some friendly bocce ball just a couple of hours ago. We had the opportunity to learn a bit about each other, and Philip taught us both so much about our current Lieutenant Governor, so thank you for that Philip.

Special Olympics here in Manitoba are made up of some phenomenal people who are dedicated and work tirelessly at making the Special Olympics in our province possible, and we want to send out a huge thank you to them. So thank you for all the work you do every day, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to play.

Now, Madam Speaker, this is my last speaking opportunity before the House rises for the summer, and I want to use this opportunity to thank our caucus staff, my constituency staff, all of our clerks, people working in Hansard, our pages, guards and security and you, too, Madam Speaker.

Between our late-night votes and our lively debates, I want to wish everyone a very pleasant and safe summer.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister for Infrastructure, 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 his statement.

### **Wildfire Update**

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** The safety and security of all Manitobans is the top priority of our government. As such, I wish to provide the Manitoba Legislature with an update on the current wildfire-fighting activities in the province of Manitoba.

I will start today by expressing our thanks to all those who have been involved in managing the fires and ensuring that all Manitobans at risk have been protected from these fires and their consequences.

The department of Manitoba Sustainable Development Wildfire Program has provided us with the following update. Total fires to date: 208. Average for this date: 128. And, Madam Speaker, yesterday, there were no new fires. Recent precipitation has assisted crews that continue to work on existing fires.

And there are currently 80 firefighters helping us from Ontario and assisting wildfire response here in Manitoba.

Indigenous and Northern Relations reports that all evacuees from Pelican Rapids have returned home on June the 2nd.

Indigenous Services Canada has engaged the Canadian Red Cross to support evacuees from Sapotaweyak Cree Nation and Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation.

Approximately 350 of the 900 evacuees from Sapotaweyak Cree Nation have returned to their community. The remaining evacuees from Sapotaweyak Cree Nation are scheduled to return home in the coming days. Evacuees from Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation remain in Winnipeg.

Re-entry planning continues, involving departments and agencies from Manitoba and Canada along with Manitoba Hydro; the Canadian Red Cross and other non-governmental organizations also involved.

Manitoba Hydro is mobilizing resources to repair damaged infrastructure and return power to Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation. Timelines for restoration of power to these communities cannot be confirmed at this time.

Manitoba EMO will continue to monitor the ongoing situation across the province and co-ordinate efforts with the agencies involved.

And again, Madam Speaker, we wish to remind everyone to obey all fire bans and to keep property clear of combustible materials to reduce risk.

Thank you.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Many thanks to the many first responders who have assisted in battling wildfires here in our province in the last few weeks and the rain over the last week.

Residents of Sapotaweyak First Nation can finally return home. Because of the recent events, residents of Pauingassi were also given some good

news, with the 27,000-hectare fire now being considered under control. It was encouraging to see electricity services being restored promptly in the community of Sopotaweyak so that residents weren't returning in the dark.

On Friday, 14 evacuees from Little Grand Rapids returned home to begin assessing the damage, cleaning up and restoring running water. Residents from Little Grand Rapids are eager to return home. The community's efforts need to be supported.

While neither level of government will accept responsibility for evacuation delays, all levels of government, agencies and organizations need to be working co-operatively to assist Little Grand Rapids and Sopotaweyak First Nation to clean up and restoration of essential services to ensure evacuees can return home safely as soon as possible.

While many communities have already faced the devastating impact of wildfires this year, Manitobans continue to show their resilience and kindness by assisting evacuees in whatever way possible.

While Norway House Animal Rescue's call for help has been well received, they need more help. They are desperately seeking food and monetary donations to help restock cleared out supplies, continue supplying much needed pet food and assist in covering flight and medical costs for pets that have suffered illness or injury during this emergency situation in Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi. All those willing to help will find this information on their Facebook page.

Want to thank the many volunteers and organizations that have and continue to assist evacuees, residents and animals who remain behind.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** I want to thank the minister for his update on the fire situation. I note that most fires now are considered under control, with the exception of one near Lac Brochet. I'd hoped the minister might have given us a little bit more information about that fire.

I want to thank all those who've been helping with the fire situation: the many firefighters, people

involved in logistics and support staff and volunteers, and the many who are helping with the evacuees, in particular the Red Cross, organizations like southeast tribal council, the CFS agencies who are helping with activities for kids and adolescents and many others.

I understand that one of the difficulties in organizing the fire response for the communities of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi has been the lack of cell service to these communities and the generally poor Internet and indeed phone access.

These are important communities in our province and it's not acceptable that in 2018 there is not cell service to these communities. The Pallister government had noted that with the takeover of MTS that there would be cell and Internet services improved on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

Well, so far it has not improved for Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi, and this has caused no end of problems in this fire season and in dealing with the fire near Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi. I hope that the government will act quickly to correct this issue and to ensure much better communication for the people of Little Grand and Pauingassi in the future.

\* (13:50)

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Miigwech. Merci.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Hutterite Colonies in Manitoba—100th Anniversary

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** Madam Speaker, it is with great pride that I have the opportunity today to recognize the 100th year of Hutterite colonies of Manitoba. It was June, 1918, that six colonies migrated from the Dakota Territory to Manitoba. James Valley, Maxwell, Huron, Milltown, Bon Homme and Rosedale were established and today there are 118 colonies throughout our province.

Originating in Austria in the 16th century, Jacob Hutter developed a communal form of living based on the New Testament book of Acts of the Apostles, which was distinct from other Anabaptists. It was during the First World War that Manitoba became a home for the Hutterites, who chose to abandon their American colonies in order to remain pacifists.

Over the past 100 years, Hutterites have traditionally owned and operated large amounts of

land, as well as hog, dairy, turkey, chicken and egg productions. In more recent years they have ventured into the manufacturing sector. Examples in the Agassiz constituency of their successes can be seen at Acadia Colony, with Community Truss Ltd., and Baker Colony, with Better Air Manufacturing. Hutterites are well known and respected for their compassion and generosity to anyone in need.

I would like to acknowledge the significant and supportive role Hutterite women have within their colonies with their 'exemplary' gardening, baking and sewing skills. I always look forward to visiting my lifelong friends at Riverdale Colony for serenity, support and a cup of coffee.

I'd like to recognize the late Selma Maendel, who was the first Hutterite to be inducted into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame for her many contributions to agriculture in Manitoba.

On behalf of this Legislature, I want to congratulate all Hutterite colonies in Manitoba for 100 years of being generous neighbours and good stewards of the land. You are an inspiration to all.

Happy 100 years in our province and best wishes for your next generations.

Please join me in welcoming my friends from Acadia and Baker colonies.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations.

**Ms. Clarke:** Madam Speaker, I ask leave to have my guests' names entered into Hansard, as well as the Agassiz colonies.

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

*Guests: Bishop Arnold and Rhoda Hofer, Reverend Ben and Mary Maendel, Thelma Waldner.*

*Agassiz Colonies: Acadia, Aspenheim, Baker, Bloomfield, Cascade, Emerald, Grass River, Hidden Valley, Parkview, Pine Creek, Riverbend, Riverdale, Riverside, Rolling Acres, Springhill, Twilight, Westroc.*

### **Recognizing Niverville Collegiate Entrepreneurs**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** As we all know, the foundation of our economy has been and will always be entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are courageous individuals that are willing to risk it all to see a dream come to fruition.

It is a great honour—rise in the House and congratulate a stellar group of entrepreneurial students from Niverville Collegiate. Grade 11 students Marcus Jofre, Cole Funk, Maddie Thompson, Diana Laso, Leah Reimer, Shadaye Fast and Jazmyn Lajeunesse have launched Social Clothing, a line of casual streetwear.

These students chose streetwear as it is comfortable, warm, versatile, popular with young people and well suited for the Manitoba market in our cold winter months. At the same time, the styles are simple so that they're both casual and adaptable to any situation. These choices have proven to be extremely effective as the business is flourishing. The students' hard work, keen business sense and a great eye for their target market have been major factors in the growth of their business.

The name Social Clothing is inspired by the distinctly Manitoba tradition of pickles, kubasa, cubed cheese and music, whether it is for weddings, to fundraise for a cause or just because we are Manitobans, and the clothing encompasses designs that reference Manitoba places, culture and heritage.

Additional, Social Clothing orders their supplies from other Canadian businesses in an effort to keep costs down and to ensure the business remains as locally sourced as possible.

What was originally an assignment for business class has emerged into a burgeoning local business. Small businesses are the backbone of the Canadian economy and the entrepreneurial spirit exemplified by these students is exactly the kind of forward thinking that will help strengthen the Manitoba economy today and into the future.

So please help me to congratulate these students and their teacher, Suzanne Mathieu, for their accomplishment and success. I am confident that this will not be the last time we will read about these young entrepreneurs.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Further members' statements?

### **International Children's Day**

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Madam Speaker, on May 28th, Mr. Sukhdev Walia of India wrote to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau about the importance of recognizing the four children of the 10th guru of the Sikh religion during children's protection international day. I rise today to echo this request for Manitoba to share their story during

International Children's Day and explain its importance.

In the late 17th century, the city of Anandpur Sahib prospered under the inspired leadership of the 10th guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj. This is the guru who established Khalsa. But the emperor at the time feared this would threaten his rule in northern India, so he launched a prolonged and brutal siege on the city of Anandpur, cutting it off from outside supplies.

To save the inhabitants of Anandpur from dying of starvation, the Guru Gobind Singh made a deal with the emperor to leave the city. However, while he was leaving, the emperor's imperial armies betrayed the deal and attacked the guru from behind, separating him from his family.

The guru's 17-year-old and 14-year-old sons focused over the coming days on fighting for their freedom and the freedom of others. They each died in battle. His other two sons, aged only nine and seven years old, were imprisoned and told that their lives would be spared only if they converted away from their faith.

When they refused, these young children were sentenced to be bricked in a wall, alive. As the wall being built around them reached higher than their chests and they struggled for air, one brother proclaimed: We shall not give up our faith.

These four children died for human rights. Their sacrifice represents the struggle for people of other faiths to practise their religion without interference.

I request we make a remembrance of these brave four sons on children's day—

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

The—does the member have leave to conclude his statement? Yes? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Saran:** I request we make a remembrance of these brave four sons on children's day. The sharing of this story will support awareness for children that have experienced violence, abuse, the effects of war and the interference of human rights.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Further members' statements?

### World Environment Day

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Tomorrow is World Environment Day. It's recognized by the United Nations—not, apparently, recognized by this

government. So let's review their track record so far on the most important environmental issue in the world, climate change.

Since coming to office—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:**—the Pallister government has failed to bring in a single new program that would help anyone reduce their emissions. In fact, they've gone the opposite direction and supported increasing everyone's hydro rates by over 70 per cent over a number of years, whereas they proposed only a one-time increase of about 5 per cent in the price of fossil fuels.

Simultaneously, they've destroyed the Power Smart brand, while its so-called replacement, ironically named Efficiency Manitoba, is nowhere in sight. They have no budget, no plans, no programs to offer and no staff over at Efficiency Manitoba.

They have also declared that none of their \$250 million—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:**—of these carbon revenues will be used to fight climate change. Instead, they're going to break their promise to return that revenue to Manitobans and are keeping \$90 million of it in general revenue. On top of that, they're going to provide tax cuts with the remainder, which will benefit the richest families 10 times more than the poorest families in the tax rebates they will receive.

Pallister government has thought it's a good idea to cut funding to transit services and also assign the carbon tax to bus fuel, which means that, of course, fares go up, service goes down—not good for climate change or anyone using transit.

We used to be the best province in the country for solar power incentives, and then the Pallister government ended those incentives, took us from the best to the worst overnight, in the words of solar representatives right here in Manitoba. At the same time, they're giving all heavy emitters, all landfills and all agricultural operations a complete carbon-free ride and only assigning the carbon tax to half of our emissions.

Their proposed climate legislation is a complete scam. It's going to use a phony counting system and won't release the truth until years after the next provincial election because they don't want anyone to know how brutal they're going to be on this.



And, meanwhile, they have repeatedly ignored good, practical suggestions.

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

\* (14:00)

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

#### **Dr. David Marsh**

**Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona):** I rise today to acknowledge a great community leader who has been an important part of Transcona since I was born some 55 years ago.

Dr. David Marsh was raised in Durham, England, and received the last medical degree from Durham University at Newcastle back in 1963. Shortly thereafter, he crossed the pond to hang his shingle here in Winnipeg and over the years has been an active and essential part of our community as a 'caregibbel'—caregiver, role model and volunteer.

As the local physician, he has delivered over 1,000 babies, some of which he still sees as patients and even still will make the occasional house call. Growing up in England, rugby may have been his sport, but in his new country, hockey coach was one of his many volunteer stints he took on.

The honours on Dr. Marsh are many, ranging from the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal to the City of Winnipeg community service award from Mayor Norrie, and even a street named after him in Transcona. But if you ask Dr. Marsh, or as he would rather be called, David, his most proud achievement would be of founding the Transcona Rotary, which this week is celebrating its 37th year of giving back to the community.

His work with the Rotary's PolioPlus campaign to eradicate polio was recognized by Rotary International in 1999 with the distinguished service award. His is truly a life where he lives the Rotary mission of service above self but also the motto of his church at Pine Ridge: to nurture a heart for God, each other and our community.

Dr. Marsh will be turning 81 in August, and for some reason, he felt that it was time to retire. July 31st will be his last day. There are patients in their 50s who have had no other physician in their lives and will be truly sorry to see him move on.

Yes, he does have plans for the future. They will include some travel, golf, a bucket-list item or two

and spending time with his many grandchildren and great grandchildren and, finally, with his wife Helene, who has been at his side for 43 years. She may have a job or two for you, David.

Please join me in thanking him for his service and wishing Dr. David Marsh a wonderful, healthy retirement.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to members—prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Collège Jeanne-Sauvé 74 grade 9 students under the direction of Mario Desmarais, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires).

We welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

Also seated in the public gallery, we have Mr. Amarjit Singh Dhillon, a newspaper reporter for the newspapers in India, and he is a guest of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran).

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**Madam Speaker:** And we have two farewell speeches here for our two departing pages.

