

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

| <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           | Man.                         |
| FONTAINE, Nahanni        | St. Johns            | NDP                          |
| FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.   | Morden-Winkler       | PC                           |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon.       | River Heights        | Lib.                         |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.   | Steinbach            | PC                           |
| GRAYDON, Clifford        | Emerson              | Ind.                         |
| GUILLEMARD, Sarah        | Fort Richmond        | PC                           |
| HELWER, Reg              | Brandon West         | PC                           |
| ISLEIFSON, Len           | Brandon East         | PC                           |
| JOHNSON, Derek           | Interlake            | PC                           |
| JOHNSTON, Scott          | St. James            | PC                           |
| KINEW, Wab               | Fort Rouge           | NDP                          |
| KLASSEN, Judy            | Kewatinook           | Lib.                         |
| LAGASSÉ, Bob             | Dawson Trail         | PC                           |
| LAGIMODIERE, Alan        | Selkirk              | PC                           |
| LAMONT, Dougald          | St. Boniface         | Lib.                         |
| LAMOUREUX, Cindy         | Burrows              | Lib.                         |
| LATHLIN, Amanda          | The Pas              | NDP                          |
| LINDSEY, Tom             | Flin Flon            | NDP                          |
| MALOWAY, Jim             | Elmwood              | NDP                          |
| MARCELINO, Flor          | Logan                | NDP                          |
| MARCELINO, Ted           | Tyndall Park         | NDP                          |
| MARTIN, Shannon          | Morris               | PC                           |
| MAYER, Colleen, Hon.     | St. Vital            | PC                           |
| MICHALESKI, Brad         | Dauphin              | PC                           |
| MICKLEFIELD, Andrew      | Rossmere             | PC                           |
| MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice   | Seine River          | PC                           |
| NESBITT, Greg            | Riding Mountain      | PC                           |
| PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.   | Fort Whyte           | PC                           |
| PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.   | Midland              | PC                           |
| PIWNIUK, Doyle           | Arthur-Virden        | PC                           |
| REYES, Jon               | St. Norbert          | PC                           |
| SARAN, Mohinder          | The Maples           | Ind.                         |
| SCHULER, Ron, Hon.       | St. Paul             | PC                           |
| SMITH, Andrew            | Southdale            | PC                           |
| SMITH, Bernadette        | Point Douglas        | NDP                          |
| SMOOK, Dennis            | La Verendrye         | PC                           |
| SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.  | Riel                 | PC                           |
| STEFANSON, Heather, Hon. | Tuxedo               | PC                           |
| SWAN, Andrew             | Minto                | NDP                          |
| TEITSMA, James           | Radisson             | PC                           |
| WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.      | Gimli                | PC                           |
| WIEBE, Matt              | Concordia            | NDP                          |
| WISHART, Ian             | Portage la Prairie   | PC                           |
| WOWCHUK, Rick            | Swan River           | PC                           |
| YAKIMOSKI, Blair         | Transcona            | PC                           |

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, November 7, 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.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, was standing?

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

**Point of Order**

**Madam Speaker:** On a point of order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, thank you for recognizing me. I rise on a point of order today.

You know, I came here to do politics differently and, you know, some two and a half years ago I entered this Chamber for the first time, and I was kind of taken aback by the heckling and other jostling and jousting that I heard, and I resolved to myself at that time that I wasn't going to let this place change me. And as much as it, you know, it's not possible to spend years in a place and not be changed by that, I have tried my best to uphold that goal.

However, yesterday, for a quick moment I didn't uphold that standard that I set for myself, and so I'm rising in my place today to offer an apology to the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher). I have previously apologized to him directly and I shared that publicly through the media. However, I do believe that I owe it to my colleague, as well as to the institution of this House, to put that apology on the public record in this Chamber.

And so I apologize without reservation both to the member for Assiniboia and also to the House and, of course, to you, the embodiment of this institution, Madam Speaker.

Again, in my haste to speak to the member, I chose words which were much too forceful, and I actually have quite a lot of respect for the member for Assiniboia. We don't always agree on the policy, but I definitely do enjoy conversations with him. I respect that he is an independent thinker and I do believe that he is committed to advancing the well-being of people in this province. So, of course, I think we have disagreements on the proper role that we may seek to advance that well-being.

I also know, Madam Speaker, that it's very important for us to set a high bar for our own conduct in this Chamber and, again, you know, I chose words which were too forceful, and I might better have chosen to say something along the lines of: I notice that you were talking when I had the floor; please don't say that again. Had I used words such as that then I don't believe anyone would have been able to find quarrel.

And so there's an important lesson in there. It's a lesson that I've learned many times in my life, but I think it's important for me to be humbled from time to time and relearn those lessons. And the lesson is that it's not enough to be right; you also have to be good. And so I reaffirm my commitment to uphold that standard and also to abide by this, you know, in my conduct here day in to day out.

Now, I also know that I want to be a good example for my kids and for all young people in the province. Just yesterday I was showing a young man around the building who is himself battling to get out of a meth addiction. And so, to people who are looking to make such a change in their own lives, to the young people in my own life, I do want to say that, you know, people make mistakes and it's okay to be a man, a woman, a person who apologizes and works to make amends for those mistakes.

So it's in that spirit that I offer my apology today and I do say to my colleague from Assiniboia that I hope that we can continue to be friends so we can continue to build this province and, who knows, maybe in a few years we'll have that debate between the Leader of the Manitoba NDP and the Leader of the Manitoba Party.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** I do want to indicate that I do appreciate the apology from the member towards the member from Assiniboia and to the House and to myself. I do thank the member for making those comments.

I do notice that the member for Assiniboia has indicated that he would like to speak to this point of order.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'd like to thank my frenemy for his comments.

Madam Speaker, the private apology was fine. I appreciate the member standing up and making a statement about—I think it's a statement about responsibility. We all make mistakes, but it's how one deals with those mistakes that is the measure of the man or woman.

And let me just assure the member that I've heard a lot worse from a lot of other people, though no harm is done, and I look forward to good public policy debate, rather than—and just focus on good policy, regardless of party.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Normally, in these situations, when members stand to make an apology we don't recognize it as a point of order, but do appreciate that the member has, in fact, done what he's done. But, technically, it's not a point of order.

#### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Abseret Hailu

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an amazing young woman from my constituency of Riel.

Abseret Hailu is a second-year medical student at the University of Manitoba, Max Rady College of Medicine. She immigrated to Canada with her family from Ethiopia in 2005, and since arriving in our country at that young age, volunteering, education and advocacy have been a big part of her life.

During high school and throughout her university years, Abseret has been involved with many community and volunteer organizations. In 2010, she co-founded the Ethio-Canadian Cultural

Academy. The academy provides after-school programming for inner-city youth, giving them a safe space to learn. This organization also teaches the community about Ethiopian heritage and culture, teaching traditional language and folk dance.

Abseret has also organized fundraising events locally and nationally. She helps to promote multiculturalism in her community by teaching classes for newcomers and low-income families in the inner city and participating in Folklorama. She also volunteers with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Central Neighbourhoods Development Corporation, Students Against Impaired Driving, Health Sciences Centre and Victoria hospital.

Abseret is a passionate advocate for global women's health. She is the current local officer of global health education at the University of Manitoba and recently organized a mental health initiative fundraiser for the North End Women's Centre.

\*(13:40)

This past summer, she spent time in Ethiopia volunteering in low-resource hospitals and was inspired to fundraise for these hospitals, which often lack basic medical supplies and equipment.

Abseret Hailu gives so much of her time and talents to make her community a better place and is taking a leadership role in her advocacy for women's health. In 2015, she received the City of Winnipeg Youth Role Model Award, and this past April she was the recipient of the Premier's Volunteer Service Award.

Abseret is a truly remarkable woman, and I am very proud to have her as one of my constituents. And I ask all my colleagues to honour her for her commitment to our community. Today, she's in the gallery.

#### Royal Winnipeg Rifles

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** As we approach the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, this Veterans' Week is very meaningful for Canadians.

This week is especially important for members and supporters of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, an infantry regiment under the command of the 38 Canadian Brigade Group based out of Minto Armoury. The Rifles recognize their 135th anniversary this week.

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles were founded in November 1883 and have served in the Nile expedition; the Northwest Rebellion; the Boer War in South Africa; the First World War; the Second World War, when the Rifles landed at Juno Beach in Normandy; the Korean conflict and, more recently, Croatia, Sudan, Bosnia, the Balkans and Afghanistan. The regiment continues to serve Canada in its traditional fashion, with professionalism and determination.

Three Rifles were awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War: Corporal Alexander Picton Brereton, Corporal Frederick George Coppins and Sergeant-Major Frederick William Hall.

Sergeant-Major Hall is one of the Pine Street Boys, three recipients of the Victoria Cross who all lived on the same street in the West End, which was renamed Valour Road in their honour.

A renovated memorial and a new commemorative plaza at the northwest corner of Vimy Ridge park will be dedicated on Saturday, November 10. Representatives from all levels of government will be present, and I look forward to attending with colleagues from the Legislature. Included in the plaza are legacy stones sold to benefit the Royal Winnipeg Rifles Foundation.

The Rifles' regimental museum, located in Minto Armoury, has enjoyed a major renewal and will reopen to the public after Remembrance Day. It is hoped that many Manitobans, and especially school children, will have the opportunity to tour the museum.

It is my honour to commemorate the proud history and the bright future of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. I ask all members to recognize members of the Rifles family here with us today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would ask leave to include the names of these distinguished visitors in Hansard.