Ashley Hunter will be graduating from Glenlawn Collegiate this year. She's planning to volunteer at a no-kill animal shelter while seeking summer employment. She will be attending the University of Manitoba this fall. She will be majoring in psychology and either sociology or political science. After getting her degree, she plans to take the LSAT.

Ashley is an avid ultimate Frisbee competitor. For the past three years, she proudly represented the Glenlawn team in ultimate Frisbee and is planning to play for the University of Winnipeg ultimate Frisbee team.

Ashley has loved this job, is extremely grateful for the opportunity. Because of this job, she has a stronger passion and understanding for politics and a deeper respect for all those involved.

Ashley would like to thank everyone for being so kind and friendly and that she will deeply miss working at the Legislative Assembly.

And Paul Zorbas is entering grade 12 at J.H. Bruns Collegiate. Throughout this year, Paul has put a lot of his time towards his cadet career,

servicing as a drill team commander, recruit instructor and the lead survival instructor who helped to plan the May long field-training exercise.

This summer, Paul will be preparing for his career in the Canadian Armed Forces as an infantry soldier with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles.

In his time spent as a legislative page, Paul learned so much about the provincial political system and will never forget his experiences at the Legislative Assembly. Paul extends his gratitude to all of the MLAs and Chamber staff for the amazing opportunities he was given this year

And to both of you, on behalf of all of us, we wish you both the very best.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals Request to Stop ER Closures

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin by honouring the life of Roland Penner, former member of this House. You know, Mr. Penner was a remarkable Manitoban. He was a World War II veteran. He served this province as the Attorney General in addition to other Cabinet portfolios. And he was dean of the law school at Robson Hall.

Of particular note, during his time as the Attorney General, he brought protections for the LGBTTQ\* community here in Manitoba along with bringing in the Manitoba Human Rights Code. In addition, he also brought in many protections for the francophone community and the protection of minority languages.

He led a remarkable life, a full life, and I wanted to put on the record that as his successor in Fort Rouge, I am deeply honoured to have known him, and that we are all sending our condolences to his family on this day.

We know the Premier continues with his plan to close emergency rooms at Concordia and Seven Oaks hospitals. Families, patients, front-line workers are all asking him to reconsider.

I would ask the Premier: Will he back off his plan to close Seven Oaks and Concordia emergency rooms?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I know that this Legislative Assembly will allow a larger amount of time at a—some future date to give us the opportunity here to reflect on the life and the contributions that

Roland Penner has made to our province. Let me just say, though, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, thank you to his family for having Roland—Mr. Penner—available to us and for his life. And our condolences to his family, to his many friends as well.

No matter what the age, it is never easy to part and to say goodbye to a man that has demonstrated such caring, such compassion in his life, not only for the people of—his family and his friends but the people of Manitoba and of Canada and of the world. It is always a tragedy, Madam Speaker.

It would be a tragedy to leave health care in the mess that it was in when we inherited that mess from the previous government, Madam Speaker. And so in the spirit of those who rise to the challenge of change, we will not back away from making the necessary changes to improve our health-care system.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, after the Premier closes the emergency room at Concordia Hospital and after he shuts down the intensive-care unit at Concordia Hospital, that health centre will be a shell of its former self.

Now, there will still be surgeries conducted at Concordia after the Premier's cuts take effect, but when there are complications for surgery, what will happen to a patient who needs support, who needs some sort of life-saving intervention? What will happen then? Well, that patient coming out of surgery will need to be transported by ambulance to another hospital.

It makes no sense to have surgeries at Concordia but to not have an ICU or an emergency room, but yet that is what the Premier is bringing in as a result for his plan for cuts.

Will the Premier back off and instead commit to keeping Seven Oaks and Concordia emergency rooms open?

**Mr. Pallister:** The member has, like myself, Madam Speaker, very little expertise in terms of organizing a health-care system, and certainly he leads a party that demonstrated virtually none in 17 years.

They commissioned then a study to be done. Recommendations contained in that study were not acted upon by the previous government, Madam Speaker. They are being acted on by this government

because we believe that the system exists to serve the needs of Manitobans. And so we will make sure that we change the system for the better.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the Premier's own experts that he commissioned have told him that he's moving too fast and too aggressively with these closures of the emergency rooms. And, again, I'm making reference to those recommendations put down in black and white by the wait-times task force.

\* (14:10)

Now, that report told him that a new emergency department at St. Boniface was, quote, urgently required before Concordia and Seven Oaks closed.

Now, just the piecemeal renovations, that which has been announced, would not cut it, according to the Premier's experts. There would need to be a dramatic increase of the capacity at St. Boniface; if not, that hospital could be overloaded by the number of people coming to the door, being diverted from the closures at Concordia and Seven Oaks emergency rooms.

Now, the Premier has ignored that advice. He only wants to focus on the money. But will the Premier start to think about the consequences?

Will he back off his plan to close Seven Oaks and Concordia emergency rooms?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, Madam Speaker, at least the member is clinging to the age-old NDP tradition of telling Manitobans they should just wait, right? But Manitobans grew tired of waiting, tired of waiting for health-care services that they needed, tired of waiting for treatment that they wanted to have for themselves and for their families, tired, weary, of waiting for diagnoses for illnesses that they needed treatment for too.

And so we have, in our first two years—yes, we have concentrated additional investments in health care, and yes, we are spending this year over \$688 million more than the NDP ever did on health care, but we are also in pursuit of better outcomes. Year over year, an 18 per cent reduction in emergency wait times is some progress, Madam Speaker, more significant than was ever achieved under the previous government.

But we are committed to doing even better, to doing even more, because we have the courage to make sure that we face the challenges of change and don't turn and run away from them as the member is telling us to do today.

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

### **Education System Improvements Request for Government Plan**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, if you ask any parent in the province if they want their child to have more one-on-one time with their teacher, I'm sure that almost every parent in Manitoba's going to say, yes, they want their child to have more one-on-one time with the teacher.

And yet, under this Premier, after cutting the K-to-3 small class sizes initiative, we now see that class sizes are increasing under his watch. We also know that the Premier has brought down de facto cuts to school divisions right across the province. In addition to that, the Premier has refused to answer questions about his capping of supports for young children with special needs.

Now, during that same period of time, has the Premier brought in a new policy to help improve education in Manitoba? No, he has not. However, he has brought forward a number of bills to protect his own salary. It reflects the wrong priorities, not the priorities of Manitoba parents.

Will the Premier stop his plan for cuts and instead bring forward a real plan to improve education for Manitoba students?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, in the absence of real material, Madam Speaker, the member invents false facts, and he has done that again today. While the previous government failed to make inroads into achieving better outcomes for students in our province, and a variety, frankly, of tests and comparative evaluations showed that we were sinking to the bottom of the provinces in terms of outcomes for our students, the previous administration failed to make any positive changes.

Now the member says that class sizes, which averaged 19 when the NDP ran and which still average 19 per class, are somehow the reason for those results to be bad. That was the case then, Madam Speaker; it's still the case. If that wasn't the case then, it remains not the case.

What is necessary for the member to understand, Madam Speaker, is that if he wants teachers to spend more time with students, they should spend less time at bargaining tables all over the province and more time in the classroom.

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

**Bureau de l'éducation française  
Assistant Deputy Minister Position**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, emergency rooms are closing, class sizes are getting bigger, and now the Premier has cut the central hub for French education in the Department of Education.

Sans consultation, sans avis, sans aucun effort d'engager le conseil consultatif, le premier ministre a coupé le poste du sous-ministre adjoint pour le Bureau de l'éducation française.

**Translation**

*Without consultation, without notice, without any effort to involve the advisory council, the Premier cut the assistant deputy minister position for the Bureau de l'éducation française.*

**English**

Now, that's in spite of thousands of parents, thousands of community members voicing their concern and saying that this cut to the ADM position for the BEF was a big mistake. In fact, the Premier's own candidate in St. Boniface has said that this cut was a mistake and he opposes it.

Now, the Premier has decided that parents and teachers were not the best people to listen to, apparently, because he has refused to back down for this cut.

Mais le premier ministre a toujours la chance de renverser cette décision mal prise.

**Translation**

*But the Premier still has the opportunity to reverse this ill-advised decision.*

**English**

Will the Premier listen to parents and families? Will he reverse his cut to the ADM position in the Bureau de l'éducation française?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Il est important de se souvenir de respecter la volonté des Manitobains.

**Translation**

*It is important to remember to respect the will of Manitobans.*

**English**

Manitobans spoke clearly in the last election. They wanted us to focus on fixing the finances after a decade of debt, repairing the services after a decade of decay, rebuilding the economy after a decade of decline. And, Madam Speaker, we are focused on doing exactly that.

In terms of reorganizing our civil service, we have decided to maintain strength at the front line, to minimize disruption to front-line workers, but instead to focus on trimming at the top of the organization.

This, of course, the member refuses to see as a positive thing, but front-line workers across the province, whether in education, health care, every other department, see it as progress, Madam Speaker. And we'll continue to focus on the front line as our key-key-point of endeavour in making our civil service work better for the people of Manitoba.

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

**Education System Improvements  
Request for Government Plan**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Yes, again, on education, I just wanted to note that today—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —you know, there is, I guess, somebody in our circles who is preparing to move on, long-time journalist who covered the education beat for the Winnipeg Free Press. I believe this is his last week before retirement, and so I wanted to take a second just to acknowledge Mr. Nick Martin.

In addition to having been on the opposite side of a tape recorder or notepad with him, I've also shared, you know, many nice conversations about soccer parents, the Leafs nation, which he's always happy to update me on, and the history of the Stratford Festival in Ontario.

So, I just wanted to put on the record here that I wish you the best in retirement and nothing but good luck.

But we do want the Premier to stop his education cuts, his de facto cuts to funding in the province, so

I'd ask him: Will he take the summer to reconsider and bring back a real plan that includes re-adding the ADM position for BEF, re-adding the small class sizes position and ensuring that education funding is tied to economic growth?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** We are, Madam Speaker, two years since the last election and are investing this year alone over \$1 billion more in education and health care than the NDP ever did, so de facto or not, the member's de factos are wrong, except in respect of the member for Free Press that's in our gallery today.

Nick Martin was here when education systems were working effectively in the province. He unfortunately won't be reporting on the progress we're making, but I know that he'll watch with great enthusiasm as we make that progress, because I know that his concerns—as are the concerns of many Manitobans and certainly of this government—are on seeing the quality of our educational services improve.

I wish him the very best in his retirement. I wish his hockey team better luck next year, except when they play the Jets.

#### **Changes to Health-Care Services KPMG Report Recommendations**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Manitobans see this government's changes to health care are all about cutting costs and not about improving patient care. After 14 long months, the Premier's finally released more, although not all, of the KPMG report, parts of which he's using as his blueprint for cuts and privatizing our health-care system.

It's there in black and white. Decisions like cutting outpatient physiotherapy and cancelling the special drug program do not and never did have anything to do with improving patient care or getting better outcomes. Those decisions are only about cutting costs.

Will the Premier today reject the further cuts recommended by KPMG, which don't lead to better care for Manitobans and in many cases create hardship for low-income Manitobans?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, as I said earlier, Madam Speaker, we are investing almost \$700 million more in the health-care system this year than the NDP ever did, and so the member's assertions are completely false.

But why doesn't he just come out and admit it? His party is espousing for higher taxes. We know it. They know it. Manitobans know it. They just don't have the willingness to say it. Why doesn't he stand up in his place and admit that the NDP just want taxes to go up?

\* (14:20)

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

**Mr. Swan:** Madam Speaker—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** —the KPMG report makes it clear why the Premier, who claims to be about openness and transparency, was so reluctant to share it. The report recommends many cuts to services, cuts to the Seniors Eyeglass Program. Why? To cut costs. Cut subsidies for children's orthopedic shoes. Why? To cut costs. Cut supports for children's hearing aids. Why? To cut costs. Introduce co-payments for home ostomy supplies. Why? To cut costs. To stop letting residents in southeast Manitoba seek treatment in nearby Minnesota. Why? To cut costs.

But it's not too late. Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) just confirm he will not implement these cuts in the KPMG report?

**Mr. Pallister:** And thank you, Madam Speaker, for your service to this Chamber and to your staff as well in this past session. We appreciate their work very much.

Madam Speaker, in respect of admissions, why doesn't the NDP admit that they're covering up their harassment report? Why don't they release it so that we can review it? We've demonstrated as a government we're serious about making this a safer workplace, yet we hear nothing from the NDP but a continuation of the culture of cover-up that got them into the mess they were in. At the start of this session nothing has demonstrated any willingness to change.

Secondly, why doesn't the member just come out and say it? Every word out of his mouth means higher taxes for Manitobans. [*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Minto, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Swan:** Well, Madam Speaker, the KPMG report also recommends privatizing primary-care facilities that Manitobans depend upon. It recommends

privatizing diagnostic testing. We know the Premier's on the road to doing that.

The KPMG report also recommends privatizing ACCESS centres and personal-care homes. These facilities provide quality care to families and seniors that keeps them healthy and out of the hospital. They should be available to every Manitoban, no matter how much money that Manitoban may have. The KPMG report written on the Premier's terms recommends cuts to essential care that families depend upon.

Will the Premier today tell Manitoba families that he will reject these recommendations and protect public ACCESS centres and public personal-care homes?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, there you go, Madam Speaker. I mean, the members opposite and their mismanagement of health care drove more people to pursue private care than ever before in the history of Manitoba. They've purchased more services for health care from private sources than any government in the history of Manitoba.

But now they just espouse tired old ideological ideas. They put ideology ahead of results, Madam Speaker. We don't. We want better results. We want better results for Manitoba patients. We want better results for Manitoba children. We want better results in the future through our education system, health-care system, social services. We want better outcomes. The NDP's stuck in the past with old ideologies, and one of those ideologies, the one they refuse to admit to, is this idea that somehow the money that Manitobans work so hard to earn is better spent by them than it is by the people who earned it.

Why don't they just come clean and admit that they just want higher taxes on all Manitobans?

#### **Human Rights Commission Staff Reduction Inquiry**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** It was a beautiful Pride week and it provides us an opportunity to reflect on efforts to expand the rights of people to live a life of dignity and respect.

However, we all know the fight for equality is not complete, Madam Speaker. The Manitoba Human Rights Commission has seen human rights complaints rise by over 13 per cent only in the last two years. The Manitoba Human Rights Commission needs more support, not less, to address complaints in a responsible and timely manner.

Why, then, has the minister cut 15 per cent of the staff in the Human Rights Commission?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** And I did want to take this opportunity to extend my condolences, as the Attorney General for Manitoba, to Mr. Roland Penner, his family and his friends as well at this time.

I will say to the member opposite that we are looking at a different approach in Manitoba when it comes to the delivery of services in Manitoba. We recognize the challenges that we inherited from the previous NDP government. The backlogs were very, very long when it came to human rights cases. We have actually reduced those from some, I think it was 22 months, down to 15 months, so we're making some progress, Madam Speaker.

There's more work to be done and we will continue to do that work on behalf of Manitobans.

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

#### **Residential Tenancies Branch Budget and Staffing Concerns**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Unfortunately, every time the minister says a different approach, that's actually code for cuts. And unfortunately, it's not only the Human Rights Commission—  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** —that has been significantly cut.  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:** The Residential Tenancies Branch, Madam Speaker, and Commission saw significant cuts to their budgets, with less staff to handle appeals, and resolutions will take months while renters are put under undue stress and hardship.

Why is the minister making cuts off of the backs of renters here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Well, the myth of cuts, Madam Speaker, is exactly that. It's a myth. The member opposite continues to put false assertions on the record.

But we recognize that Manitobans elected us to reduce crime in Manitoba where members opposite—and I know they think it's funny about reducing

crime because under their watch, they believed in higher incarceration rates. Their way of reducing crime was about putting more people in jail.

We take a different approach through our Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy to reduce crime.

We are looking at different ways, including restorative justice initiatives and other ways through responsible reintegration of offenders back into society.

So we will continue to provide for safer communities and more timely access to justice for all Manitobans.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The minister's priorities or lack thereof are clear. Her priorities simply do not involve the vast majority of vulnerable Manitobans.

Their so-called red tape bill removes the rights of tenants to appeal rent increases they feel or deem unfair.

Cuts to Residential Tenancies will cause even more delays for renters when they will have a bad landlord or at risk of homelessness.

Why is the minister making cuts off the backs of renters and tangibly creating a space to ensure that there's an increase in homelessness here in Manitoba?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, that coming from a member who was part of a government who has some—among the highest homeless rates in all of Canada, Madam Speaker.

We will take no lessons from members opposite. We have a different approach, a different way of doing things.

After 17 years of their mismanagement of the system, we will continue to work towards safer communities, more timely access to justice, Madam Speaker.

We will also—and I know the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding) is working hard and making some changes to a system that this member was a part of.

She never produced one report—one single report—towards making life better for those most vulnerable citizens in Manitoba. So we will take no lessons from this member opposite.

### Education System Funding for K to 12

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** This session, we've seen just how little the Pallister government values K-to-12 education. Class sizes are getting bigger in this province, and there's been an absolute funding cut for dozens of school divisions—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —across this province. These school divisions have had to make tough choices as they cut teachers, they cut educational assistants and they cut vocational supports.

Last week, we revealed that, in his desperation to change the channel, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has resorted to using accounting tricks, misstating education funding and moving money around. But misdirection can't hide the obvious truth: larger class sizes and a school system that's under stress.

Will the minister change course, or is it full speed ahead on Conservative cuts to education?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I do not accept the member's premises that things are going in the wrong direction on education.

During the period of time that they were in government, the results for Manitoba students went from fifth in the country to dead last. Now, that's the wrong direction.

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

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, the minister has tried to deflect attention from his cuts through summits, through consultants' reports and strategies announced. But the minister's own House book that we obtained through a freedom of information request—and I'll table that right now—confirmed that, quote, the minister committed to releasing the provincial literacy and numeracy strategy by the end of March 2018. End quote.

It's hardly surprising, Madam Speaker, that—and clear the minister doesn't really care about this strategy. It's a distraction from what's really going on: larger class sizes and absolute cuts for funding in dozens of school divisions across the province.

So why is the minister cutting education and not even delivering on the promises that he made?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question. We're certainly looking forward to releasing the literacy and numeracy strategy very shortly.

We have taken the time to actually listen to Manitobans, something the previous government never seemed to get right during their period of time in government.

And while we were doing that, we not only heard what they had to say; we continued with programs that improved education in Manitoba.

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

### **Budget Implementation Bill Tabling Timeline**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) misdirecting the public about education funding, and I guess it's hardly surprising because last year his government hid cuts to services across government in the budget implementation bill.

Yet, this year, for the first time in modern Manitoba history, the government won't be tabling the budget implementation bill in the spring. We checked, Madam Speaker; majority governments have always tabled this bill in the spring unless there's been an election or other factors.

Of course, we know last year the government was heavily criticized for its cuts to transit funding and cuts for communities within that bill.

So my question for the Finance Minister is simple: What is he cutting this time, and what does he have to hide? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** Well, Madam Speaker, Manitobans and that member, too, understand that this is a government that is keeping its promises and getting more value for all Manitobans.

But if that member wants a history lesson, I give him one: 2015, the NDP party spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on a prebudget consultation that did not, in 2016, bring a budget for Manitobans.

This is a government that just came into a session and brought a budget arguably weeks earlier than anyone I can remember in recent NDP history.

We are doing a better job of reporting. We are getting—doing a better job of getting progress on behalf of all Manitobans.

### **Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi Request to Table Fire Plan**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, on May the 23rd, I asked the minister for the fire plans for the communities of Pauingassi and Little Grand Rapids. The minister replied, and I quote: I would like to suggest to all members of the Legislature that there are fire plans in place, and if the member would like to have access to those, perhaps not today or tomorrow, but we can get those for him. End of quote.

That was almost two weeks ago.

I'd like to ask the minister why he has still not provided the fire plans and whether he'll table the fire plans for these communities today, or doesn't he even have the fire plans?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Well, Madam Speaker, I explained this to the member for River Heights on Thursday, and I am more than willing to explain it to all members of the Legislature. Both of those communities that he mentioned are federal jurisdiction. There are fire plans. We do have access to them as emergency measures.

I indicated to the member also we'll be sending him a letter where he should go to in the federal government to ask for copies of them. Madam Speaker, we, as a Province, are not allowed to hand those out on behalf of those communities and the federal government. I told him all of that on Thursday.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, when we're dealing with a forest fire approaching a community like Little Grand or Pauingassi, it's important to have good fire plans in place and that those who are dealing with the emergency, whether at a provincial or a federal level, have quick access to those plans to make sure the effort is well co-ordinated and following the approach of the fire plan.

I ask the minister today whether he has actually seen those fire plans and whether he is using them in implementation of the strategy to address the fire and to help the communities in Pauingassi and Little Grand.

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, Madam Speaker, as a former minister of the Crown, the member would know that



these exist. He was a federal minister of the Crown; he should know that these plans exist.

I would also like to point out to him that both Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi were both evacuated. And I would suspect, Madam Speaker, that the federal government and those two communities were probably more focused on ensuring that their residents got out to safety and not quite as focused on the member's need to see the emergency plans.

Madam Speaker, I will get him a letter. I will point out to him where he should go within the federal government to access those plans.

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

#### **Little Grand Rapids Evacuees Return to Community Plan**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I hear from the chief and council at Little Grand Rapids that the evacuees from their community are being approached by drug dealers who want to give them meth. I had asked the ministers for assurances that this wouldn't happen, on May 23rd, but now we know that it is happening.

The chief and council believe there's an urgency to return people to their community as soon as possible before the community has to deal with a meth epidemic.

Can the minister tell us today what actions he's taking to enable people to return to their community as soon as possible, and can he share those plans? Thank you.

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Well, Madam Speaker, I would caution the member for River Heights to choose his words 'carefully.' He's disparagingly spoken about Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi and the fact that they may or may not have emergency plans and that they haven't come forward with them, and now he's taking a run at law enforcement.

Madam Speaker, federal government, through the Red Cross, with the leadership of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi, have done an outstanding job protecting their citizens, and I would suggest to the member opposite that he just wait, let's get the situation cleared up. Manitoba Hydro is up north right now, assessing the situation. They will come back with a report.

Everybody is working flat out. Maybe the member opposite should cut them some slack and wait 'til the event is over before he second-guesses people.

#### **Investing in Canada Plan Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement**

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, our PC government is investing in strategic infrastructure that will help the growth of provincial economy, that will be a boon to the daily lives of Manitobans.

Today I heard an important announcement involving the Minister of Municipal Relations about investing \$1.1 billion in long-term infrastructure projects.

Can the Minister of Municipal Relations please share with this Chamber the good news emanating from the hard work of our PC government?

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Municipal Relations. *[interjection]*

Order.

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I thank the member from Dauphin for that great question.

This landmark agreement, Madam Speaker, paves the way for continued historic levels of infrastructure investment in new priority projects right across Manitoba. We look forward to working in partnership with the federal government and municipalities, non-profit, indigenous and northern communities to identify priority projects that strengthen Manitoba's economy, improve our global competitive-competitiveness and revitalize our communities.

This new agreement will deliver lasting benefits to Manitobans and enhance our government's commitment to fair say for municipalities and ensure we're on the track for being Manitoba-Canada's most improved province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

#### **Agriculture Water Supply Pumping Station Costs**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Last September we learned that this government wants to push the costs of pumping stations, pumps that protect valuable farmland, onto the people of Kelsey and The Pas.

Now this government wants to do the same thing in southwestern Manitoba, forcing the people of Macdonald, Cartier and Portage la Prairie to pay for their pumping stations.

\* (14:40)

Manitoba farmers and reeves are saying that this government is ignoring them, moving forward with bottom-line cost cutting—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Maloway:** —that will hurt farmers and rural communities.

I'd like to know: Why is this government refusing to give the people of rural Manitoba support for their critical water infrastructure?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Well, far be it from me to give the member for Elmwood a little bit of a geography lesson, but I think he's talking about south central Manitoba.

And, Madam Speaker, we recognize that the start of the spring was very dry and that there were a lot of needs for water in a lot of those communities, and the pumps were working as expected.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** The local reeves, Dale Fossay for Cartier, Brad Erb for Macdonald and Kam Blight for Portage la Prairie, have all made it clear—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Maloway:** —that they simply cannot afford to take on this responsibility. It costs nearly \$100,000 a year to operate three pumps, as well as expertise, and the pumps are at the end of their life cycle with a \$2.3-million repair bill.

Madam Speaker, why is this minister giving no thought to the ability of municipalities to bear the costs of this poorly thought out policy?

**Mr. Schuler:** The member for Elmwood has just again pointed out one of the difficulties and one of the challenges that our government faces, and that's the liabilities when it comes to maintenance and repair.

Under 17 years of mismanagement, not a dollar, not a dime and not a nickel was ever spent on any of these pumps, and now we have a lot of infrastructure that has gotten old and need repairs.

Madam Speaker, the pumps are running. We're ensuring that those communities have water for drinking and for irrigation, and—something that the government—that the NDP never did when they were in government—we're also talking to those communities.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** Madam Speaker, water is pumped from the Assiniboine into the La Salle and Elm River and Mill Creek. The system provides thousands of people in Macdonald with drinking water, dozens of commercial vegetable farmers with irrigation, and water for livestock.

Without pumping from the Assiniboine, the La Salle often stops by late summer, and climate change will only make droughts and flooding more severe.

The minister has the mandate to regulate, protect and provide critical water infrastructure, so why is he shirking his responsibility?

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I'm certainly encouraged to hear the new love for municipalities from the member opposite because, you know, for the last three and a half months in session, he's done nothing but throw municipalities under the bus, Madam Speaker.

We are supporting municipalities right across Manitoba, whether it comes to sewer, water or any infrastructure, Madam Speaker. We're on the heels of a great announcement this morning: \$1.1 billion being invested throughout Manitoba over 10 years. Where they got it wrong, we'll get it right.

### **International Students Health-Care Coverage**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** I continue to hear from constituents who say the Pallister government's cut to international-student health coverage is hurting their families. International students with kids relied on that health-care package for their child's Manitoba health coverage.

Now they are being forced to pay out of pocket for their child's health care. Many parents will be forced to make sacrifices in order to get their child the care they deserve.

Why is the minister cutting health care for the children of international students?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question. We're certainly always pleased to look at international students that are coming to this province. We know that the enrolment has been increasing steadily and continues to do so.

And—because we're a good province to come to. We offer great opportunities in terms of international education, and we also have special programs under Provincial Nominee Program that attracts many students to this province.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** Cuts to health-care coverage for international students put their families' health at risk and undermine our economy.

We want talented international students to choose our province because of our strong public services like quality universal health care. Parents put their children first, no matter what. If they know they will have to pay out-of-pocket for their child's health care in Manitoba, they may not settle in our province.

This government should be actively recruiting talented people and their families by making it easier for them to settle in Manitoba.

Why is this minister trying to make it harder for international students and their families?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, under this government we lead all provinces in investing in the compassionate departments of government—of child services, education and health care.

We are going to continue to stay focused on delivering better services to the people of Manitoba who need those services, and we're going to make sure that this province remains the home of hope for people from around the world.

We set up the program that brings people here. The Conservative party set up the Provincial Nominee Program.

We eliminated the NDP wait times and we're going to lead the country in new immigration for our size in the coming year, Madam Speaker, so we're making the necessary investments to ensure that all the dangers the NDP created, or as many as possible of the dangers they created, for the people of Manitoba when it comes to affordability, like jacking

up taxes after going to the doors of the houses of this province and promising they wouldn't, jacking up taxes on those very people the member claims she wants to defend today, gives no evidence of the assertion—does not support the assertion she's making today that the NDP care anything about Manitobans. All they care about is the green in their pockets. They want more of it to spend. We want more of it back in the pockets of Manitobans.

### **Speaker's Ruling**

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

Following oral questions on Monday, May 28th, 2018, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) rode—rose on a matter of privilege to draw to the attention of the House comments allegedly made by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer) from his seat while the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) was asking questions during oral questions on that same day.