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

*Royal Winnipeg Rifles: Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Albert El Tassi; Lieutenant-Colonel John Robins, retired; Major Brian Orton*

#### **Ajai Khandelwal Primary Care Centre**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** After five years of planning and a year of construction, the Dr. Ajai Khandelwal Primary Care Centre is now home to the medical professionals serving

Minnedosa and surrounding area. The building was named after Dr. Khandelwal in honour of his 44 years of providing medical service to the Minnedosa region.

The \$2.2-million facility, which was officially opened on September 20th, was funded and constructed by a charitable organization, the Minnedosa Primary Care Centre Inc., and is leased to the Minnedosa Medical Group.

The funds came from a combination of personal, corporate and service club donations as well as municipal contributions from the Town of Minnedosa and the municipalities of Minto-Odanah, Oakview and Harrison Park.

An example of a gift to this regional facility was a combined donation from the Lions Clubs International Foundation and the local clubs in Minnedosa, Sandy Lake, Rapid City and Erickson in the amount of \$230,000. The local clubs raised \$100,000, and the foundation matched the amount in US dollars.

Built adjacent to the hospital, Madam Speaker, the 5,000-square-foot facility replaced an aging medical clinic in Minnedosa. The building has room for up to eight physicians and supporting staff with space in a walk-out basement for other medical professionals. The new clinic is wired with the latest technology and has allowed the physicians to move to electronic medical records.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate all those involved in the planning and construction of this modern building to ensure health care is available for residents now and well into the future.

I'd invite my colleagues to welcome many members of the committee who have joined us today in the gallery.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of all those who served on the committee during the planning and construction of this facility recorded in Hansard.

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

*Dr. Ajai Khandelwal Primary Care Centre planning committee: Jennifer Brykaliuk, member; Bruce Dalgarno, director; Susan Glasgow, fundraising chair; Gord Lane, chairman; John Mendrikis, secretary; Ray Morgan, treasurer; Rick Nysten, construction chair; Ray Orr, recruitment chair;*

*Monty Peckover, director; Brad Ross, member; Pat Skatch, member; Brandi Thompson, media chair.*

### Doughnators

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** The protection of all animals is an issue dear to my heart. I'm blessed to work with, support and meet so many amazing Manitobans fighting to protect animals 24-7.

Today, I acknowledge the loving work of Doughnators—and that's dough as in pizza dough, Madam Speaker.

After a decade of advocating for animals, Susan Noga officially established Doughnators three years ago. With a team of over 12 volunteers, Doughnators puts on a monthly perogy drive, producing up to 250 dozen perogies, raising funds to cover the costs of veterinarian bills for animals injured or sick through a variety of animal rescue, including, to name a few, Strays That Can't Pay, Central Paws, K9 Advocates and Spirit of Hope.

With an incredible amount of work, Doughnators typically raises \$1,500 each drive and, thus far, Doughnators has raised \$40,000.

Last month, I visited Doughnators' team at Victoria school—Victory School where I got to meet everyone and was invited to help out making some perogies.

I also got to meet Jimmy Walker, who shared with me his dream of having Doughnators on The Ellen DeGeneres Show, highlighting the important work of—that's being done here in Manitoba advocating for animals.

So, Madam Speaker, I'd like to take this moment to give a shout-out to Ellen on behalf of my constituents and, in particular, Jimmy, encouraging her to have these amazing folks on her show.

Doughnators is always looking for volunteers, so if people are interested in helping out, their contact information can be found on Facebook.

Finally, I can attest, Madam Speaker, Doughnators is made up of phenomenally kind and loving Manitobans. And so, Chilly and—Chilly Dog and I are grateful for their dedicated love to Manitoba animals, and I say *miigwech* to each and

every one of them and I ask my colleagues helping me to acknowledge and honour them.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns.

**Ms. Fontaine:** I ask for leave to include the names of our guests in Hansard.

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

*Doughnators: Dorothy Anderson, Scott Anderson, Bernadette Folster, Shirley Garbutt, Russ Jackson, Lena Lenton, Maureen Minter, Kevin Noga, Susan Minter Noga, Judy Picklyk, Jimmy Walker, Sherry Wood*

### Recognizing Election Candidates in Fort Richmond

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today in order to recognize some extraordinary people who have contributed to a stronger democracy in Fort Richmond.

In the recent municipal elections, our constituents were provided with five names to choose from for city councillor and eight names for school trustee. Each of these candidates put in hours of their time and knocked on countless doors as they offered their various skills and talent to serve our community.

I reached out to all of them with an invitation to join me today in the gallery at the Legislative Building in order to receive the respect and appreciation they deserve for their efforts.

Madam Speaker, every member in this Chamber knows the hard work behind campaigns, and many know the challenges that come with both winning and losing. The results of an election do not tell the whole story behind each candidate's efforts and sacrifice, but those of us in politics know the cost can be high for all who put their name forward.

On behalf of the Fort Richmond constituency, I would like to thank Nancy Cooke, Chris Davis, Nikolas Joyal and Glenn Churchill for your selfless service during the election. You provided our residents with a tough choice between many qualified individuals for city councillor. Well done.

Thank you to Alia Harb, Jasmine Brar, Laurie Lazer-McCorrie, Yunusa Salami and Simon Strauman for each day you spent at the doors, sharing your insights for the future of education.

We are all better for having listened to your perspectives and expertise.

I want to also take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected city councillor Markus Chambers and our school trustees in Pembina Trails School Division, Ward 3, Kathleen McMillan, Julie Fisher and Cindy Nachtigall.

I invite my colleagues to help me thank those who were able to join us in the gallery today, including Markus Chambers; Nancy Cooke, with her volunteer Trina Duffy; Cindy Nachtigall; Alia Harb and Jasmine Brar.

\*(13:50)

### Introduction of Guests

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

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today members from the Manitoba 4-H Council celebrating national Show Your Colours Day, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), and they are: Leanne and Sarah Seniuk, Judah Chepil, Victoria Walker, and Lynn Silver.

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

And seated in the public gallery, from Kildonan East Collegiate, we have 36 grade 9 students under the direction of Ebony Hunter and Elliot Unger, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Manitoba Hydro Mandate Terms of Reference Changes

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the actions of the Premier are putting the most important Crown corporation in the province at risk, and now he's putting Manitoba Hydro on a very concerning path. Now, without any public message or acknowledgement, there's a new terms of reference for Manitoba Hydro under this Premier.

The previous mandate of Hydro was to keep rates low for families in Manitoba and to do this in

part by seeking out export opportunities with our neighbours. Now, that has been removed from the new terms of reference of the board. So the Premier's new board eliminated the objective of keeping rates low for families in Manitoba, keeping bills affordable and to do so by exporting power.

Now, the Premier's actions are clear, and the impact on rising bills that families have to pay in the province is also equally clear, Madam Speaker.

Why is the Premier telling Manitoba Hydro that they no longer have to keep bills affordable for Manitoba families?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I appreciate any question on the topic of Manitoba Hydro from an NDP member in this House, Madam Speaker, because it gives me the opportunity to remind all members of this House that Manitoba Hydro is owned by Manitobans, not by political parties. And the fact is, when the previous administration forgot that and decided to change the mandate of Manitoba Hydro away from low power costs for Manitobans only and move it to an Americanization strategy—which is a political endeavour they pursued—they invested over \$15 billion in two projects alone: Keyask and the bipole line—\$15 billion with no return in sight for four or five decades according to expert testimony at the PUB.

Now, that's the reason there's pressure on Manitoba Hydro right now to clean things up, and we'll work with the people of Manitoba Hydro to make sure that's exactly what happens.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** So, we just—thank you, Madam Speaker—we just heard the Premier say that it would be wrong to take away the mandate to keep bills affordable, but I will table the terms of reference that have just been implemented under his leadership that implement just that. So he's condemned his very own actions.

Now, what else have these terms of reference taken away from the mandate of Manitoba Hydro?

Well, we've seen a remarkable change in tact from the Premier, who would previously condemn all the investments made in hydroelectricity, and now when it's politically opportune for him to pick a fight with the Prime Minister, he starts to trumpet all these investments in green power that Manitoba Hydro has made over the years.

However, what he's just taken out of the terms of reference of the—Manitoba Hydro is any reference to the environment. There's no longer a reference to the environment in the mandate of our generator of green electricity in the province: no more commitment to keep rates low, no more commitment to the environment.

Why is the Premier telling Manitoba Hydro that they no longer need to protect the environment?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, Madam Speaker, again, the member goes with the false accusations and cites phony agreement to his preamble, which I did not give.

What I have said, Madam Speaker, is that the previous administration made a massive mistake, probably the biggest financial error in the history of Manitoba, and they did it by pushing forward on a line that goes halfway around the province and costs over a billion—five more than it would have—it was east side of the lake. And they did this while eliminating Manitoba's ability to actually participate in hearings around the very issue, which they decided politically.

What that means is that Manitoba Hydro's now saddled with massive debts which will catch up in just two or three years to the entire debts of the Province, and the member can try to massage it all he wants, but the fact remains we're cleaning up a massive NDP mess. We're committed to doing just that.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** So here's a review of what the Premier has taken out of the terms of reference for Manitoba Hydro: no more low rates as being central to the mission of Manitoba Hydro; no more environment as being central to the mission of Manitoba. Now, what else have they removed? Well, they removed a reference to Manitoba Hydro serving the public interests, Madam Speaker. Now Hydro is just accountable to the minister, and that's a direct quote.

Now, why would the Premier make this change? Perhaps it's because elsewhere in their terms of reference, and I'm quoting here, it says that the Hydro board may now, quote, establish subsidiaries to assist in carrying out the corporation's mandate. End quote.

Now, we know the playbook when it comes to privatization: break it up and sell it off. The Premier

is clearly taking steps to make it easier to spin off subsidiaries of Manitoba Hydro.

Why is the Premier—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —in move after move, hire after hire, after contract, after change to the terms of reference, why does he keep opening the door to the privatization—

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

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the member committed to becoming something new and he's failing at that, and now he's repeating the same age-old arguments the NDP always try to foist on the people of Manitoba. Be afraid, they say—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —be very afraid. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Rely entirely on fear tactics, Madam Speaker. Here's the reality: Manitobans know who politicized Manitoba Hydro. They know—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** The member's apologized for his conduct earlier; he maybe shouldn't repeat it again because that gets on to people's nerves. It tells people he isn't sincere. It tells people—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —he isn't sincere, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** If he's going to heckle from his seat the same day, the same hour that he's apologized for his conduct, perhaps he should take a look in the mirror and understand that that conduct can't be repeated or he will not be believed by anyone.

Now, I will try again, Madam Speaker, to get my response in here. Manitoba Hydro was politicized by the NDP to the tune of a \$15-billion mistaken investment, and if there's pressure on rates to go up, don't try and tell anybody in this province it comes from anybody but the NDP.

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



**Lifelight Air Ambulance  
Privatization Concerns**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Well, maybe the Premier's just so mad because we're on to his plan to privatize Manitoba Hydro. It's the Conservative playbook.

What are they doing to Lifelight air ambulances right now? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Right now, as we speak, there is a meeting taking place between the 16 physicians who are objecting to the privatization of air ambulances, and they have made their position very clear, Madam Speaker. They will not work in the air ambulance service any longer if this government proceeds with their plans to privatize Lifelight.

Now, those are the words of the physicians—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —themselves. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Those are the doctors, the experts who care for people right across the province, telling this Premier to back off his plans to privatize Lifelight.

With the meeting on the table today, has the Premier directed his Minister of Health to abandon their plans to privatize air ambulances right across the province of Manitoba?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, again, Madam Speaker, I mean, Halloween's over, but jack-o'-lantern politics are still here: orange and hollow, and they don't scare anybody anymore.

The fact of the matter is other provinces have already evaluated and proceeded to provide better services through air ambulance and this province is going to do the same.

Madam Speaker, what other provinces offer critical air ambulance—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Again, the member from Fort Rouge wants to chirp from his seat, Madam Speaker. He should ask better questions and then he could listen to even better answers. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, critical air ambulance service is operated by the private sector in British Columbia, the Yukon, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Ontario, New Brunswick and the Northwest Territories, and just of note, two of those provinces are governed by NDP governments. Can't be an ideological thing or they probably would have taken it back by now, but they didn't because the service works better when you take a look at how a service can work better, not when you close your mind to old ideology, like the member wants to do.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable—*[interjection]* Order.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Just let the record show that those two NDP governments are valiantly fixing the damage done by decades of Conservative governments in their provinces and we intend to do the same very shortly here in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Now, of course, the Premier's—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —remarks here in the House are very reckless. He has just announced, for the benefit of the people listening today, that he has predetermined the outcome of this meeting that is happening today with the physicians. Again, the physicians have said they will not work for the air ambulance Lifelight service if the government decides to privatize. The Premier has just said in his previous answer that privatization is the way that he intends to go.

So, has the Premier communicated this to the Minister of Health, or is he still dangling the opportunity that he may change his mind before those expert physicians with whom his government is meeting today?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, if truth was an island it wouldn't be inhabited by that member, Madam Speaker, because I said nothing of the kind and I will not say anything of the kind.

I will say this, though, Madam Speaker: private operation of ambulance services is common throughout our great country. It is pursued by governments of all different political stripes. It has been measured, tested and determined to provide better service to the people of other jurisdictions from coast to coast. And so here we are late in the

game taking a look at whether it could work better for Manitobans.

So when the member accuses me of making reckless remarks the same day that he apologizes for his, I don't mind, Madam Speaker, I've been accused of worse things by better people.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, it's a real surprise, Madam Speaker, that a Premier who loves to say the words made-in-Manitoba solution over and over again—over and over again—time in, time out, loves to say made in Manitoba, will not listen to the Manitoba-based physicians who are telling him that the decision to privatize Lifeflight will harm Manitoba health care.

Again, the Lifeflight Air Ambulance service provides emergency care to people right across the province, whether they're in Dauphin, whether they're in a community like Garden Hill, and, now, those physicians who deliver that care say that the impact on the safety of patients but also the health-care providers will suffer—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —to such an extent that they are prepared to walk off the job if this government proceeds with their plans to privatize.

Now, the Premier doesn't have to listen to me in the Chamber today, but he ought to listen to the health-care professionals.

Will he, in fact, take their advice, back off his plans to privatize and come back with a made-in-Manitoba solution to air ambulances that keeps government air services public?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, we're doing the requisite work, Madam Speaker, to make sure that we take the right course of action to deliver value for the people of Manitoba. The NDP didn't do that when they made their moves on Hydro; \$15 billion has been invested; there's no way out of it, no return on it.

And there's no way the NDP listened to the people of Manitoba. They shut them right out of the process. The Metis, the indigenous, the nonindigenous people of our province didn't get a chance to be listened to because they were shut out of the process entirely.

The Auditor General told them they should shop smarter and maybe shop a little bit instead of giving

sole-sourced contracts to their party pals. But they didn't listen to that, either.

And when they went door to door, Madam Speaker, they told everybody in Manitoba they weren't going to raise the PST, and then they went to court and they said, you know, Manitobans shouldn't have a chance to vote on this. Let's not listen to Manitobans.

Well, Manitobans saw the way they were treated by the NDP, Madam Speaker, and the member opposite offers no alternative to the previous misbehaviour of the NDP. In fact, he proposes a repeat of it. Good on him, keep proposing it. We know the result.

### Poverty Reduction Request for Plan

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** For nearly three years this government has refused to present a poverty reduction plan.

Instead, the government cut 300 people off of Rent Assist. They've reduced benefits for over 7,000 Manitoban families. They froze 'mimumum' wage for two years.

And they've failed to build one single unit of social housing. Now they've even cut the total amount of social housing available to Manitoba by selling some off.

When we say poverty plan on this side of the House, we mean a real plan, a plan that's going to take people out of poverty.

Will the minister produce—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** —her poverty reduction plan today?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families):** We take the issue of poverty very seriously in Manitoba. In fact, since we came into government—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** —previous to that, Manitoba was deemed the child poverty capital of Canada, and for the first time, Madam Speaker, we are no longer the child poverty capital of Canada. That's our plan.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** This government's track record on taking credit from somebody else is, right across the board, unbelievable. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** They take credit for our NDP building social housing.

We know that since—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** —they've come into office their only strategy is to cut, cut, cut. They're actually known as, now, the party of cuts. They balance their budget on the backs of Manitoba's most vulnerable. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** We know because countless times we've produced documents in this very House that are these government's documents that prove that they know.

Madam Speaker, will this minister stop ignoring the facts, stop denying the facts and actually produce a plan today that's going to reduce poverty in Manitoba?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Madam Speaker, the member opposite talks about taking credit for the—from the previous NDP government. We would never take credit for a track record of making Manitoba the child poverty capital of Canada.

In fact, we turned that around, Madam Speaker, and for the first time in the history of the last—well, in the last 20 years our province is no longer the child poverty capital of Canada. In fact, we moved from—we were ranked 10th of 10, dead last, in Manitoba when it comes to poverty, and now we are No. 5, the biggest improvement nationally, according to Statistics Canada.

So we recognize there's more work to be done, but we are making the improvements that Manitobans need, want and deserve.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Again, taking credit where credit isn't due.

We know that cutting Rent Assist, freezing 'mimumum' wage, hiking transit to over \$100 for a bus pass and no new social housing only hurts

low-income Manitobans, but does this government care? No.

Before I was an MLA, Madam Speaker, I was a teacher. When it comes to homework, this minister is making excuses. She might as well say that her dog ate the poverty plan.

Madam Speaker, this minister needs to do her work she's been hired to do and produce her own plan, a good plan, a plan that's actually going to make differences in this province.

Where is her poverty plan?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Our poverty plan started with making sure that Manitoba is no longer the child poverty capital of Canada.

Now, Madam Speaker, we recognize, though, that there is more work to be done. We don't want any child to be left in poverty out there, without housing and so on.

But we are taking steps, we are taking measures that were never ever taken under the previous NDP government, that left us at the—as the child poverty capital of Canada. We will work with stakeholders in the community to ensure that we move in the right direction to ensure that we are no longer the poverty capital of Canada.

\* (14:10)

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to proceeding with oral questions, we have another guest that's just arrived.

Sitting in the loge to my right we have Gerry McAlpine, the former MLA for Sturgeon Creek, and we'd like to welcome him back to the Manitoba Legislature.

### Flin Flon General Hospital Birthing Services

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** The attack on women's health continues in Manitoba. We learned just yesterday that in just over a week the hospital in Flin Flon will be suspending births. Women in the area will now have to travel to The Pas to give birth.

For over a year we've been hearing from patients, from nurses, by former MNU president Sandi Mowat, who I quote: There's a lack of understanding about the importance of reproductive health and postpartum care, end quote, with this government.

Will the minister reverse this move and restore birth services in Flin Flon hospital now?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** So, Madam Speaker, I want to be perfectly clear that the member knows that information as of yesterday because I took him aside and let him know—as the local MLA—that the regional health authority had determined from a clinical patient safety perspective that it was important at this juncture to limit that obstetric low-limit service.

Understand, the member just asked for the medical opinion to be overturned. I will not stand in the way of medical safety, where he would. We will rely on the experts in this situation.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Madam Speaker, we know why services have deteriorated in the Northern Health Region—in Flin Flon in particular. It's because—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —this government, this minister, have cut funding to health care in the North.