The Official Opposition House Leader contended that the comments were infringing on the rights of the member of Point Douglas to raise issues of concern and were also attempting to limit and silence her freedom of speech by being aggressive and bullying.

The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) and the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) also offered advice to the Chair about decorum and heckling and personal attacks.

I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege: First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

Regarding the first condition of whether the matter was raised at the earliest opportunity, given that rule 28(5) indicates that points of order and matters of privilege cannot be raised during oral questions, the earliest opportunity to raise a matter of privilege is immediately after oral questions.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader did raise the matter of privilege immediately

after oral questions, so the condition of timeliness has been satisfied.

On the second condition of whether a prima facie case has been established, this condition has not been met. At the conclusion of her remarks the Official Opposition House Leader did not move a motion, which is one of the requirements for demonstrating a prima facie case.

In addition, as I ruled on October 20th, 2016, issues relating to language, decorum, or procedure are inherently questions of order and not privilege. Any complaint about language in this House should be raised as a point of order and not a matter of privilege. This concept has been reinforced by rulings from numerous Manitoba Speakers.

\* (14:50)

Further, Bosc and Gagnon state in House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, on page 623, that, and I quote: "Any member who feels aggrieved by a remark or allegation may also bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Speaker on a point of order." End quote.

Also, as I ruled in the House on October 17th, 2016 and on October 20th, 2016, off-the-record language cannot be considered or ruled on by the Speaker, and this is consistent with decades of Manitoba practice. Accordingly, off-the-record comments cannot form the basis for a matter of privilege.

Although I am ruling that the conditions for a prima facie case of privilege have not been met in this circumstance, I do want to talk to all sides of the House very seriously about heckling and breaches of decorum.

On the day in question I rose numerous times during oral questions to call for order and to appeal to the better nature of members for setting a positive example for the schoolchildren and guests in the public gallery and for those watching on television and online. However, my appeals appear not to have been taken to heart by members, as heckling continued on both sides of the House with members yelling at each other at some points.

This is a place where there are often strong differences of opinion, but shouting each other down and heckling is not a constructive way of having public debates on issues. This type of behaviour could serve to intimidate members on both sides of

the House and it certainly does not show the Assembly in a very good light in the public eye.

I made the following comments to the House on April 3rd, 2018 to talk about how we all need to be mindful of our actions giving the watershed moment of changes in society, and I am again repeating these words for the benefit of members: More than ever this is requiring all of us to be mindful of our actions and to treat each other with more civility and respect so that we can move forward as the role models society expects us to be. This Chamber is a place where strong and differing views are expressed, and that will not change. What is incumbent on all of us is to moderate our behaviours and to remember to treat each other as we would want to be treated. Our constituents and our family and friends would expect no less from us.

I strongly urge members to think about the message I am sharing with you today and I thank members for their attention in listening to this ruling.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, respectfully, I do challenge your ruling.

**Madam Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. All those in favour—shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Voice Vote**

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Madam Speaker, on division.

**Madam Speaker:** On division.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** Petitions—oh, prior to moving on to petitions, I would just like to ask, as the House is expected to adjourn later today for the summer, I would encourage all honourable members to prepare for this by removing the contents of their desks now.

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.

Now, petitions.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Madam Speaker, I inadvertently missed the names of a couple of the escorts of my guests.

I'm wondering if I can get unanimous leave of the House to table the names of the guests that—associated with my private member's statement?

**Madam Speaker:** In reverting back, then, to private members' statements, is there leave to consider those names in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Petitions, then.

## PETITIONS

### Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17th, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed by multiple systems which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

(5) Tina Fontaine's murder galvanized Canada on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, MMIWG, as she quickly became our collective daughter and the symbol of MMIG across Canada.

(6) Manitoba has failed to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports and

recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous peoples and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Justice to immediately call a public inquiry into the systems that had a life in the role—that had a role in the life and death of Tina Fontaine, as well as the function of the administration of justice after her death.

(2) To urge that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by Samantha Asbury, Angela Kaminski and Dayle Wood and many, 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.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed by multiple systems which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

(5) Tina Fontaine's murder galvanized Canada on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, MMIWG, as she quickly became our collective daughter and the symbol of MMIWG across Canada.

(6) Manitoba has failed to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports and recommendations meant to improve and protect the

lives of indigenous peoples and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the royal-Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Justice to immediately call a public inquiry into the systems that had a role in the life and death of Tina Fontaine, as well as the function of the administration of justice after her death.

(2) To urge that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be jointly-developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by many Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed by multiple systems which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

(5) Tina Fontaine's murder galvanized Canada on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, MMIWG, as she quickly became our collective daughter and the symbol of MMIWG across Canada.

(6) Manitoba has failed to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports and recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous peoples and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Justice to immediately call a public inquiry into the systems that had a role in the life and death of Tina Fontaine, as well as the function of the administration of justice after her death.

\* (15:00)

(2) To urge the terms of reference of a public inquiry be developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Madam Speaker, this petition was signed by Linda M. Wilson, Pam Rayner Moore, Gail Hill and many other Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, would you call concurrence?

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider concurrence this afternoon. The House will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

#### Concurrence Motion

**Mr. Chairperson:** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

We have now before us the consideration for the concurrence motion moved by the Government House Leader (Mr. Cullen) on May 28th, 2018.

The Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) previously tabled the following list of ministers to be called for questioning on the debate for concurrence motion: Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson), the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) and the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton). The ministers are questioned concurrently, and the floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I appreciate the opportunity to ask the Minister of Sustainable Development and Francophone Affairs a few questions about Francophone Affairs, so I appreciate the opportunity to do that this afternoon.

So just over, I guess, a couple of weeks ago, the minister was talking a little bit about her

government's recent cuts to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and at that time was saying that these kind of cuts, they're—they weren't a trend, they weren't going to continue. She had no plans to continue to cut, at least in this year, is what I think she put on the record.

So, as always, I'm eternally optimistic that when the government does say that they won't cut any more services that that is what's going to happen. So that's very encouraging, I would say, Mr. Chair.

One of the main concerns the minister will know that the francophone community here in Manitoba has had is that when French language services seem like an afterthought from the government, when they're not prioritized, when they're not put front and centre, that that can seem disrespectful to that community and especially here in Manitoba where we do have, of course, constitutionally protected French language services.

\*(15:10)

But, you know, it's more than that, and I think the minister would agree it is more than that. She's gotten to know the community, I'm sure, very well over her time as minister. And I'm sure she has a better—even a better understanding than I do of the historical value that's put on the francophone community and the relationship that's been built here in this province. And it is fairly significant, and I know, talking from—with legislators across the country, just how important it really is here in Manitoba and how much respect has been given to that.

So—but, again, the concern is that when these positions are cut, it's seen as disrespectful. And what the—you know, what the community's been asking for is, you know, information that's offered to them. You know, it's not simply translated from English; it's actually created in French, and it has that cultural, linguistic, social component that is so important to the Franco-Manitoba community.

So I just wanted to ask the minister: how does the minister think materials for francophone communities in Manitoba should be produced?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs):** Well, I certainly do thank the member for that question. And our government is certainly proud to be moving forward in an enhanced Francophonie here in Manitoba. We started with bill 5 that brought in many different enhancements for the francophone community, and we're building

on that. To that end, I'm going to be meeting with the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council on June the 12th, looking forward to this meeting so that we can continue our dialogue about how government can best serve the community needs. I view the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council, which is the first of its kind in the province's history, as a real key component to bridging the gap between community and government. I see this community as being a very nimble, hands-on advisory council that will be continuing to provide advice to our government.

We've also been doing a lot of work in regards to enhancing services for francophones. We've got the first ever francophone—the French Language Services plans that all, not just government departments but many agencies and Crowns have also completed, and we're compiling a lot of great data about the enhanced bilingual capacity in government, and we're just getting started with this work. So I'm proud to continue on that work.

I would also like to note that I've had a lot of conversations with francophone sexual assault survivors and women who've come to me and said to me that they—one of the barriers for them—like, there's a lot of barriers for a lot of women in reporting sexual violence, when it has occurred—but the francophone women have said specifically it's hard for them to report in the language of their—in their native tongue or the language of their choice. And I certainly can understand and empathize with them. I recently addressed the Pluri-Elles AGM, and I was asked to speak heart—from the heart about my experiences as a sexual assault survivor. And they'd asked me to do it in my—in the language of my choice. And they encouraged me to speak in a language that I would be most comfortable with.

As many people know, French is—I'm learning French language and wouldn't be very fluent enough to talk about something so emotional and so deeply personal as my experience with sexual assault in French language right now. And so I was eternally grateful that they had extended that opportunity for me to share my story in English. And it's made me think a lot about the initiative about third-party reporting and how we can work with the francophone community to enhance third-party reporting for them, and I've had some discussions with the Pluri-Elles organization and the Winnipeg Police Service, as well. They're very keen. I saw the head of the Sex Crimes Unit at an event the other day, and he had mentioned to me that he'd heard from the group as well, looking at ways to really just

enhance not only bilingualism but, in this case, opportunities for sexual assault survivors to share their experience and have that documented and recorded in their native language.

So our government is committed to enhancing French language services in every aspect of our society and enhancing the Francophonie in Manitoba, and we'll continue to do that.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I appreciate the minister giving that personal reflection on this and experience with this, because I think that cuts exactly to the heart of what I'm trying to get at here this afternoon. And that is for individuals who not only are sharing information but are looking to receive information, and maybe I'll just pick up on the minister's example and, you know, and use that as a basis for maybe how someone would want to be communicated with.

So, if the government has an initiative or needs information passed along to people about steps that they can take, you know, in the case of sexual assault or if they have complaints, you know, whistle-blower situations, anything where it pertains to them and their comfort or their first language or their most effective way of communicating would be in the French language.

Again, I understand what the minister is saying about opening those doors to allow them to communicate, to express themselves in that language, but I think what I'm trying to get at is, is to receive information in that language as well.

And so the question really is, is about, you know, how that information is presented. And, you know, and would it be sufficient, in the minister's estimation, for that information to be a translation of an English document or to take the English document and have it produced, have that information made available and then have civil servants sit down and try to translate it? Or maybe this is, you know, contracted out. I don't know how that would be undertaken within government. Maybe it's a department-by-department scenario.

But once that information is produced in English, take that and then translate it and disseminate it within the francophone community. Is that adequate, do you think? Would the minister say that that would be adequate for the francophone community in Manitoba?

**Ms. Squires:** We—our government does appreciate the importance of having an enhanced bilingual—enhanced bilingualism in the civil service. And we're

very proud this year that we've had record numbers of civil servants who are bilingual and in designated and non-designated positions.

And we believe that we're actually having more bilingual people in government now than ever before. And that will go a long way to ensuring that people can communicate in the language of their choice and deliver reports and make recommendations, so we're really committed to enhancing bilingualism in the civil service.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Yes, and again, I mean, this—I think that's a laudable goal as well. I do think that the rate of bilingualism within the civil service is an important aspect. But, again, my question is, is about producing materials and documentation for distribution.

You know, this is an important way that government communicates with the citizens of Manitoba. This is a crucial way that information, as the minister stated, as the minister herself cited, when it comes to sexual harassment claims or what to do if they see something in the workplace that they need to report. I think this would be a very important and a very specific way that the government would want to communicate back to its citizens. And there's a long—there's a big difference, there's a big gap between having somebody who understands French as a second language who, you know, maybe took it in school, is considered fluent, absolutely fluent, but doesn't have that true francophone perspective and doesn't have that as their basis, doesn't have that as the starting point when creating these documents.

And as I said when we began this afternoon, this is a historic relationship. This is something that we can be proud of as Manitobans is our relationship with the francophone community and the understanding of how integral it is to the Manitoba experience.

So, again, I—unless I'm—maybe I'm, you know, maybe the minister has already answered me and I'm just not quite getting the picture. Is she saying that a translation from a civil servant who has French as a second language is acceptable to her as a way to produce materials for distribution from government?

\* (15:20)

**Ms. Squires:** So two years ago, the member will recall we did unanimously support bill 5, which was the francophone enhancement and support act. And in that, one of the crucial components of that is we



are extending the definition, expanding the definition of a francophone to anyone who has an affinity for the French language and speaks it on a regular basis. And the prior definition of a Franco-Manitoban was someone who had French as their native tongue.

And so that is a very crucial difference. We're seeing now we have 25,000 students enrolled in French immersion. And these students are graduating being fully bilingual. And by definition of a francophone according to the new law, these students that are graduating from French immersion that are bilingual are, for all intents and purposes, welcomed into the Franco-Manitoban family.

And I personally have had a lot of experience working with the Franco-Manitoban community, and I know that they're an incredibly accepting and welcoming community. They've accepted me as their minister, and as someone who is progressing through my lessons in French language, they have supported me and been an advocate for my quest to become fluent in their language. And I certainly do think that there is a grand—a great acceptance in the province of Manitoba for anyone who is—who has a special affinity for the French language to be classified as a Franco-Manitoban.

And so I certainly do think that bilingual civil servants who certainly would, by definition, be a francophone, because I wouldn't anticipate that they would have an affinity for the language, would be able to produce documents and be able to do this good work on behalf of the government of Manitoba.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I'm glad the minister mentioned the 25,000 students, and I'm sure she can anticipate that's where we're headed this afternoon.

But, just to sort of finish up here, and I think the minister has this exactly right. You know, there are—there is a growing francophone community, whether those are people that have learned it here in the province through our school system or through immigration coming to this province—and of course we know that the population of francophone Manitobans is growing through those folks from other countries who feel comfortable coming to Manitoba, feel comfortable that their language is going to be respected and protected.

But the question is, is about the production of those materials. And so it's one thing to translate an already-produced document that has been produced in English and then is translated and then distributed. It's another thing altogether to have a francophone

producing that document, being the genesis of that document and creating that policy or that information from the ground up. And I think that's where the distinction comes, and I think that's where the concern comes.

I did want to ask the minister—and I might have the name wrong. I was trying to jot it down quickly as she said it. The—was it the francophone advisory council? [*interjection*] Francophone Affairs Advisory Council? Can the minister just tell me—she had mentioned there's a meeting coming up in June. Maybe can she mention the last time that they've—that that group has met or—well, that and how often the advisory council has met with the minister?