Madam Speaker, \$6-million cut that the government forced on the NRHA has diminished the quality of health care in northern Manitoba. They can't dispute that. It's a fact. It's written down in their own documents, Madam Speaker. So we know that this cut was approved by that Cabinet. We know that this government has cut it.

Will the minister reverse the cut today and restore birthing services in the Flin Flon General Hospital?

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, Madam Speaker, that member knows that he's being disingenuous, because as the member for that constituency, he knows that the issue around obstetric care, anesthesiologists care in that community has been tenuous for years now.

He also knows that when it comes to that obstetric care it is a challenge for remote locations all across Canada right now. He also knows that the region has tried for a long time to maintain that service and using best efforts. And at this point in time they are relying on the experts, including an obstetrician expert from Winnipeg and a nurse expert. And he says don't listen to them.

We will listen to the medical experts and not the member for Flin Flon.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Madam Speaker, the minister may not wish to listen to the member from Flin Flon, but he'd better start listening to the people from Flin Flon.

Madam Speaker, with this government's continued cuts to funding for the Northern Health Region we can expect to see more services cut; with this government's saying, well, there's nothing we can do, nobody wants to come, we don't have the equipment.

Madam Speaker, this minister needs to ensure the people of Flin Flon and surrounding communities have access to birth services close to where they live.

Will this government change direction, improve services for northern and indigenous women in Flin Flon and area, restore birth services at Flin Flon hospital today and quit with his foolish cuts?

**Mr. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, I cannot think of anything more foolish than for the member to stand in his place in possession of the evidence—as he is, because I've shared it with him—and ask this government to wave aside the medical opinion of experts. That is the definition of foolishness.

To the question of cuts—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** —that member also knows that this government has invested \$700 million more in health care than his government ever did. When it comes to—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** —recent investments in Flin Flon and the northern health authority, over \$28 million in new capital investments, showing how we are investing in medical attention and medical provision for people of the North.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

I've been urging, over the last number of days, for respect to be shown to members, and I would just encourage now—there is some incessant heckling that is going on, and I would urge members to please try to show some respect for members. We've already had a number of comments being made

today and yesterday, and I would urge members for some co-operation, please.

### **Diabetes Prevention and Management Costs Not Covered Under Pharmacare**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Last week, MLAs from all parties met with Diabetes Canada, who spoke of the crisis in diabetes across Canada and especially in Manitoba. There are areas of Manitoba for—in the North, for example, where diabetes rates are 20 times the national average.

The complications from diabetes are responsible for billions of dollars in health-care costs: amputations, blindness, heart attack and stroke, but they made it clear that diabetes that is well managed can prevent these terrible illnesses.

Earlier this year, this government cut the special drugs program and raised the price of diabetes test strips. I have heard from a constituent who is a senior on a fixed income that she may have to choose between her insulin and bankruptcy because of \$4,000 in new costs that are not covered by provincial Pharmacare.

The Premier often talks about courage when it comes to health care. Can he explain what is courageous about cutting insulin coverage for seniors on fixed incomes?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, I would say, Madam Speaker, our concerns about health care are evident in far more than just the fact we are investing more than \$700 million additionally in the budget this year than the NDP ever did. I would say they're better evidenced by our willingness to proceed to work diligently with experts to develop better systems for delivery and to put patient care first.

I would also say that they are evidenced in our diligence around restoring a reasonable partnership between the federal and provincial governments across the country for health-care financing, something the member needs to understand has eroded under the Trudeau government to the point where, instead of 25 per cent of costs, they are only absorbing around—well, less than 19, approaching 17, probably, over the next year and a half, Madam Speaker.

So, his federal colleagues won't support us in health care. We're doing the job. We're filling in the gaps that they're creating, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** Madam Speaker, because Manitoba's diabetes rates are so high there are high levels of kidney failure requiring dialysis, and this government has asked for millions more in special funding for dialysis, while the Manitoba Health annual report shows they are cutting \$6.7 million from primary care where diabetes and prediabetes are detected. This is like saving money by cutting back on sprinkler systems while spending all your money on fire departments instead.

At the same meeting with Diabetes Canada, I met a man whose strict control of his condition resulted in him regaining his sight after 20 years.

Is this government willing to invest in prevention by making test strips affordable and paying for insulin pumps so people with diabetes can avoid amputations, blindness, heart attacks and strokes?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, exactly, Madam Speaker. Investing in preventative approaches is an intelligent strategy, one we are following, and I would share with the member that Diabetes Canada has actually raised its voice and asked the federal government. His colleagues in Ottawa have refused to support that.

And so the federal government doesn't want to or has neglected to or is dragging its feet on developing a national strategy on diabetes, something that our Health Minister supports and our government supports, something that I would hope all members of this Chamber could support. Just this one time, the member might like to take a position in support of Manitoba's interests as opposed to Ottawa's.

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

### **Health-Care Funding Canada Health Transfer**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** The Premier has often referred, as he did today, to the fact that federal transfers for health aren't going up as much as they used to. The reason for that, Madam Speaker, is that in 2007 the Conservative government voted to change the Canada Health Transfer. I didn't agree with it then, but the Premier, as an MP in Ottawa, voted for it.

\* (14:20)

Under that change every single province lost out except Alberta. Manitoba loses \$31 million a year under that agreement—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —and then, in 2011, the Conservative government cut back its investments in health, but not a peep from this Premier, who said that Manitoba was flush with tax revenue.

My question is: When did the Premier realize that he made a mistake by starving his own province of hundreds of millions of dollars in health-care funding?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, that man couldn't find truth town with a map and a compass. There's no way that I supported a change in that formulary. I opposed it when I was there. I've opposed it ever since. If he's—wants to look for someone who supported cuts to health care, he doesn't have to look any further than just spin around and look at the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

The member for River Heights supported those cuts back in the '90s. They were the wrong thing to do then. They're the wrong thing to do now. In fact, they're even wronger now, Madam Speaker, because our population is clearly aging and, as it ages, the need for health-care supports goes up, not down.

And, Madam Speaker, if the member would simply turn his gaze in the direction of joining with us to oppose Ottawa's reductions of \$1.2 billion to Manitoba alone over the next decade in health-care transfers, if he would join with our NDP colleagues who have now come to grips with the reality of the danger this poses, we could have a unanimous motion here in the House, if he would simply represent Manitobans for a change.

#### **Personal-Care Homes Need for Construction**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Before the election, Madam Speaker, this Premier promised to protect front-line health-care services, but his cuts and his cancellations are making those things worse.

One of the first moves the Premier made was to cancel new personal-care-home projects in Lac du Bonnet and Winnipeg. That's hundreds of beds that the Premier has decided Manitobans don't need. Then the Premier decided to cut millions of dollars from personal-care homes all across

Winnipeg, and then the Premier raised rates for seniors in those homes. Fewer beds, cuts to nurses and other health-care professionals, that's this Premier's record.

Why has the Premier refused to build personal-care-home beds for Manitoba seniors?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, Madam Speaker, quite on the contrary. Where the NDP failed, we're going to make that very good investment.

That member knows that the research that the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, other experts all show the increase in the—in that demographic, that older demographic, showing that, actually, by the year 2036 Manitoba will need 50 per cent more capacity.

What did the NDP do in the view of that information? Very, very little to make this a priority. They had money for everything else, it seemed, except for personal-care homes.

That's why our government made in the campaign and renewed it in our government a fundamental commitment to build personal-care homes all across Manitoba to get better value and provide seniors with appropriate housing as they continue to age in our communities.

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

**Mr. Swan:** You know, the House isn't sitting next week, so maybe the minister and I, we can tour around and see the personal-care-home builds—beds our government built: Calvary Place, Concordia Place, Misericordia Place, Sharon Home, Altona, Winkler, Oakbank, Ste. Anne, Steinbach, Hartney, The Pas and Flin Flon.

Why don't we, after that, take some time and go and visit all the home-care beds that this government's built?

I ask the minister: How long would that take?

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, Madam Speaker, any time that that member wants to talk about capital investment, we should do that, because even when it comes to schools in our province—and right now, the Minister of Education is just about winding up to deliver a whole bunch more—but we know that our government has made a fundamental commitment that is outstripping—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** –the NDP's record on education.

When it comes to the one average they could build in a single year, under the NDP, our government has already announced seven new schools for Manitoba—seven new schools.

If that member wants to talk about adequate capital investment, we could talk about it, but—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** –we're also doing a smarter investment, getting better value for money, being better stewards of Manitobans' money.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Well, Madam Speaker, I posed a pretty simple question to this minister: how long would it take to visit the personal-care-home beds that have been opened by this government? And the answer is it would not take any time at all.

The only personal-care home that was opened was the Tabor Home, which was actually constructed by the NDP government and delayed by this PC government.

This minister would like to talk about anything, clearly, than the fact that his government has failed to build a single personal-care-home bed.

It's now almost the end of 2018.

Why has this minister failed Manitoba's seniors so terribly? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, if the member wants to go on a little bit of a tour, we could visit all the happy, happy, cheerful moneylenders that are happy to lend us money to pay off all the interest on all the debt the NDP ran up. We could have such a good time with that tour. I'm sure the member would enjoy it thoroughly.

We could go and visit happy, happy taxpayers so excited that they have now got to pay higher taxes, thanks to the previous government, on everything from their cars to their cottage, to their beer, their benefits at work, to their hairdos, you name it, Madam Speaker. They'd be happy, and we could tour all of them with the member.

If he wants to be—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** –snarky about it, Madam Speaker, if he wants to make a joke out of it, he should understand \$700 million additional investment in health care isn't a small thing.

And, Madam Speaker, if he wants to go on a tour, why doesn't he go for a tour of all the homes of all the former NDP members who used to be in this Legislature and aren't anymore because of the fact they betrayed the trust of the people of Manitoba, something this government will not do, Madam Speaker.

#### **New Child-Care Facilities Refundable Tax Credit Announcement**

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale):** The other day in Sage Creek, in the wonderful constituency of Southdale, I was proud to stand with the Minister of Families and Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) to announce a refundable tax credit to stimulate the creation of licensed child-care centres in the workplace.

Can the hard-working Minister of Families please inform the House how this government is helping businesses to create strong community connections while meeting the needs of families?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families):** I thank the member for that excellent question.

Monday, I was pleased to join my colleague, the Minister of Finance, as well as the member for Southdale in Sage Creek where, along with Qualico, we announced 74 new child-care spaces for Manitoba families.

Madam Speaker, because of the NDP's ideological approach to child care, Manitoba lagged behind other provinces, with only 5 per cent of spaces created by the private sector compared to 24 per cent in Ontario, 47 per cent in BC, 53 in Alberta, in fact, a whopping 64 per cent in PEI.

Manitobans know that it's important to set ideology aside and consider all options to encourage investment in child-care centres to meet the diverse needs of Manitoba. The child-care-centre tax credit—

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

### **Methamphetamine Addiction Public Awareness Campaign**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Madam Speaker, this government has taken to saying that the meth—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** This government has taken to saying the meth crisis is something that happened suddenly. However, a year ago, when the member of River Heights asked about it, the Premier said the Health Minister was addressing it well.

Since that time, there's been an explosion in meth-driven crime across Winnipeg and across the province. This is not just a health issue; this is a community safety issue. And while the government says they're open to suggestions, they've turned a deaf ear.

We haven't heard a word about prevention, and we've been calling for it for months.

This government and MPI are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars warning against cannabis, but nothing warning against meth. We keep hearing about dealing with addicts, when it is too late.

Will this government launch a province-wide public awareness campaign to warn Manitobans against doing meth in the first place?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** We certainly recognize there's an issue in society, and we as—here in Manitoba are dealing with, as other jurisdictions are dealing with it, certainly from a crime perspective. So, happy that we've developed some positive relationships with police forces across our province and across other jurisdictions.

To that end, we were able to target a sophisticated criminal drug network—made the announcement on Project Riverbank just this past week, where one—pardon me—\$2.7 billion of cash, drugs and weapons and assets were seized. That is a sign of putting a dent in organized crime here in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** Madam Speaker, the question is about prevention. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** I met with Winnipeg chief of police, Danny Smyth, and he has said the meth crisis is keeping it up—him up at night. It keeps growing, and what this government keeps delivering is stopgap measures and band-aid solutions. I will—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —remind the House the VIRGO report made no mention of meth.

This is a fast-moving epidemic, and the government is stuck reacting in slow motion.

So what is this government actually doing to get ahead of this problem to keep people from ever taking meth in the first place?

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, our government recognizes that it's not just a criminal and justice approach to dealing with illegal drugs. We recognize that other departments such as Education, such as Health, have to be involved in this fight, and we are taking on this fight as a team and, quite frankly, there's educational components going on.

We know that from a health perspective there's a lot of discussions going on as well in terms of how we're going to deal with this particular illicit drug.

We're working with other jurisdictions to learn from what they have done and now we're working on actually engaging in additional education components, and if the minister—the member stays tuned he will hear more about education programs that are going to happen here in Manitoba.

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

### **Emergency Treatment Fund Manitoba Participation Inquiry**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Madam Speaker, there's a \$150-million federal fund dedicated to fighting opioid and drug addiction. British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland have all signed on to it, and some—and to some of those provinces the money is already flowing.



As of Monday of last week Manitoba had not submitted a plan. This is becoming a defining feature of this government. Other provinces sign off on agreements on housing, health care, you name it, and the money starts to flow. But on the most important issues facing Manitobans this government can't get its act together and get its paperwork in on time.

Has this government submitted its application yet and, if so, when can we expect to see some action?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** That member will be happy to know that it was Manitoba's leadership along with Saskatchewan that got the commitment from the federal government to allow that opioid-focused \$150-million fund to also be considered for local threats.

In this case they acknowledged that methamphetamine was the singular issue facing Manitoba, and we're pleased to say, stay tuned, to that member because he'll be informed very soon about an important investment that this Province will be making in that regard.

#### **Social Services Appeal Board Legislation Judicial Access Concerns**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Bill 24 will unfairly harm people on Employment and Income Assistance, people on Rent Assist and people who rely on Community Living disABILITY Services.

Bill 24 would limit access to justice for some of the most marginalized Manitobans. Janet Forbes, executive director of Inclusion Winnipeg, says, and I quote: I think it's really an erosion of peoples' rights to access the justice system. They do not have the resources to be able to hire lawyers to take them through the court system.

Why is this Premier (Mr. Pallister) stripping protections for Manitoba's most vulnerable peoples?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families):** The member opposite is absolutely wrong and it does not strip Manitobans of their right and their freedom to move forward with appeals of this nature, Madam Speaker. The member opposite knows that. We've debated this in the past. We've put everything on the record with respect to that. This does not take away the constitutional value component of this.

Madam Speaker, the member opposite should be ashamed. She should be—not be putting false

information and fear mongering on the record for Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

### **PETITIONS**

#### **Vimy Arena**

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** I'd like to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of St. James and other areas—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fletcher:** —of Manitoba are concerned with the intention expressed by the provincial government to use the Vimy Arena site as a Manitoba Housing project.

(2) The Vimy Arena site is in the middle of a residential area near many schools, churches, community clubs and senior homes, and neither the provincial government nor the City of Winnipeg considered better suited locations in rural, semi-rural or industrial sites such as the St. Boniface industrial park, the 20,000 acres at CentrePort or existing properties or existing properties—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fletcher:** —such as the Shriners Hospital or the old Children's Hospital on Wellington Crescent.

(3) The provincial government is exempt from any zoning requirements that would have existed if the land was better—if the land was owned by the City of Winnipeg. This exemption bypasses community input and due diligence and ignores uses for the land that would be consistent with a residential area.

(4) There are no standards that one would expect for a treatment centre. The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has stated that the Department of Health had no role to play in the acquisition for this Manitoba Housing project for use as a drug addiction facility.

(5) The Manitoba Housing project initiated by the provincial government changes the fundamental nature of the community. Including park and recreation uses, concerns with the residents of St. James and others regarding public safety,

property values and their way of life are not properly being addressed.

(6) The concerns of the residents of St. James are being ignored while obvious other locations in wealthier neighbourhoods, such as Tuxedo and River Heights, are not being considered for this Manitoba Housing project, even though there are hundreds of acres of land available for development at Kapyong Barracks or parks like Heubach Park that share the same zoning as the Vimy Arena site.

(7) The Manitoba Housing project and the operation of the drug treatment centre fall outside the statutory mandate of the Manitoba Housing renewal corporation.

(8) The provincial government does not have a co-ordinated plan for the addictions treatment in Manitoba as it currently underfunds treatment centres, which are running far under capacity and potential.

(9) The community has been misled regarding the true intention of Manitoba Housing as land is being transferred for a 50-bed facility even though the project is clearly outside Manitoba Housing responsibility.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Vimy Arena site is not used for an addiction treatment facility.

(2) To urge the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the preservation of public land along Sturgeon Creek for the purposes of park and recreational activities for public use, including being an important part of the Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail and Sturgeon Creek ecosystem under the current designation of PR2 for the 255 Hamilton Ave. location at the Vimy Arena site, and to maintain the land to continue to be designated for parks and recreation active neighbourhood and community.

Madam Speaker, this has been signed by a great many Manitobans with terrible handwriting.

Okay, thank you.

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

Further petitions? Grievances? Oh—the-back to petitions.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** No, on a grievance, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, okay, sorry. I'm on to the grievance, then.

No further petitions.

## GRIEVANCES

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I rise today on a grievance.

The Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) is not taking the situation of Lake Winnipeg seriously enough. I am passionate about Lake Winnipeg, as are many Manitobans. It is our great lake. It is at the centre of Manitoba. It is, for many Manitobans, the heart of our province. We need to look after it well.

In early October The Interlake Spectator reported, and I quote: Lake Winnipeg commercial fishers say they're being inundated with algae and sewage near Grindstone, between the lake's north and south basins, and it's like nothing they have ever seen before. One fisher commented: It's like a frigging sewage lagoon out here.

They are very concerned that this is due to continuing pollution of the lake by untreated and poorly treated sewage from the city of Winnipeg. Fishers from this area tell me that the fish are avoiding the region. This is likely because the conditions are using up oxygen and creating a vast dead zone where oxygen is depleted. Fish cannot live in such zones and move elsewhere. Fishers are naturally very concerned. They tell me they think the size of this dead zone, which is north of the south basin, may be as large as the entire south basin. That is a very large area.

\* (14:40)

Fishers in the south basin tell me that they are catching very large numbers of whitefish and tullibee. It is possible that the large concentrations of these fish in the south basin are happening because they are being forced to mood-move out of the large dead zone just north of the south basin.

I am very surprised that the Minister of Sustainable Development has not reported to the Legislature on this very concerning situation. My grievance, in part, is that the minister has not reported on what is happening and what her department has found. We should expect no less.

Second, I will discuss the situation of the sauger fishery, an important fishery. One by one, populations of sauger have become functionally extinct on other large lakes. Lake Winnipeg is the last remaining significant commercial fishery for sauger anywhere in the world, and there is a concern that sauger on Lake Winnipeg are now threatened.

I'll review the history of the sauger in the six large lakes of North America where there have been commercial fisheries.

On Lake Erie the peak sauger catch was in 1916. It was 2.8 million kilos. The sauger catch was down to 80 per cent of its peak in 1921; to 50 per cent in '32; 15 per cent in '39; 20 per cent in '43; 10 per cent in '46; and was functionally extinct in Lake Erie by 1954.