**Ms. Squires:** I believe the last meeting was November. We have a legislated mandate for this advisory council to meet twice a year, and since we brought the law in, I believe we've met that by having our inaugural meeting in the—you know, shortly after the advisory council was met—was named, and then we've met every six months thereafter and are now coming up to a very important meeting on June the 12th. And I've met with the group each and every time they have convened.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I thank the minister for that, and I appreciate the fact that she doesn't have her officials sitting around her as we do during the Estimates process, so I know that they, I'm sure, would be frantically flipping through their calendars and finding those exact dates, but I appreciate that information.

So, I did want to pick up on, you know, the minister just mentioned 25,000 students who are enrolled in French immersion, who are engaged in francophone education here in the province, and that is a record number. That's more than we've ever seen here in the province, and we know that it's absolutely essential.

It's essential, as I said, to—not only to those Manitobans who see it as a value, as a benefit to learn a second language or be, you know, engaged in the larger Canadian community of francophone speakers, but it's also, I think, probably one of the best-selling points that we have if we're talking to people from other countries, francophone countries, to say, you can come here, your children can be educated in French and they can fit right in, in terms of their language, and then, you know, excel in other ways and, really, hopefully pick up right where they left off from their home countries.

And so it is absolutely vital to, I think, who we are as Manitobans and where we want to be going forward. So I guess, the question is what will the minister do to ensure that those students will have access to French language services after they graduate high school?

**Ms. Squires:** Well, I can certainly hope to find room for them in the Manitoba government where we are enhancing our bilingual capacity in every department. And it has been a real learning experience for me to be reading all the French Language Services reports that have come in from all of the departments represented by my colleagues.

And it has been a real delight to see the numbers of our bilingual servers—civil servants moving forward and increasing year over year. So we're really pleased about that, and I certainly hope that today's graduates, some of them will find themselves in the Manitoba government in some way, shape or form.

Perhaps some of them will even become legislators themselves and find themselves in this Chamber, and—or in other Chambers around the country. We know that the growing—our enhanced Francophonie here in Manitoba is not, you know, it's a great opportunity for us to attract newcomers to Manitoba.

And when we are in a variety of communities throughout the province and the City of Winnipeg, we're seeing newcomers, several of them from Francophone countries in Africa, Cameroon and a variety of those countries and it's great to see this multicultural mosaic really flourishing here in Manitoba.

But it's also an important economic strategy, and I know our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), he's been attracting a lot of businesses to come and set up shop here in Manitoba, and bilingualism has certainly been a key selling feature of our province, and very pleased about that.

And we also know it's a great tourism strategy. We're seeing an enhanced francophone tourism component here in Manitoba unlike anything we've ever seen before.

And I know my department was really proud to support Entreprises Riel with some of their initiatives, and I wish all the—wish all of them all the best as they continue to enhance their tourism strategy in the—in Manitoba and to really promote francophone tourism in our province.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I—and I'm glad that the minister is, I mean, she really does seem to be keen on enhancing French language support and promotion of the francophone community in Manitoba, so my question is, you know, as we've seen cuts from the Minister of Education to the Bureau de l'éducation française, you know, what kind of conversation did she have with the minister?

\* (15:30)

Or maybe, better yet, this is probably a more genuine and honest question is, is what was her conversation like with the Premier (Mr. Pallister)? Because I, you know, venture to guess that it probably wasn't the Minister of Education that was driving this—these cuts.

I'm sure the Minister of Education, like every other minister in government, probably said, this is important; this is vital; I've met with the parents of French language education; I've met with the teachers; I've met with people involved in French education, and they're saying this is an absolutely vital position. They're saying we cannot cut this.

And yet we saw the cuts. So I must assume that it's coming straight from the Premier's office. And, if it's coming from the Premier's office, and the minister is passionate about French—protecting French language and the francophone community in Manitoba, and you've got an ally in the Education Minister, what was this conversation like? How did this go down? How did—what kind of points did the minister make to the Premier to say, look, maybe we should reconsider this; this is an important file?

**Ms. Squires:** Well, the entire preamble is based on the myth, the myth of cuts. That is simply inaccurate, that our government is cutting. We are enhancing our Education budget. We had a very large Education budget, more than any time under members opposite.

And so we are certainly moving forward with enhanced funding for education, and I do want to commend the Minister of Education for the hard work that he's done and continues to do.

And I also do want to more specifically answer the question, although I'll rephrase the question. I think what the member was getting at is what is my relationship like with our government, with our Minister of Education and with the Premier. And I would let him know that it's a good relationship.

And what was the conversation like with the community? Well, minister—the Minister of Education and myself, we met with several members of the francophone community on this very issue, and we continue to meet. And we've established a working group so that we can ensure that the francophone community has even greater access now to government than ever before through a new initiative and through the minister's openness and willingness to meet with community. So we are very pleased with our relationship going forward with community.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I'm surprised that the minister would call the cuts a myth when it's the community that's telling us about this—these cuts, when it's, you know, 1,800 residents who signed a petition. This isn't a political document. This wasn't something dreamed up in a party caucus. This came from the community. This came directly from the francophone community, and it came from a group of individuals that I bet you if you sat down and polled all those parents and those concerned citizens and you said, which political party did you vote for, I bet you'd get a pretty even split amongst those folks about their voting history. Because this isn't a political issue. This isn't something that should be a Conservative, an NDP, a Liberal concern. It should be something that we all as Manitobans value.

And, you know, we spend, you know, three questions, four questions for the minister, you know, promoting the francophone community and the importance of it, you know, both in terms of our economic outlook and our social outlook and the historical value of the French community in Manitoba, talking about promoting that. And then we hear, you know, her say, well, yes, she's got a great relationship with the Premier (Mr. Pallister). And, presumably, what I take that to mean is, is that she has the ability to have the Premier listen, actually listen to these concerns and listen to this issue.

So, you know, it just—it sounds to me like she's got a great opportunity, as the minister, to partner with other ministers in other departments where this is important, especially, I would say, Education, and to say, look, there's some value here, and change the Premier's mind, change this Premier's mind on cutting at all costs. And that's really what we're seeing here in an area where, you know, I would say, you know, the government is looking to cut in all different places, all kinds of places. And, you know, we're talking about big budgets in some departments; I get it. These are multi-billion-dollar departments.

But when you're talking about something that's so vital to so many Manitobans, and it is something that is funded, you know, in a way that keeps—that shows the value of it and shows the importance that the government places on it. It's not only symbolic, but it is symbolic and it shows where this government's priorities are at.

So, again, I just—I mean, I understand. I'm not going to get the Cabinet transcript here tabled—well, maybe—the minister says maybe we could get that tabled for us, her excerpt where she pleaded with the Premier, she begged, said please, Mr. Premier, don't cut the francophone services in this province; value those where the, you know, the next hand up at the table was the Minister of Education, and said, I agree; I've heard from parents, I've heard from teachers, I've heard from educators. This is important.

And maybe the Premier just said, no, that's it; my word is final. And maybe, you know what? Maybe the minister can put that on the record.

But I want her to square that circle of how she, as a proponent of the francophone community, as the Minister of Education, as a proponent of French education in this province presumably, can't get through to the Premier, can't make him listen. Why is that?

**Ms. Squires:** Well, I appreciate the member taking exception to me saying that he's promoting the myth of cuts, but he really is. He needs to understand that he is inaccurate, false, when he says that there's been a cut. We have not only expanded the budget for all education services in the province of Manitoba, when it comes to the Bureau de l'éducation française, there have been absolutely no cuts, no transfers out and no diminishment of service in any way, shape or form. So, when he talks about the cuts, that is simply a myth.

What I can tell him is that we have enhanced the bursaries and scholarships, you know, significantly since we—when—since we formed office, and I know a lot of the francophone families that I talk to, a lot of the anglophone families that I talk to really appreciate the opportunity to apply for scholarships and bursaries as someone who—I was low-income when I went through university. I put myself through. All of my post-secondary degrees came when I was working at a lower income—I was a lower income wage earner and a single parent head of a household, and I know bursaries and scholarships, which were harder to come by when I was in school

a decade ago would have meant a world of difference to me. It would have made the difference between pursuing even further education or not.

And so all the people that I've spoken to, single mothers like myself, low-income women like myself, have said that bursaries and scholarships, either for themselves or their children, have been absolutely vital. And so I'm really proud that our government has taken this initiative on and that our Education Minister has enhanced that pot of money to over \$20 million.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, again, Madam Speaker—Mr. Chair—apologies—this isn't just myself saying this. This is parents, this is educators, these are people who are closest to this in a sense that they are investing their time and their energy to ensure that there aren't cuts.

And, I mean, the argument that there's not cuts is just ludicrous because the most obvious, or the most important cut was the cut to the assistant deputy minister position, which is a cut. I mean, the minister doesn't need to dance around this; it's a cut, you know, and either stand behind that and say, as the Premier (Mr. Pallister) says, well it's, you know, it's a cut at the top and we are, you know, we're going to cut all these people at the top.

Well, and I—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —and I hear the criticisms of my impersonation of the Premier. I am working on that one, so I'll keep working on that.

But this is what I hear, is I hear the Premier say it's a cut, but it's a good cut; it's a fine cut. It doesn't matter. Nobody cares about this cut. We can still do the same work.

\* (15:40)

But the community is saying no; no, you can't do that work, because this is an absolutely integral part of the education—French education system in the province. And this goes back to where the minister started, this historic relationship between the francophone community in this province and the anglophone community, the basis of our province and a compromise which was 'reased'—which was reached, which was unique across the country. This was unique in this place, that we were able to create a position, to create an importance of French education.

And I can tell you, having been to other provinces and understood some of their politics or some of the sticking points or the friction points amongst communities, that is a major sticking point and a friction point in other provinces. Whereas here in Manitoba, we made that compromise, we made that special arrangement, and now we've had 100 years of—you know, the importance of that French-language education being honoured and respected by the government.

And yet here we are, having a cut that the Premier says he thinks it's great. He thinks it's fine. So we don't need to dance around the fact that this is a cut. This is a cut. There's no question about that. And, I mean—and that's just at the top.

So then you start going down through the system, and we start seeing, you know, how there's more cuts. There's more cuts. The curriculum consultants within the department are getting let go. These are the people who are creating the materials that are getting distributed across the province that are going to teachers in the classroom. And those are getting cut. Those are positions that are getting cut.

So, on the one hand, the minister says, ah, that's a myth; there's no cuts. Yet, every single day, the Premier stands up and says, oh, man, these are the best cuts that we could have made. So I'm just—I'm a bit flabbergasted.

**An Honourable Member:** Just a bit?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Just a bit, as the minister for—or the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) points out. Just a bit. Because this is as clear as it possibly can.

And I see, you know, it's important for the minister, you know, to get the full picture. Maybe she's getting confirmation now that this is a cut, and maybe she can just clarify: Does she think that this is a good cut?

**Ms. Squires:** Well, let's look at results, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are certainly a government that's focused on results. We're seeing record investments in education. We're seeing record-high enrolment in French immersion and in the single-track French education system. And we are seeing more bilingual civil servants. And I'm certain that if we were to do a scan of the rest of Manitoba, we would see parallel numbers to correspond with the enhanced bilingual capacity in the civil service. We would see an enhanced bilingual capacity in private and corporate worlds, as well.

And so the results speak for themselves, that we have been working on our—the enhanced Francophonie in Manitoba. And that has been a focus of our government. The first legislative act that I had the honour of working on and introducing was bill 5, and our government is continuing to move forward in that spirit. We will enhance the Francophonie in Manitoba in the education capacity, in immigration capacity, in economic capacity, in tourism capacity, in all aspects of community. And so the results speak for themselves, and we are committed to enhancing the Francophonie in Manitoba.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Just wondering if the minister—again, understanding she doesn't have her staff at the ready to answer some of these questions, maybe she could just take it as under advisement or—I don't know if that's the right language, but give me the information ASAP on the current staff listing for the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

**Ms. Squires:** I beg for one moment to see if I can be able to provide that information.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay. We'll take a small break here.

The honourable minister.

**Ms. Squires:** Francophone Affairs Secretariat has 38 FTEs.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I appreciate that. And can the minister provide a current staff listing, then, for them as well? And I'm wondering about a current staff—again, if she doesn't have this handy—a current staff listing for the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council that she was mentioning earlier.

**Ms. Squires:** Can I ask the member to repeat the question about the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council?

**Mr. Wiebe:** My apologize—apologies. I think I mumbled my way through that one. Can the minister undertake to provide a current staff listing of the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council?

**Ms. Squires:** So, when we appointed the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council, we did issue a press release with all the names, and there have been no changes, with the exception of the chair. We know that we said au revoir to a very fabulous chair—or co-chair, Madame Jacqueline Blay, when she left her role. She wanted to pursue some other projects, and I hear from her from time to time that those projects are going exceedingly well, and we certainly wished her all the best. She had took her leave in

November of this past year, and we welcomed Monsieur Christian Monnin as the co-chair of the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council.

And other than that, we haven't had any changes on that council, with the exception of—the clerk of the executive council is also the co-chair of the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council, and we have had a new—we have a new co-chair with Fred Meier who is now the new clerk—not so new, but newish to the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council.

So—but I will certainly give the member the list of all the members of that council which include several from the community as well as the SFM and six deputy minister from government. So I'll refresh his memory and provide that and as well as the current staff listing. I don't have that information.

**Mr. Wiebe:** And just to confirm, also a current staff listing for the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. Okay. I see the minister nodding her head, so we'll just put that on the record, and then hopefully that'll be okay for Hansard.

Has the—just wondering, the minister has mentioned—referenced bill 5 a few times. I'm wondering if the advisory council has made any recommendations as per section 2(a)—sorry—section 10(2) since that council has been formed. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

**Ms. Squires:** Can I get the member to repeat that question?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I thought it was quite clear, Mr. Speaker. I thought members in the Chamber agreed with me, but—*[interjection]*—totally clear, I think I hear members saying.

But—and I appreciate that the minister did do this a number of times with the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), that she asked for the question to be repeated. And I will just note that my questions are quite a bit shorter than the questions that were being asked by the member for Assiniboia, so, hopefully, it'll be as efficient as possible.