On Lake Huron the peak sauger catch was in 1930. It was down to 80 per cent in '35; 25 per cent in '36; 10 per cent in '37; 2.5 per cent in '47; and sauger were essentially extinct in Lake Huron by 1962.

On Lake Superior the peak sauger catch was in 1952. The catch was down to 80 per cent of its peak in '58; 50 per cent in '63; 10 per cent in '67; 5 per cent in 1970; and sauger were essentially extinct in Lake Superior by 1974.

On Lake Winnipegosis the peak sauger catch was in 1941. By 1966 it was down to 80 per cent of its peak. In '70 it was down to 20 per cent; in '87 it was down to 5 per cent; and sauger were essentially extinct in Lake Winnipegosis in 1994 under the watchful eye of the Gary Filmon Conservative government.

On Lake Manitoba the peak sauger catch was in 1941. It was 1.75 million kilograms, the third largest sauger fishery in North America. The catch was down to 40 per cent of its peak by 1946; to 30 per cent in '88; to 25 per cent in '91; to 10 per cent in '95; to 5 per cent in 2000; and sauger were essentially extinct in Lake Manitoba in 2007 under the watchful eye of the Gary Doer government.

On Lake Winnipeg the peak catch of sauger was in 1942. It was 4.6 kilograms. By 1951 the catch was down to 70 per cent of the peak. In '88 it was 40 per cent. In 1995, under the watchful eye of Gary Filmon, the catch was down to 30 per cent of its peak. In '99 it was down to 20 per cent. In 2010, under the watchful eye of the then-NDP government,

the catch was down to 10 per cent. In 2005 it was down to 5 per cent.

We do not know how much longer the sauger have on Lake Winnipeg, but certainly with the trend that has happened, unless there is action the likelihood is that sauger will be, like all the other lakes before it, gone from Lake Winnipeg.

The Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) has said repeatedly that her government will ensure that we have a sustainable fishery for Manitoba. She has said we will not ignore the scientists like the former NDP government. She has said we are taking action to ensure that we do have sustainable fisheries here in Manitoba.

Well, Madam Speaker, it is time to take that action now. A recovery plan for sauger on Lake Winnipeg is needed for both the commercial fishery and the sport fishery.

For the sport fishery, which is important in the Red River, which leads into Lake Winnipeg, there are records of master-angler-sized sauger caught in the Red River from 1987 to the present. From '87 to '92 the average number of master-angler-sized sauger caught annually was 35. From '92 to 2015 the average number of master-angler-sized sauger had fallen by 80 per cent to six. In 2016 and '17, the total for the two years was two, for an average of one per year or a decrease of more than 95 per cent.

Madam Speaker, it is possible that sauger could be undercounted because fisheries are not targeting sauger or because some fishers label sauger as baby walleye to get a better price, but with the numbers I present, coupled with the histories of the sauger fisheries on other major lakes in Canada, it is very clear that a recovery plan is needed for the good of all fishers and for the health of Lake Winnipeg.

One additional observation suggests that sauger are threatened. Increased catches of perch and small walleye from 2014 to '17 suggest increased use of small mesh nets. Even while the catch of perch and small walleye during this period went up, the catch of sauger did not, suggesting that the reservoir of sauger is smaller than generally recognized.

Madam Speaker, the commercial sauger fisheries on lakes Erie, Huron, Superior, Winnipegosis and Manitoba are all gone. Lake Winnipeg is the last major commercial fishery for sauger left.

The Minister of—Sustainable Development has said she will act. She must provide a sauger recovery plan and take steps to ensure the sustainability of the sauger fishery on Lake Winnipeg and the sustainability of Lake Winnipeg itself. It is time she does. Manitoba will—Liberals will be watching to see if she can keep her word that she will not ignore Lake Winnipeg like the former NDP government.

Part of what is needed is to have much better information on the fish in Lake Winnipeg. Report after report has stressed that we don't have the basic data to know precisely what's happening on Lake Winnipeg. Both fishers and scientists to whom I talked stressed that getting such data is important. Collecting this information is a public good, and the costs should not be on the backs of the fishers themselves.

Fishers I've talked with have suggestions. Fishers in the south basin catching whitefish and tullibee are arguing that there are fewer walleye and sauger being caught because they aren't targeting these fish.

They tell me, for example, that there isn't much use putting in a three-inch-mesh net because it would be totally overloaded with tullibee, so they are using larger nets. It would be reasonable, as some have suggested, to limit the size of smaller nets now to protect the young walleye and the sauger.

Fishers also tell me that many of the sauger are now in the Red River. Sauger are migratory fish and they like flowing rivers, particularly this time of year. They tell me it's important to put in place some restrictions on catching sauger in the Red River.

I urge the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires) to put in place, as quickly as possible, collection of better scientific data on the status of the fish in Lake Winnipeg and to work with all fishers to move to eco-certification to ensure the sustainability of the Lake Winnipeg fishery into the future.

Fishers are on the front line. It is to the benefit of all commercial and sport fishers, and to all Manitobans, that Lake Winnipeg is looked after very well. We need to look after Lake Winnipeg, and the time is now.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Further grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Could you please call for concurrence and third readings Bill 35, Bill 36 and Bill 228?

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider concurrence and third reading of bills 35, 36 and 228 this afternoon.

### DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

#### Bill 35—The Crown Lands Amendment Act (Improved Management of Community Pastures and Agricultural Crown Lands)

**Madam Speaker:** So beginning, then, with Bill 35—debate on concurrence and third reading of Bill 35, The Crown Lands Amendment Act (Improved Management of Community Pastures and Agricultural Crown Lands), standing in the name of the honourable member for River Heights, who has 29 minutes remaining.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I have started to talk yesterday on this bill and to talk about the issues that relate to access for young farmers.

And I'm disappointed that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler) has not addressed this and that it was not addressed in the discussions at committee stage. I hope the Minister of Agriculture would look into this issue and find a plan that will be effective, because we do not want young farmers to be completely excluded.

The second point that I will make has to do with the potential that—which was brought up, that we could have the bulk of these lands taken up by extremely large commercial farmers and commercial farmers from other provinces.

\* (14:50)

This is a potential issue. I think that, for the most part, cattle will be put on pasture close to where people are living and raising those cattle. I think there are potential benefits in having mutual arrangements with Saskatchewan because, in fact, there are considerable pasturing areas in Saskatchewan as well, which Manitoba now might have access to.

On the other hand, this is a concern that has been raised and is one that I hope that the Minister of

Agriculture (Mr. Eichler) will be watching very closely because we want to make sure that farmers in Manitoba have access to pastures near them and to Crown lands near them.

With those concerns put on the table, I want to say that the provisions that the minister has put in this bill which relate to biological diversity and looking after the ecological system appear to be quite positive. It is important that they are followed through and that, in fact, we achieve the preservation of biological diversity. I think that this should happen under this bill. But it is important to monitor the situation to make sure that it is happening.

The proposal, on balance, has been supported by Keystone Agricultural Producers. It's been supported by the beef producers of Manitoba and, Madam Speaker, we will support this legislation, but we have put on the record the concerns that we have and we hope the Minister of Agriculture will attend to these once the bill is passed. Thank you.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** The main concerns that were raised by the member from River Heights has always been very good, and I agree with him. And I am just adding on some of the concerns that were raised during the public hearing, during the committee hearing, wherein those who might be excluded are the young farmers of Manitoba.

And the succession of farmers who are dealing with these resources, which are the community pastures and now the agricultural Crown land, the Crown land that we will use by selling it off, actually, for 50 years, which means that there are certain areas wherein big-time farmers or big-time corporations might take over but vast tracts of land. It's one of the fears that have sprouted from the hay and the forage. It is impossible for us to know unless we monitor.

And at this point in time, I may have to just trust the Minister of Agriculture to do his job real good, and I'll be keeping an eye on him.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there further debate on this motion?

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading on Bill 35, The Crown Lands Amendment Act (Improved Management of

Community Pastures and Agricultural Crown Lands).

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour 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.

#### Recorded Vote

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, on a recorded vote.

**Madam Speaker:** On a recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 35, The Crown Lands Amendment Act (Improved Management of Community Pastures and Agricultural Crown Lands).

#### Division

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

#### Yeas

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

#### Nays

*Allum, Fontaine, Kinew, Lathlin, Maloway, Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.*

\* (15:10)

**Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Yeas 39, Nays 10.

**Madam Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

### Bill 36—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences)

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 36, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences).

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 36, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Cullen:** And as you know, Madam Speaker, the federal government has moved to proceed with cannabis legislation. Obviously, our government has taken a lot of time and energy to develop a legislative framework around that.

MADD Canada has indicated we have the best legislation in Canada in terms of protecting the safety and well-being of Manitobans.

Bill 36 speaks to making sure that we have proper legislation in place and that we have the tools for our front-line police officers and, in fact, Bill 36 speaks to that. So I'm hoping that members of the House will adopt Bill 36.

Thank you.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, I'd like to just take a couple of minutes to put a couple of final words in respect of Bill 36, and again, just to reiterate that we understand, as I'm sure everybody in the House, that all families should feel safe when they are on the roadways, on Manitoba's 'roadways', and so certainly we support that we understand that impaired driving should be taken seriously by all Manitobans and certainly by both sides of the House.

And we understand that impaired driving can cost millions in damages and, more importantly, Madam Speaker, can take and impact on innocent lives and the lives of families.

So we do understand that the first bill was created a little bit fast and missed some pieces which perhaps we could suggest it's because we're all in a new kind of regime about legalized cannabis. However, I would suggest that next time around the

government take a little bit more time in respect of their bills.

And, again, on this side of the House, we support and understand the need for public education in respect of driving now that we are—we operate within an—a legalized cannabis regime and agree and assert wholly that families deserve to feel safe and be safe on our roadways.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there any further debate on this motion?

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 36, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences).

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

I declare the motion carried.

## CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

### Bill 228—The Animal Shelter and Rescue Awareness Day Act

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 228, The Animal Shelter and Rescue Awareness Day Act.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), that Bill 228, The Animal Shelter and Rescue Awareness Day Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred and be now read for a third time and passed.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, I'm pleased to get up in the House today and just put a couple of final words in respect of Bill 228, The Animal Shelter and Rescue Awareness Day Act.

First, I do want to say miigwech to everyone in the House for the support of Bill 228 and then just put on the record, Madam Speaker, that—as I've said many, many times in the House—I apologize—you know, animal rights has been an issue that I have paid attention to for many, many years and have found that now, as an MLA in the very privileged

space that we operate, have been able to support and work with and meet so many amazing Manitobans that work literally day in and day out, 24-7, 365 days a year on the front lines dealing with the over-population of Manitoba dogs, particularly in the North and rural areas that have a lack of veterinarian services and resources available, as well as those on the front line that rescue dogs that are—dogs and cats that are forced to live in just really extreme, extreme conditions.

And this bill is meant to recognize all of those amazing Manitobans and those front-line animal rescues and all animal rescue organizations, including The Winnipeg Humane Society, Winnipeg-K9 Advocates, Save A Dog Network. There's so many—there's far too many for me to name.

But we actually have probably about 40 animal shelters and rescue facilities that are operating in Manitoba. And often they go without any recognition or any appreciation for the work that they're doing, really, on behalf of all of us. And so I wanted to be able to have an official day that we can recognize the work that they're doing and just to be able to say *miigwech* for the very critical work that they do.

And, finally, Madam Speaker, really it is a testament to who we are as a people when—in respect of how we treat those who can't speak for themselves or who cannot advocate for themselves and who are the most vulnerable, including animals who suffer quite atrociously not only here in Manitoba, but really across the world.

So I really do lift up this bill for all those individuals, and I say *miigwech* to the House for supporting it.

\* (15:20)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I want to first congratulate the MLA for St. Johns for bringing this forward. It's an important measure which recognizes the importance of pets and of animals to our life as humans.

The history of animals and humans being partners goes back thousands of years. It was a pretty important step when this partnership began to develop and evolve with dogs, with cats and now today with many, many other animals as well.

It is an important relationship partly because of the amazing things that animals can do and keep us enchanted, interested, but at the same time, caring for animals we learn important characteristics, human

qualities of caring for others and ourselves, and this is a really important quality that I hope all young people have a chance to experience. And I hope that in the future we do even better in exposing young people who don't have pets to animals in rescue shelters and getting them experience in the wonderful benefits of interacting with and learning from animals.

I know in all the pets that I have had or we have had as a family, the animals and the birds and the turtles that we have looked after, that it has been an amazing experience over the years. And with birds that was often helping them to get back into the wild and helping them to be in shape, trying to help them so that they wouldn't learn to get too close to humans and not be ready to behave as wild birds in the future.

But it is that relationship which is important for young people, but it's also tremendously important as people get older. And, indeed, for seniors, pets are a good reason for people to be a lot more active, taking their pets out for a walk. I see innumerable people in River Heights going out for a walk with their pets, and I think that if it were not for their dogs, in particular, that they would not get nearly as much exercise, and I think that's a wonderful aspect of this, that pets can be amazing not only as creatures, not only as loving animals, but they can be amazing in what they contribute to human health. And we know this, and it's not just the exercise; it is the companionship; it is the relationship.

A friend of mine has been involved in making recordings of animals and developing those recordings so that people can play them at times and so that if they have animals at home, the recordings can be played to calm the animals and keep them knowing that there are like animals around.

And so there are a lot of good reasons to support this bill, and we are firmly on the side of supporting this bill and making sure that there is awareness day for animal rescue and for animal shelters.

Thank you, merci, *miigwech*.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there any further debate on this bill?

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 228, The Animal Shelter and Rescue Awareness Act.

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

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Acting Government House Leader):** Would you call debate on Bill 8. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** It is—the honourable Minister of Justice?

**Mr. Cullen:** Would you call concurrence and third reading for Bill 8.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 8, The Government Notices Modernization Act (Various Acts Amended).

### CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

*(Continued)*

#### Bill 8—The Government Notices Modernization Act (Various Acts Amended)

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mrs. Mayer), that Bill 8, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, seconded by the honourable Minister for Crown Services, that Bill 8, The Government Notices Modernization Act (Various Acts Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Mrs. Cox:** For 17 years, Manitobans languished under the NDP government, dead last in health care, education and access to information. Our government is modernizing access to information and bringing government communications into the 21st century. Manitobans will now have free online access to the Manitoba Gazette 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 52 weeks of the year.

We're fixing the finances, repairing the services and rebuilding the economy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, this is the latest in a suite of bills that aren't really bills brought forward by this government that isn't really governing.

They brought forward a carbon tax bill that doesn't have a carbon tax in it, and now they bring in this bill that they don't plan to proclaim, hot on the heels of the last bill that they didn't want to proclaim, which was the former Bill 28.

*Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

So what exactly the—is the government up to with this move? Well, seeing as their Premier (Mr. Pallister) has threatened lawsuits but hasn't actually filed one with the newspaper of record in the city of Winnipeg, I suspect that this bill is nothing more than petty score-settling with a free press—and note that I say, a; not The Free Press.

Again, we on this side of the House support a free press. In fact, we support the entirety of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And it is fundamental to a free and open society, it's fundamental to the proper functioning of a democracy, that there is a free press.

And yet this move by the government to try and pull resources away from community newspapers, including the community newspapers owned by the Winnipeg Free Press, which the Premier has threatened to sue, is an affront to those basic democratic freedoms.

We recognized this from the outset. We saw right through the Premier's moves, and that's why we delayed this bill over the summer.

Now, we wish that we could defeat this bill. Perhaps we will get a chance in the near future to repeal this bill, but for the time being, we decided to delay this bill because we wanted Manitobans, people right across the province, to get the opportunity to learn more about what damage this government is trying to do with Bill 8.

Now, we delayed this bill to this fall so that people would get a chance to speak up, and speak out they have, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And sometimes in this game of politics, you find yourself with some unlikely allies. And so it was with great surprise that Ken Waddell, amongst others, joined us in the chorus of people speaking out against Bill 8.

Now, even though Mr. Waddell is a, you know, a true Conservative, I would say, somebody who even contested the leadership of the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Party, he himself has condemned this government's actions under Bill 8. And he has, I believe, made it very clear to members opposite that if they do vote for this bill, then the



space in those local papers that they're accustomed to may no longer be there in the future.

Now, I'm not interested in the back-and-forth between the owners of local papers and the members opposite on the backbench, but I am interested in what precedent is being set by a government that so plainly uses the legislative tools at their apparatus—at the legislative apparatus at their disposal to try and silence a free press, trying to silence a media that is rightly asking questions and holding a government to account.

\*(15:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm somebody who does not always enjoy favourable coverage in the media, and yet I still recognize that it is fundamental to our democracy to have a media and a press that can freely question those in positions of power. Now, maybe that's because I used to work as a journalist in a previous lifetime, or, perhaps more accurately, it's because that I understand that a free press is the lever with which the public can hold the powerful to account. And that's why the issue of freedom of the press is so important to us here in Manitoba and across the free world.

Now, of course, we do believe very concretely that there is a requirement for freedom of speech and freedom of the press in our society, but in the cultural background that I come from, for every right that an individual can claim, there is a concomitant responsibility that balances it out. And so at the same time in our society that we have a right to the freedom of the press and a right to the freedom of speech, there is a corresponding responsibility on the part of those in power to inform. There's a corresponding responsibility of a government to inform and to keep the people of this jurisdiction apprised of their activities.

And so not only is there a vindictive streak at the heart of this bill, but there is also the abdication of that responsibility to inform the citizens of Manitoba about the conduct of this government. And so that's why we have decided on this side of the House to oppose this bill, because we believe that Manitobans deserve to be told about what their government is up to.

We are in favour of openness and transparency. But most importantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in favour of fundamental human rights, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** We've been clear about opposing this bill. And under Bill 8, this government is going to stop giving public notice on hearings in newspapers for the following: The Cooperatives Act, the criminal 'properter'—property forfeiture act, The Ecological Reserves Act, The Endangered Species and Ecosystems Act, The Environment Act, The Highways Protection Act, The Human Rights Code, The Municipal Board Act, The Public Schools Act, The Public Utilities Board Act, Securities Act, The Surveys Act and The Water Protection Act.

At committee, not a single witness was in favour of this bill. It is not a bill that is in the public interest; it appears to have no public support, so it is impossible to understand what the motivation for this bill is. Just saying that it's modernization is not good enough. There are all sorts of examples of when this government has talked about modernization when really what they're talking about is stripping away 50 to 80 years of progressive legislation.

We've put forward amendments to strip the offensive parts out, but the PCs voted them down in their entirety. And I've made it clear that this is a bad bill that is likely to backfire. And one commentator said that whatever pittance this government will save or expects to save by not running these notices will be lost to litigation when people are upset and find out that they've been duped in some way by this government.

I am sure that every one of us has appeared in the media in a story that made a mistake about us. In the 1990s when I was involved in student politics, the Winnipeg Sun once ran my name as Dorothy. I have since forgiven them.

And, as someone who has worked in government communications, I had to go through media training, which consists on learning to stay on message and give the same answer, no matter what the question. In these training sessions, reporters are sometimes painted as the enemy. But I have never, ever felt this way. While I am partisan enough to be the leader of a political party, I also understand that journalists and many citizens are genuinely non-partisan, and they are doing their best to act in the public interest.