\* (15:50)

So the advisory council has a mandate to make recommendations as per the section 10(2) of that bill, bill 5. And so I'm wondering if the advisory council has made any recommendations since its formation.

**Ms. Squires:** Well, I thank the member, and I do appreciate his brevity in comparison to my friend

from Assiniboia. But I just—yesterday was a very loud and proud day at the Pride rally, and so I think my hearing is a little off today, so I thank him for his patience on that and for repeating the question.

The advisory council certainly does make several recommendations, and I've met—as the member knows, I have met with them each time that they have commenced, and I've also met separate and apart with the new chair, the incoming co-chair, Monsieur Monnin, and just recently, they had submitted to me a request. They had recommended that they make their Francophone Affairs Advisory Council more nimble, and it wasn't an official—you know—type document that spelled out that they were making a recommendation under section 10(2) of the act, but what they were saying is that they wanted to have a conversation with me about how we could proceed with making the council more nimble.

The council wants to be an effective tool for communicating with government and to have a certain—more contact with government. So what we're doing on June 12th is responding to that request on how we can make this council more nimble.

I certainly have a—I can draw a comparison from the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council to my Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. It's very similar in structure. They're both acts of the—set up in the Legislature and have a mandated requirement, a legislated requirement, and the council members are prescribed in law. And they also—they meet with similar frequency and have a very similar role in representing community and providing advice to the minister.

And, in comparison with my Manitoba Women's Advisory Council, which has a long history—I believe it's dated back to the, I believe, early '90s, maybe late '80s, where it has been a part of Manitoba society—and they're a very nimble group.

They do an incredible amount of work, and they meet formally and officially. They meet with me, and then they also meet separately in subcommittees, and they have working groups, and they have tackled a lot of amazing projects and work independent of their set meetings with me.

One of those was the creation of the Status of Women report where the chair had endeavoured to take that work on and got the council engaged in that work. And I was very supportive of that and had been made apprised of the work that was ongoing for

a year and a bit that it took them to get all the information together to assemble the Status of Women report in Manitoba. And they're a very nimble council, to say the least.

Now, that being said, they have that framework, they have that history and they have those best practices that we can offer the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council, which we certainly are, in helping them structure themselves.

They can meet more often in subcommittees and informally in addition to the two times a year that they're required to meet by law, and they can certainly bring forward suggestions on how they can—what they would like to do in their role as advisers to government, and I'm certainly eager to continue working with them in that capacity and helping them get more established. But, ultimately, this is a fairly new committee—a new council, pardon me, and they're just getting their legs underneath them, if you will.

And so we are moving forward, and one of the recommendations that they had made to me was to become more engaged, more nimble, and we're responding.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Okay, I'm not quite sure I understand the minister when she talks about the commission—sorry—the council being more nimble. And that's fine; maybe I don't need to understand exactly what she means in terms of the operation of that particular council.

But I guess what I'm wondering is, is she saying that the only recommendation that has come forward from the council has been that they want to be more nimble—and maybe she can clarify, I guess, just so I understand what that means—or is she saying that they have a list of recommendations, and because they are not nimble, they can't move forward on those, or maybe they haven't gotten to the minister because of the meeting schedule, or they're being held up because they're not as nimble as they would like to be?

**Ms. Squires:** What the council had recommended to me and what they meant when they said to be more nimble is to be more engaged and active and to have the opportunity to provide advice to government in an official capacity on a more frequent basis, similar to my Status of Women—the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council. And so I certainly do appreciate their eagerness to roll up their sleeves and get to

work. And I'm engaged too, and we're rolling up our sleeves together and meeting very soon.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Okay, so I think I understand. So the—it sounds like the council may have a number of recommendations that they'd like to move forward on, but in terms of the structure of the council as it stands now, it's not as easy to move forward on those recommendations as they'd like it to be, so they want to think of other ways to be able to implement them.

So I'm wondering: Has the minister seen the other recommendations? Has she gotten any information about what the—what other recommendations are coming from the council? Or is that, you know, the—literally nothing, she's seen nothing from the council, and on June 12th, she'll get a binder and start going through all of these recommendations?

**Ms. Squires:** I've had ongoing dialogue with the council, even when we haven't been meeting in an official capacity, since this council has formed. With the incoming new co-chair, which occurred in—it was either October or November. I believe it was early November. With Mr. Monnin coming in as the co-chair, we certainly have had a need to—and we haven't had a council meeting since he's become the co-chair. And so I'm certainly looking forward to seeing a list of recommendations from them. And this is our meeting and will be the fulfillment of one of those recommendations.

But I don't anticipate a binder of unanswered recommendations from the council, because I have had very good communication with them, and I haven't seen—they haven't submitted formally a list of recommendations, but I look forward to seeing that from them and working on their recommendations.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Okay. So—okay. So maybe not a binder, but certainly they have lots of ideas, I would imagine, even if they are a new council. And they're going to have a lot that they're going to want to present to the minister.

Again, just trying to understand the process here. Has the minister requested any work to be done on any recommendations, you know, that she would like to see move forward, either that, you know, the genesis of the idea was from the council itself or maybe from the minister's office, maybe from one of her colleagues or something that she's heard out in the community? Has she gone to the council in one of the previous meetings or in these informal discussions that she's had—has she gone forward and

said, I would like to move forward on X, Y, Z? Could she give us some context of whether there's any of that kind of back-and-forth kind of dialogue being undertaken?

**Ms. Squires:** And so, as I'd mentioned earlier, it is a new council, and they are—the framework is being developed. It's—a lot of it is already determined and set in terms of the membership, but in ways in which they want to conduct council is largely at their discretion, and we can make the council as nimble and as active as they would like.

\* (16:00)

Now, in regards to have I received any recommendations from council and have I discussed those recommendations with my colleagues here in the Manitoba Legislature, the answer to both of those questions is yes. And I do have frequent conversations with my colleagues about issues on how we can enhance the Francophonie in Manitoba.

I believe I've had a conversation with nearly every member of Cabinet on those discussions and I know that we're certainly continuing to work on that and make progress.

**Mr. Wiebe:** The Province launched a survey of quality-of-service provisions to francophones in August 2017.

Can the minister advise us how many individuals participated in the survey?

**Ms. Squires:** So I don't have that information at my fingertips. It was a really excellent initiative and I want to thank everybody who did participate and, as always, there is a lot more work that goes on behind the scenes in creating surveys and disseminating them and collecting them, and I do wish that I had that information at my fingertips, but unfortunately, I will have to take that under advisement and provide the member that information as soon as possible.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Sure, and that's fine, but maybe the minister could just give us, like, a sense of, you know, are we talking, you know, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of Manitobans that participated in this. Maybe that would be helpful in context.

But really, what I guess I'm trying to find out is what kind of information was the survey looking to collect. You know, were there any problem areas that were identified? What were some of the areas of success, maybe, that were identified? You know, any

information that she can tell the House about that survey would be helpful, I think.

**Ms. Squires:** So one of the key factors of our government is to be a listening government, and I'm seated next to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) who is always, you know, had very robust prebudget consultations and is continuously listening to Manitobans. He's reminding me that he had 35,000 participants in his last prebudget consultation.

I know when our government launched its made-in-Manitoba climate and green plan, we had hundreds of people participate in surveys to provide us input when we wanted to—we wanted to launch the survey into French language services and the active offer and to see how well we were doing across government and across all of our agencies and Crown corporations to see how well we were providing service, and we certainly are always looking for areas to improve and we learned that there are certainly some areas where we can continuously offer improvement.

Active offer is something that is—it's an ongoing evolution of moving towards active offer in any point of contact from members of community and government services and we're certainly eager to continue to learn from community where we're—where we need room for improvement and to make those improvements.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I would hope that the minister isn't looking at the Minister of Finance for inspiration about how to conduct a survey because, you know, the minister's budget consultations were roundly criticized, you know, not only by us—you know, we've been known to be critical of the government—but by the media, by experts, by people who are concerned with public policy—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —widespread condemnation of the tactics that were employed in using, you know, moving to, you know, moving to an electronic or an Internet-based platform. I think this way of the future so I think there's a lot of value in that.

But then using questions that are leading, or create false dichotomies or leave out information. you know, as necessary to create the results that the minister or the Premier were looking for.

So I would hope that her survey—and I would imagine her survey did not follow the same tactics,

because I think that what she's trying to undertake, you know, isn't in the same vein. In other words, I would hope that she's coming to this issue in an honest and open way, in the sense that, you know, a good idea is a good idea, whether it comes from either side of the aisle or it comes from any Manitoban in this province, regardless of their political affiliation, you know.

And the other part that I would hope that the minister isn't looking to for guidance is the release of that information or the publicizing of that information, because I have yet to see the full report of those 35,000 people and exactly what they said and how many of them said to the Minister for Finance that, well, maybe you should invest in health care and keep the Concordia Hospital open. I'd love to see how many people wrote that in.

But, regardless, as I said, I do think the minister's coming to this in a different—from a different perspective, in a different way, so I'm just trying to get some of the—and I can appreciate that she doesn't have, maybe doesn't have the survey, although looks like she's got a lot of documents on her desk, so maybe she has it hidden back there—just to—just give us what, you know, what was the information they were looking to gather.

You know, again, you know, where were some of the issues or the concerns that she was hearing? And I guess, to take that next step is what is the minister—what are the plans of what to do with that information? Like what is—what are the next steps for how to utilize that information in a way to improve francophone services in Manitoba?

**Ms. Squires:** So we did hear from 528 Manitobans, and—on a variety of issues, but the general flavour of the respondents were providing their advice on how we can improve the francophone—our—improve active offer, how we can enhance bilingual capacity in the civil service or any point of contact that a member of the public would have with a government of Manitoba agency, and as well as initiatives on how to enhance the Francophonie in Manitoba.

We did hear from several people as well that were very pleased with our government's initiative to actually not just introduce but pass bill 5 and to show our commitment to an enhanced Francophonie in Manitoba.

And I do want to just get a clarification on another question that the member had asked prior, and I said I would take that under advisement, and



that was regarding the makeup of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

So, as I've explained to him, we have 38 positions, and of course, he would know that—or maybe he doesn't know—but most people know that the executive director of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat is Teresa Collins, and I just want to know, does he want a list of all the names or just the positions?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Yes, I think just the positions would be—yes.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member for Concordia, or do you want to finish off, Minister?

**Ms. Squires:** I just want to thank the member for that clarification and I'll provide him the list of positions that are in the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I wanted to thank the minister for getting that information to me so quickly. When I asked for it as soon as possible, I didn't expect it that quickly, but, you know, in this day and age, it's pretty amazing what information we can get.

So that's awesome that even though the minister is left here without her staff sitting right beside her, she always feels that they're with her at all times, which is important, I think, as a minister, to feel that. *[interjection]* That's right.

So, anyway, so I appreciate that information, 528 respondents. Again, I just wanted to get a little bit more clarification about that sample size and the techniques that were used.

You know, this is, I would say, a more specific area of service delivery within the government than, you know, let's say a budget consultation, where you have kind of a general understanding, maybe not a deep understanding but certainly a general understanding and a broad understanding of the financial realities of running the Province.

\* (16:10)

I guess, what I'm wondering is, how—what kind of techniques did the survey employ to ensure that they were getting the right sample, they were engaging the right communities? Was this experts that they were surveying? Was this open to the general public? Did they reach out to specific communities or specific individuals, you know, maybe even communities in the sense of geographic locations in the province? And I say that because

there are, of course, many places in this province where—towns and municipalities where you will find a higher number of French-speaking individuals. So I'm wondering if she can give some information about that.

And maybe just as a follow-up to that or an addition to that—not to pile too much on the minister—but what—where—again, where that information went to—did that information go to the advisory council? Did they get a copy of the survey results? Were they privy to how the information was gathered? Did they review it? Maybe she can give some context on that.

**Ms. Squires:** So, in terms of the framework or developing a framework for the survey, I can certainly hope that the member would appreciate that I wasn't necessarily involved in the technical aspects. I'm certain that there was software involved in creating the survey. I know we—as members of this House, we've often seen a lot of surveys developed online. There's a tool called SurveyMonkey, I believe. I personally haven't been involved in the hands-on creation of a survey of that nature, so whether or not my department used something a little more technical than something as basic as SurveyMonkey or not, I couldn't speak to that. But I certainly will endeavour to find that answer for the member.

He—my memory has been refreshed, and I can share with him the members of the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council. They are—as I'd mentioned earlier, the co-chairs are Fred Meier and Christian Monnin. And then the deputy ministers that are involved on that committee include the deputy minister of Justice; Health, Seniors, Active Living; Families; Sport, Culture, Heritage; and Education and Training.

And then the members from community, which we took the advice from community on—and they had helped us find—they put forward their recommendations, and so this is a great group of members of the community, and they include Aileen Clarke and Jacob—I'm going to mispronounce his name, with all apologies to Jacob, but it's Jacob Atangawe-Abe, Alexandre Brassard, Louis Tétrault, Michèle Lagimodière-Gagnon.

So those are the members of the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council. And for Hansard, I will provide a list of those names with appropriate spellings so that our good friends down in Hansard won't have to try to figure out the names—the spelling

of those names. So those are the members of our Francophone Affairs Advisory Council.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, in addition to the advisory council receiving that—the survey results, and being, you know, made aware of the results and how the survey was conducted, et cetera, I'm wondering, is the plan, then, to release this to the public, to open it up, open the books, so to speak, and allow Manitobans to see the results and understand the implications and what the survey results were?

**Ms. Squires:** I'm certainly looking forward to discussing that first with my council on June 12th.

**Mr. Wiebe:** All right.

Bill 5 also required the government departments to have multi-year French Language Services plans. Can the minister indicate how many departments have completed their multi-year plans?

**Ms. Squires:** All of them.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Can the minister indicate which non-core government agencies—for example, RHAs and others—have completed their plans?

**Ms. Squires:** I can confirm that many RHAs and agencies, the Crowns, have submitted their reports. I know just recently, I received one from the Manitoba Arts Council, which is an arm's-length entity that is under the Sport, Culture, Heritage portfolio. They submitted their French Language Services plan. I have received several of them, but I don't have an exhaustive list of which agencies and Crowns have submitted their French Language Services plan, but I will take that under advisement and have that available for the member as soon as possible.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, now, the minister has set a very high bar here in terms of as soon as possible. So I—hoping I'll get that in the next, you know, five minutes or so, but, no, I'm sure she'll get that as soon as she can.

So, for those agencies that have not completed their plans at this time, does the minister have a timeline by which she's given to them to have those plans completed or an expectation of when those should be submitted? And maybe she can just talk a little bit about some of the work that her department is doing to ensure, because, you know, it is one thing to lean over to your seatmate in the Chamber and say, hey, where's that plan; for outside agencies, that might be a little bit more difficult.

**Ms. Squires:** Well, we are very happy to see widespread compliance with the delivering of the French Language Services plan, and we have had, again, like I said, widespread compliance, and what was important for us, most importantly, was to have these documents to be working documents. We want them to be a blueprint for how we're going to go forward, how we're going to expand bilingualism in the province of Manitoba, how we're going to enhance active offer, how we're going to enhance service delivery in every aspect of government and how we are going to enhance the Francophonie in Manitoba.

So it's—it was very important that these documents be something that departments really view as their plan or their framework or their blueprint for success for the future so that they would be working on them, updating them, seeing the opportunities for improvement when they've actually put all the information together and move forward with that as well as what our government sees the value of these plans. And so, to that end, it was more important that we work collaboratively, offer some support to government departments or agencies that were perhaps struggling to get that information pulled together and to have clarity in terms of what these plans are intended to do.

So we have worked very closely with everyone involved, and it wasn't a challenge working with any of the agencies or Crowns that are outside of the purview of direct core government. And I was really pleased about that very collaborative process with all the agencies involved. And we now have—we have amassed a stack of plans, and now the next step is: What are we going to do with those plans. And I look forward to this next chapter in the evolution of enhancing the Francophonie in Manitoba.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, so—and I appreciate that there has been, you know, widespread acceptance or, you know, a genuine undertaking by agencies to fulfill this mandate. But, I mean, we are now, you know, two years into this initiative—or into this mandate, and so I'm just wondering what are some of the reasons that the minister has heard to explain, you know, from these public bodies, that they haven't completed their plans. And, you know, maybe she could just spend some time talking about the timeline here of being at this point now here, two years into the term, this being, you know, an important part of the mandate of the minister and of these public bodies and still not having those reports in front of her.

**Ms. Squires:** Well, just to clarify, I don't physically have the reports in front of me; that is correct. But I do have them. They have, you know, been submitted. I would have to say we're at 98 per cent and possibly even 99 per cent full compliance right now, and it hasn't really even been a discussion about reasons why departments or agencies haven't been able to submit their reports.

It has been generally a—you know, how can we get these done, how can we make things better, how can we support the overall mandate to enhance the Francophonie in Manitoba? And those have been very pleasant discussions to have with all those agencies involved.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, again, I mean, you know, it's hard to say without having that list in front of us, you know, and the minister now says 98 per cent, you know, so that would be a very high completion rate.

But I think it is important to see that list and to really understand what ability the minister has to complete this part of the mandate, make sure that these public bodies are responding well and meeting their obligations. And, hopefully, if we do get that information, we'll have a little bit better of a sense of, you know, of the success, I guess, of the government of meeting that mandate.

You know, the 2017 throne—I will mention that the 2017 Throne Speech indicated that all departments would complete their French Language Services plan by April 1st. And, well, maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think the departments—maybe all the departments—can the minister confirm how many departments met that self-imposed goal?

**Ms. Squires:** So, just to revert back to the survey now, the member had asked me what—how we'd conducted that survey, and I can share with the member that it was our government's IT agency, BTT, which stands for—it's the government IT agency, BTT—they were involved in the technical rollout of this survey to ensure that it was effective. And so that answers that previous question. Business Transformation and Technology is the—what BTT, that acronym, stands for, for the member's information.

And regarding the list of agencies and departments that have complied, we had said to all departments and agencies that compliance is important, but, more importantly, we want you to really embrace these plans and to use them as your

internal working document, as your blueprint for a path forward. And all departments have complied with that.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Okay, but I specifically asked how many departments met that target date of April 1st, so I would hope that the minister would be very clear about that aspect.

And as I see my colleagues here are interested in jumping in and asking some questions, maybe I'll just quickly say with regards to the survey, I think what, you know, what is most helpful is when Manitobans can see the results of these surveys—not doctored, not spun, you know, by some political communicator—and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) will appreciate that terminology; I think I've heard him maybe use that term a few times here in the House—but actually just given to Manitobans in kind of its most raw format in the sense that we can then see what that information is.

The francophone community can understand where the shortcomings are, they can see some of the successes, they can see some of the benefits and some of the initiatives that this government is undertaking, but they can also see where there's room for growth.

And, again, not to approach it in a partisan way, but to approach it in a way that actually improves services for Manitobans, and that's, I think, what we're all trying to do.

So I'll—maybe I'll leave it at that. But, if the minister can just comment to just specifically answer the question. In the 2017 Throne Speech, the government indicated that all departments would have completed the French Language Services plan by April 1st. So can the minister indicate how many departments met the government's self-imposed goal?

**Ms. Squires:** So what was really important was that all government departments really embraced the spirit of what we were trying to accomplish here, and that is to enhance the Francophonie in Manitoba. And all departments are in compliance of that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe)—or, sorry, the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). *[interjection]*

Okay, we'll just make sure that—we're just going to take a little bit of a moment here first.

**An Honourable Member:** Brief recess?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Brief—this a brief recess. *[interjection]* Yes.

Is it okay to have a five-minute recess until we get the minister—*[Agreed]*

Okay. Five minutes, it is.

*The committee recessed at 4:25 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:27 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Actually, to come back here, just before we start the recess, is it okay to start with—keep on going with the Sustainable Development? Are you guys both agreed, both sides? *[Agreed]*

Okay, so we'll continue now.

The honourable member for—who's going to ask the next question? The honourable member for Concordia?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I'll just—I believe the minister may have dug deep in her briefing, so can—found an answer for me.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Oh, sorry. I guess we'll just—oh, I just want to call the Committee of Supply back to order. So I'll have the member for—the Minister of Sustainable Development.

**Ms. Squires:** I, again, appreciate the member's patience.

He did ask earlier about the FLS plans and how many government agencies and Crowns had submitted, and I can share with him that all the Crowns, except the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, have completed their plans and that health science—Health, Seniors and Active Living are working with that Crown to help them compile their French Language Services plan.

And, again, it is vital that we receive this plan from them, but we also recognize the work that they're undertaking, and certainly just more interested in working with them to ensure that they have a full French Language Services plan that they are wanting to embrace and make part of their daily operations.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Just for clarification on that answer, the minister said all Crowns had submitted and then talked about AFM. So I'm just trying to make sure that we're all kind of using the same language. So all Crowns have submitted their plans, and then AFM would be—would not be—obviously, is not a Crown,

so is that—is she saying that all other public entities that would fall under this legislation have submitted their plans other than AFM? They're literally the only ones left in the entire province?

**Ms. Squires:** The CFS agencies have a different schedule and a different process. And they are working through their different agencies to submit these plans, so this does not include each of the CFS agencies.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Wiebe:** And so the CFS agencies, they have a separate timeline? Do they have—is there a specific date—a target date that they're working towards?

**Ms. Squires:** We do have a separate framework for them for the completion of their FLS plans, and we are working individually with them, understanding that it's more important to ensure that we have plans that will be a blueprint and guide their work on a go-forward basis.

And so they are working on their plans, and we are providing them with some service, but—or, support for the creation of these plans, but there.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I have a number of questions for the Minister of Municipal Relations. And so I do want to compliment my friend from Concordia for an excellent dialogue with the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires).

We certainly appreciate getting answers back so quickly, and I'm hopeful that the Minister of Municipal Relations will be as equally forthcoming as his colleague, although I've been advised not to hold my breath, but we'll see what happens.

The ministry annual report from 2016-2017 seems to show a discrepancy between budgeted numbers and that which was spent. Could the minister advise us why Neighbourhoods Alive! was underspent by \$1 million, and can the minister assure the House this: that he will fully spend his budget this year?

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I'm not sure where the member is getting his information from as far as—I wouldn't—if you're holding your breath, you can start breathing now because I'm more than happy to work collaboratively with my—I think you're my critic, but I'm not sure, because I have a new critic, it seems, every day in question period, so—but certainly, with respect,

certainly glad to sit here with the member and discuss the important issues of community organizations here in Winnipeg and in Manitoba.

And we're certainly, I can tell the member that we're very proud of the relationships that we've been building in the short time that I've had this opportunity of working with community organizations like Neighbourhoods Alive!, and I can also share with the member that we've had a number of meetings directly with their board of directors and a number of organizations that they represent.

And we've had some fantastic dialogue. Work—we're planning a working committee to work collaboratively on how we can better get funding to the front lines of our—of their community organizations. Of course, we're proud to partner with them.

And, of course, working with my colleague, the member for Status of Women as well, to ensure that we get as much assistance we can to those folks as we go forward in the process. And, you know, can enlighten the member a little bit on funding this year, as well as previous, but funding this year, direct to community organizations, will be increased by approximately 11 per cent.

So we're very proud of that commitment. And our goal when our government was elected, of course, to ensure that we repair the services, and one of those areas is ensuring that we get as much resources to the front lines as possible to ensure that programs can run efficiently.

And I know Neighbourhoods Alive! is very, very excited about moving forward with plans to ensure value-for-investment and value-for-money on their—and, obviously, outcomes are important to them as well, because they know that they want Manitobans to have a hand up and move out and be an active part of society.

So we're certainly pleased about that and the understanding—matter of fact, I just had a meeting with them two weeks ago at their office, and again, I was just overwhelmed by how ready they are to get down to work and roll up their sleeves and ensure that the community organizations throughout Winnipeg and Manitoba are well-looked after.

I had an opportunity to meet with another group down in, actually, in the Point Douglas area. And the member from Point Douglas would probably be interested to know that we had a wonderful meeting with a group down in Point Douglas and the seniors'

resident group down there, and it—I was really impressed by the amount of work and investment that's going on in the area, with housing that's going on in that area, that essentially a block of housing that was rebuilt—I'm sure the member from Point Douglas is probably familiar with the area that I'm referring to—and just really awesome for young families, single moms with children that can move in there and actually have safe, warm environment to raise their kids. And this is—some of the areas that this organization works with—they offer a meal program. And, certainly, there's quite a few issues in the area with folks that need to rely on food banks, and this group will make a breakfast and have a lunch and everybody's welcome. And that's a real community working in collaboration.

So, you know, in my short tenure now as Minister of Municipal Relations and, of course, with respect to community development programs and organizations, I—you know, I can share with the member and members opposite and my colleagues that it's been humbling. And I just can't wait to continue to work with these groups and ensure that they're not only here tomorrow but they're here for the long run as well because we understand the mess that was left by the former NDP government in many aspects and, unfortunately, there's a big mess that we need to clean up here. And I can tell the member that our sleeves are rolled up and we're ready to get down to work.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, just a few points of clarification for the minister. He wondered who was his critic, and I can assure him that every member on this side of the House is critical of the work that's been done by his department and by every other department of the government.

He also says, on the one hand, Mr. Chair, that somehow he's fixing up some mess that was left behind him and, at the same time, then goes and seems to be purporting to be taking credit for the Merchants Corner which, of course, was our government and many of my colleagues, former colleagues, some current colleagues, had worked enormously hard for him. So he should be cautious in taking credit for things that—for which he has taken no particular role.

And, in addition to any organizations he may have met with in Point Douglas, he might want to articulate for members in the House today why \$500,000 was cut from the budget of the North End renewal corporation.

So I want to caution the minister that this is an important process that we're undertaking here this afternoon, and it's important that he stay true to the facts of the situation and not as is 'creasingly' the context of this government to rely on partisan rhetoric that serves the—ill serves the people of Manitoba.

So I asked him why Neighbourhoods Alive! was underspent by \$1 million in the previous year. Maybe he could tell us why the Urban Development Initiative was underspent by \$1.8 million.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister for sustain—Municipal Relations.

**Mr. Wharton:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, and for Municipal Relations, eh?

And, again, I'd certainly like to thank the member for the question. But I guess in his preamble, though, he says that I was taking credit for these hard-working organizations and the commitment they make to their communities. Well, quite frankly, I—and he seems to want to take credit for it. But I guess my concern is that, you know, these are the folks that when you can try to give them—you give them assurances that, you know, that funding will be available for them for the sustainable future and not just, you know, six months or a year or, you know, I guess a period of time that, you know, they really can't plan.

Well, part of the planning with—that we're looking at and communicating with community organizations is is how can we best ensure that that funding will be there for the long haul? And, you know, that's an area that we're working really close with as we continue.

\* (16:40)

And matter of fact, I'm going out on some open houses over the next, oh, probably month or so into June and July, and I'm going to continue to meet with organizations throughout Manitoba. And, again, there are great organizations not only in Winnipeg but right across this great province of ours.

And I know that, you know, the member had mentioned that he was going to take credit for this. And I kind of—I'm a little disappointed in that way of thinking because, you know, we're here, you know, we're all Manitobans and we're here as legislators and elected officials to ensure that, you know, we work to ensure that folks are essentially, you know, counting on us to make sure that programs like

Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places and Partner 4 Growth can continue for the long term, and they know they want to be a part of the solution. They want to make sure that they have a voice, unlike in the past when they didn't have a voice, when members opposite, again, case in point, when they were on the eve of—the AMM was on the eve of their biggest convention of the year, were forced—dropped forced amalgamations without any consultation at all.

So, certainly, members of rural and—Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg, because the member from—member sitting next to that member talks about the City of Winnipeg not even being able to run the City finances—so, you know—but I did hear today, and I'm pleased to hear that perhaps maybe there's a new sense of, I guess, a positive relationship with the City of Winnipeg because—and municipalities because it sounds like now, you know, there was actually some questions about some concerns, and those are why—that's why we get out on the road and we talk to municipalities and we ensure that we have the opportunity to listen and municipalities have the opportunity for fair say. That's really important to them.

And we were so pleased this morning to announce the Investing in Canada, phase 2, \$1.1 billion of investment. And, you know, I can share with the member that, you know, there's going to be great opportunity to invest in community, community organizations, along with infrastructure that's—and an important one is even simple things like repair and services, repair to buildings and infrastructure that, for the last 20 years, was ignored by his government at the time, and now we're looking at a—I believe the number is around a half-a-billion-dollar-plus deficit in areas of infrastructure improvement like roofs, sprinkler systems, repairs, you know, just simple things, windows, doors, that, you know, in our own household we ensure that we budget for because, look, things wear out and things get tired and you have to be prepared to replace them at some point or another.

So those are important areas for us, of course, and I know for communities. I'm just so pleased to have the opportunity to work with them. And, you know, I hope the member gets on board, and I'm certainly—I know he has some experience in community organizations, and certainly I'm willing to take his—some of his thoughts too. I mean, this is about doing the best for Manitobans, so any time the

member wants to sit down and have a chat, my door's always open.

**An Honourable Member:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). My mic was off.

**Mr. Allum:** Sorry, I missed that, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Oh, the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). My mic was off, so I just wanted to repeat that.

**Mr. Allum:** Oh, good. That's good. I appreciate the clarification there, Mr. Chair.

So we've been sitting now for about 15 minutes. I've asked the minister to explain why Neighbourhoods Alive! was underspent by \$1 million in the previous year; five-minute answer but no answer. I just asked him why urban development initiatives were underspent by \$1.8 million the previous year; five-minute answer and yet, remarkably, no answer.

So I'm going to ask him a relatively easier one now, and I hope he'll give us some explanation for that. Why was the government's timeline for the application process for Community Places, Neighbourhoods Alive!, why was it so short? Yes, I believe it was 30 days tops, probably shorter.

Could he explain why community organizations were given so little time to prepare their applications?

**Mr. Wharton:** Well, and certainly as the member opposite knows, well, he was a minister as well, and he certainly can appreciate it's important to make sure that you understand your files to the best of your ability, and I've undertaken that and I'm really appreciating the opportunity to do so.

I will certainly talk about, you know, his issue with Neighbourhoods Alive! in his first preamble. He was asking about it being underfunded, and I know that, in speaking with Neighbourhoods Alive! at their last meeting, there were some issues with them being unable to expend some of those funds in last fiscal, so I can let the member know that those monies are re-appropriated. They don't get lapsed. They continue forward, and we would simply be working with other community organizations and programs to make sure that that money hits the front lines and, through either strategic investment or strategic initiatives, to ensure that programming continues.

**Mr. Allum:** So I'm really working hard here to try to find an answer within the minister's replies to my questions, and I appreciate that it does take time for a new minister to come to terms with the breadth and depth of a ministry, and that's okay. I have full respect for that. I should remind him that I was also an employee of the City of Winnipeg for 15 years, in the CAO's office for over a decade, so I'm pretty well versed on issues relating to municipal government and the City of Winnipeg in particular.

I think I just asked him, though, why the application process was so short, and I'm not sure that he gave an answer.

Community organizations provide an extensive—do extensive good work in our communities, and I think every member of this House has enormous respect for the organizations in our own communities.

And yet I heard from any number of organizations in my community asking why they only had 25 to 30 days to complete a really complicated application form, which, in addition, required organizations to articulate what the social return on investment was.

When one of those organizations phoned his department, that organization was asked, well, what organization did they hire to do the social return on investment calculation?

And so was it the minister's intention that community organizations hire KPMG in order to complete a Neighbourhoods Alive! application or Community Places application? And, while he's answering that, maybe he could give us his definition of what a SORI [*phonetic*] is—actually is.

**Mr. Wharton:** And again I'll thank the member for the question, and, you know, it takes me back to my small-business days when I ran my business for 30 years and some of the issues we had to cope with in running our business and ensuring that we were sustainable just in our own business world and responsible for 75 to 100 staff members and their families to make sure that, you know, they were able to put food on their table when they went home, and some of the issues we had was red tape. And the red tape would cost—was costing our business hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars annually to go and sift through forms. And, you know, certainly, as a small-business owner we didn't have the ability to, in his words, hire a consulting firm to come in and walk us through.

\* (16:50)

So we, essentially, had to look outside and to look at—for other partners to help us walk through that. And my message to the member opposite is that—a couple things: Number 1, on red tape, we're working very hard with stakeholders, including community organizations, to ensure that we reduce the onerous challenge, at times, to go and put forth an application for a—you know, a 15 or a \$20,000 community initiative.

Quite frankly, the whole area of community grants and programs was riddled with red tape, and it's—I can see why some of these organizations have a challenge filling them out, Number 1, because, look, these folks are all volunteers. They're working hard for their communities. And, you know, not everybody would have the ability or the capacity to sit down and work through a government intake without assistance.

And I can share with the member that that's one area that I've really focused on. I call it customer first. And what we're doing in the department now is—and in collaboration with our community organizations—we're working hard at making sure that everybody is treated like a customer. So a lot of people may say, well, you know, you really can't connect politics and private sector together. Well, I can tell the member that you can. You know, the member has a background with the City of Winnipeg and certainly has a lot of knowledge when it comes to other areas, I'm sure, and I certainly wouldn't—you know, I would certainly respect his opinion and ask—if I had a question I couldn't answer, I would certainly ask for his answer. And I would expect the same from him because we all come to the table with a certain skill set. And, you know, the member may have his own skill set. Well, we have our own skill set here on this side of the House too, as well, and it's about customer first.

And so our community organizations and our staff within the department, when they pick up the phone, they know the phone rings both ways. It doesn't only take inbound calls; they take—they do outbound calls. And the outbound calls are now reaching out to customers. We call the community organizations and their volunteer's our customer. And that culture is starting to really build within our department, and I believe, my colleagues too, within their departments, because we have the opportunity to talk about this.

And it's—we really feel it's making a difference. And I—you know, I can share with the member that, you know, when they pick up the phone and they have a question, one of our department staff will be appointed to that person, that volunteer, to ensure that they sit down and actually do a face-to-face sit-down with these folks to ensure that all the I's are dotted and all the T's are crossed when it comes to filling out an application, because we know in the past—and this is what we've heard from organizations that do this, is this file will come in, they'll make their application, and then they'll find out in the eleventh hour that they were missing an incorporation letter, or they were missing a signature, or they were just missing little things that could have been dealt with in a matter of probably a—either a sit-down, five minute face to face with the proponent—or the applicant, or simply, you know, a quick phone call to say, you know what, you're missing a certain part of your area, and we're here to help you move forward.

So, you know, with that, we have—the single-portal access is going to be more manageable for community organizations. And we're excited about the future of not only community organizations here in Winnipeg, but right across this province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Allum:** I just asked why the application process was only 28 days, but let me try to connect the dots for the minister, then. Neighbourhoods Alive! underspent by \$1 million, short turnaround time for an application, involved a really complicated element relating to social return on investment.

So is it the government's intention to underspend budgets by ensuring that community organizations don't have sufficient time and ability to undertake the kind of rigorous application that the minister's department was asking for? Is this what's at the heart of the government's agenda, is to put out numbers that are budgeted, underspend them dramatically and then point to an application process that makes it very, very difficult for community organizations to respond to.

Maybe the best thing the minister can do so that—in case that I'm wrong in my assertion, maybe the best thing he could do would be to undertake to provide a list of all the organizations which sought funds under Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places. Would he do that for us? Would he agree to table a list of all of the organizations



which sought funds under Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places?

**Mr. Wharton:** Certainly, the member asks a question about is it our intent to essentially underspend in areas of community programming, and my answer to that is no.

**Mr. Allum:** Can the minister undertake to provide a list of all the organizations which sought funds under Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places? *[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, everyone. I just want to make sure that we can hear—both the—I know everybody's coming into the Chamber. We just want to make sure we hear the speaker and the critic asking—the minister and the critic asking the questions.

**Mr. Wharton:** Again, thank the member for the question and, you know, we're certainly, again, as I mentioned earlier in one of my preambles in my answer was we're very pleased to partner with organizations throughout Manitoba. And, certainly, Neighbourhoods Alive! is—and I know the member has mentioned Neighbourhoods Alive! a number of times, so I'll go back to Neighbourhoods Alive! They represent a number of great initiatives and folks across Manitoba and in Winnipeg too. And it's obviously—it's our responsibility to make sure that we can maintain these programs for whoever wants to put an application forward. We will be there to support them.

**Mr. Allum:** So I guess the answer is no, the minister will not table a list of all the organizations which sought funds under the Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places programs. And that's a—that's unfortunate because for a government that pretends to be transparent and accountable, we often find that getting information from them is like going to the dentist. It's a painful, painful exercise.

Can the minister tell us whether the funding administered by the former, I guess, Manitoba Community Services Council board is now being solely administered through Community Places?

**Mr. Wharton:** I guess a couple of questions there. First all, if the member has a toothache, then Tylenol 3 works really well, because, you know, I've had a bit of an issue here, too, and it works great for that—so. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

**Mr. Wharton:** You know, again, I remind the member that we're really focused on sustainability and our—so are our community organizations. They want to make sure that we're here helping them and assisting them where they need it and communicating, not like in the past with the former government when communication was—well, they couldn't even communicate with themselves, Mr. Chair. I mean, that was obviously an issue. So this side of the House is working very hard at communicating with our community organizations and will continue to.

**Mr. Allum:** So I asked the minister whether the funding administered by the former Manitoba Community Services Council board is now being solely administered through the Community Places program, and, Mr. Chair, I didn't receive an answer. Like, the minister needs to recognize that this is concurrence. This is a matter of asking questions and getting answers. And I know my friend from Lac du Bonnet would like to get home, but, in fact, we're here to do the business of the people of Manitoba—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

**Mr. Allum:** —and we're going to continue to try to do that to the very best of our ability.

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries previously provided nearly \$1 million annually to over 400 community groups. And the Manitoba Community Services Council, which we on this side of the House certainly supported, administered these grants.

It looks like now that both the department's grants and Liquor & Lotteries grants—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

\* (17:00)

## IN SESSION

**Madam Speaker:** As previous—as previously agreed by the House on May 31st, 2018, I'm interrupting proceedings to begin the royal assent ceremony.

I will remind members that, as agreed, the House will not rise today until after royal assent has been granted for all eligible bills and that matters of privilege and points of order will be deferred until after royal assent for all eligible bills has been completed.

I'm advised that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor is about to arrive to grant royal assent to the bills. I'm therefore interrupting the proceedings of the House for the royal assent.

### ROYAL ASSENT

**Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Ray Gislason):**  
The Lieutenant Governor.

*Her Honour Janice C. Filmon, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:*

**Madam Speaker:** I ask Your Honour to give assent to:

**Clerk Assistant (Mr. Claude Michaud):**

Bill 3—The Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Labour Mobility Act and Regulated Health Professions Act Amended); Loi sur la mise en œuvre de l'Accord de libre-échange canadien (modification de la Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'œuvre et de la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées)

Bill 4—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Member Changing Parties); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative (adhésion à un autre parti)

Bill 5—The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divulgations faites dans l'intérêt public (protection des divulgateurs d'actes répréhensibles)

Bill 6—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public

Bill 7—The Sustainable Watersheds Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur les bassins hydrographiques durables (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)

Bill 9—The Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act (Enhanced Powers Respecting Governance and Accountability); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la garde d'enfants (pouvoirs accrus en matière de gestion et d'obligation redditionnelle)

Bill 10—The Boards, Committees, Councils and Commissions Streamlining Act (Various Acts Amended or Repealed); Loi sur la simplification des

conseils, des comités et des commissions (modification ou abrogation de diverses lois)

Bill 11—The Safe and Responsible Retailing of Cannabis Act (Liquor and Gaming Control Act and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act Amended); Loi sur la vente au détail responsable et sécuritaire du cannabis (modification de la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools et des jeux et de la Loi sur la Société manitobaine des alcools et des loteries)

Bill 14—The Traffic and Transportation Modernization Act; Loi sur la modernisation des lois relatives à la circulation et au transport

Bill 15—The Film and Video Classification and Distribution Act; Loi sur la classification et la distribution des films et des vidéos

Bill 17—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conducteurs et les véhicules et le Code de la route

Bill 18—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Taking Care of Our Children); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille (soins conformes aux traditions)

Bill 19—The Planning Amendment Act (Improving Efficiency in Planning); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire (efficacité accrue)

Bill 20—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi

Bill 22—The Queen's Counsel Act; Loi sur les conseillers de la Reine

Bill 23—The Commodity Futures Amendment and Securities Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les contrats à terme de marchandises et la Loi sur les valeurs mobilières

Bill 25—The Non-Smokers Health Protection and Vapour Products Amendment Act (Prohibiting Cannabis Consumption in Outdoor Public Places); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de la santé des non-fumeurs et les produits servant à vapoter (interdiction de consommer du cannabis dans les endroits publics extérieurs)

Bill 26—The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi modifiant diverses lois en matière de conduite avec facultés affaiblies

Bill 212—The Invasive Species Awareness Week Act; Loi sur la Semaine de sensibilisation aux espèces envahissantes

Bill 213—The Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week Act; Loi sur la Semaine de reconnaissance des professionnels paramédicaux

Bill 219—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Inappropriate or Unsafe Footwear); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité et l'hygiène du travail (chaussures inappropriées ou non sécuritaires)

Bill 221—The Rail Safety Awareness Week Act; Loi sur la Semaine de sensibilisation à la sécurité ferroviaire

Bill 300—The University of Manitoba Students' Union Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Association des étudiants de l'Université du Manitoba.

\* (17:10)

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour assents to these bills.

*Her Honour was then pleased to retire.*

*God Save the Queen was sung.*

*O Canada was sung.*

**Madam Speaker:** I have a message for the House.

I received a letter from—I have received a message from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba, and I would like to read the letter.

As per section 2(3) of the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, please accept this letter as notice of our intent that the House will be recalled on Wednesday, June 6th, 2018, at 1:30 p.m., for an emergency session in order to consider financial matters and other important undertakings which serve in the best interests of Manitoba.

The hour being after 5 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 4, 2018

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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