I am deeply concerned about the feature of media and newspapers, because I see their work as essential to democracy because they help keep people in government accountable. Winston

Churchill said that accountability is an essential part of democracy. Our job in opposition is to hold this government to account, but the media play a larger role in holding government and all of us to account. And again, that's why I'm so concerned about the future of local news media, and newspapers in particular.

One of the most important issues to me is growing inequality and that life has been getting harder for many Canadians as incomes have stalled for years. One of the hardest hit industries in terms of revenues and job losses has been the traditional media industry. There have been massive job losses across Canada. There used to be five Winnipeg Free Press reporters in the press gallery here. There used to be reporters from CJOB. And they aren't there any more.

But local media plays an essential role in the life of the community on so many levels: in terms of jobs; in holding people to account; in telling community stories; and especially telling the stories that no one else will tell. There is no replacement for what these newspapers do, so when local media disappear there is nothing to replace them.

I've said this before, that people sometimes think that if you just—if you run out of—or—if one kind of newspaper shuts down or if you run out of one thing, you can just replace it with something else. The idea, again, if you have a problem with energy, if start running out of oil or it gets too expensive, you can switch to energy, you can switch to electricity or coal or gas or whatever. But journalism is like water. It is like clean water. If you run out of water, you can't replace it with anything. There is no alternative.

David Simon, who is an American journalist for The Baltimore Sun and a writer for the TV show The Wire, said, we are facing a potential golden age of corruption because reporters aren't there to cover the decisions being made even at the local level. That can include municipal hearings, school boards and even trials.

And there was a recent story that showed that votes for Donald Trump were higher in so-called news deserts, where voters did not have access to a trusted local news outlet.

Now, I think part of that is because people are not seeing their own communities and their own stories reflected in the media around them. And what we've seen instead is that companies like Facebook and Google and other companies have all eaten up ad

revenues and they have absolutely no standards at all in what they have in their platforms; they're not accountable in the least. Facebook and 'oogle' will run ads that newspapers would not run. They will run and repeat stories that newspapers and traditional news outlets would not run because American social media platforms are not accountable for what they publish, and local newspapers are, and that matters.

This is something that KPMG and, unfortunately, and others in this government do not understand. They think they're cutting costs, but they are cutting corners. It is essential for governments, in particular, to support local news with statements through the Gazette and with non-partisan government advertising in the public interest because those newspapers are providing a premium product, information that is fact checked and accurate and accountable. And if someone makes a mistake, you can go to them and, frankly, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) can even try to sue them. And that's worth paying for because I don't think we can afford the alternative.

Bill 8 is unacceptable, anti-democratic legislation that takes away the government's responsibility to inform the public and puts it on the public to try to have to seek that out. The fact that it is being paired with significant cuts by this government in advertising spending and further planned cuts in advertising spending is a further concern that this government is looking to choke off independent government-independent media, which we need to be able to challenge this government and hold it to account.

Once again, as—the Manitoba Liberal caucus is united in this, we oppose Bill 8. It's bad legislation and we hope it will be repealed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is there—the honourable member for St. Johns.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** I move that debate on Bill 8 now be adjourned.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns. [*interjection*]

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech. I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that debate on Bill 8 now be adjourned.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed to, the House?

**An Honourable Member:** Agreed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it all 'an unanimous' for—

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Yes, okay, agreed and so ordered.

The honourable member—the honourable Minister for Justice—Government House Leader.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Acting Government House Leader):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, could you call Bill 24 for concurrence and third reading.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Call No. 24—Bill 24 on concurrence and third reading.

Is it agreed to the—the honourable member—the honourable Minister for Justice.

**Mr. Cullen:** Apologies, Deputy Speaker; that's Bill 16 for concurrence and third reading.

\* (15:40)

#### **Bill 16—The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Okay, it's going to be concurrence and third reading of Bill 16.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** So I move, seconded by the minister of Crowns, that Bill 16, The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs and subsequently amended, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

#### ***Motion presented.***

**Ms. Squires:** I'm honoured to stand today and put a few final words on the record about Bill 16, The Climate and Green Plan Implementation Act, that would move Manitoba forward on initiatives that would help lower our carbon footprint and help us build a more sustainable environment now and into the future, for our future generations.

We have had a lot of discussion about our plan over the last year, and I want to thank the many presenters who came to committee to talk about the importance of moving forward and having real action on climate, but also protecting the economy at the same time, and that is exactly what our bill does.

We are saying yes to green projects. We are building—we've committed a historic \$102 million into a conservation trust, which will provide a stream

of funding for green infrastructures in perpetuity. We are working to clean up a lot of contaminated sites in the province that had been neglected for several years, if not decades. And we are moving forward with initiatives to transition to clean, renewable resources so that we can all lower our carbon footprint and that we can do it in a sustainable way.

So I look forward to this bill's passage.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I want to take this opportunity to comment on the curious happenings that have occurred with bill.

We got a revised bill today which had 15 pages, and the previous bill had more than 50. And so when we were voting on report stage amendments quite recently, the situation was that this government has taken away more than two thirds of this bill, more than two thirds of this green and climate change plan gone.

It is a matter of taking out the parts which relate to having a price on pollution; it's a part of taking out the approach to industrial pollutants, big 'industrial' emitters. But essentially what it is, is it's taking out much of what was a made-in-Manitoba plan.

And the curious thing is that, when it came down to the wire, the Conservative government abandoned their choice of having a made-in-Manitoba plan. And Liberals and NDP were standing up to have a made-in-Manitoba plan, where the Conservative government was handing everything over to Ottawa. It was a very strange evening.

We on this side, our leader and myself, the members of the Liberal Party, wanted and supported a made-in-Manitoba plan with a made-in-Manitoba price on pollution, with a made-in-Manitoba approach to large industrial emitters and with the revenue coming in a way that Manitobans could decide how that would be used.

Now, we differed from the government—it is true—in how we wanted to allocate that revenue. We didn't choose the approach that the government chose when they were looking at a made-in-Manitoba plan. We didn't choose that approach because their approach would have provided, primarily, help to people who are large income earners and absolutely zero help for those who are the least well off and who are below in earnings the current personal exemption.

And so we thought, when we looked at this, that it was actually pretty important to provide those dollars to help people who were less well off, who have less opportunity to buy electric cars and to cut down, in a major way, on their use of greenhouse gases or their generation of greenhouse gases, their use of fossil fuels.

And so what happened was that, in the end, this government decided that in the end they didn't want a made-in-Manitoba plan and the—as Liberals we stood up and said, yes, we like a made-in-Manitoba plan, even when it's got a lot of flaws in it, as opposed to the alternative.

But the—we also think that it was very important to be able to use those dollars, some of those dollars, to make investments in helping people around Manitoba to adjust so that the cost of the price on pollution, the money coming in from that, would have gone to support individuals to make choices which would be more beneficial. It would have gone to supporting ensuring we had electric charging stations all over the province, and, hopefully, in partnership with Manitoba Hydro, who stands to benefit a lot from that, we believe that some of that could have gone to supporting the trucking industry in its transition.

And so, Mr. Speaker, there was a big opportunity to have a made-in-Manitoba plan, but this government chose, when it came down to the final analysis, that it did not want a made-in-Manitoba plan. They wanted to throw it out, and they did the other night. They chucked the made-in-Manitoba plan and chose to have an Ottawa plan instead, because that is what we will have. It is a curious turn of events, but that is the reality of what happened.

We have, in addition to that, some major concerns with this legislation, that there are not enough specifics in many areas of the plan for them to be really practical and credible in a way that they need to be. We have tried to get amendments recently at the report stage that would have required targets and timelines, but the government said, no, no, we don't want targets and timelines, they might get in the way. Well, the Conservatives used to be a party which wanted accountability, but they don't anymore. They have lost that sense of direction which, at one point, they had, and they have it no longer.

The amendment—other amendment that we put forward was that there would be charging stations all

over the province and that we would keep track of that. This is essential if we're going to be able to convert to using a lot more electric cars. It's essential if we're going to have buses and tourists coming here using electric motors. It's essential if we're going to move to an economy which uses a lot more in the way of electric vehicles than we have now, which is an economy which uses primarily fossil fuel vehicles.

\* (15:50)

It is actually amazing the difference that even a hybrid vehicle can make. We purchased, not long ago, a hybrid vehicle—it happened to be a Prius Prime—but overnight our consumption, our use of gas, went down by more than 80 per cent. It's quite a change. It's a very nice, quiet ride. And it really is not much in the way of inconvenience because we can just plug it in overnight and then unplug it in the morning, and away we go, fully charged up.

It's a easy transition, and it will be helped when this government all of a sudden, hopefully, someday realizes that actually setting up charging stations, as other provinces have supported, would greatly facilitate the purchase of electric vehicles here in Manitoba.

There are certain decisions that—options that are out there which this government has chosen not to take. And that was one. We also brought forward an amendment which provided for research.

Now, there is a lot that we need to learn in terms of the storage of carbon. The storage of carbon in wetlands, the storage of carbon in the boreal forest, in the trees, in the peat bogs. And I am sure that improved stewardship and improved attention to this and looking at areas where we can effectively plant trees, that we can in fact be storing a lot more carbon than we are at the moment.

But we actually need to have the research base so that we can track these changes effectively, so that we can claim those credits to which we should be owed. And lacking that research base, we would continue on, and lacking the ability to fully claim the stored carbon that we can and should be claiming moving forward into the future.

My leader has been a strong advocate not only for storing carbon in this way, but for new approaches to storing carbon—in fact, producing fuels from carbon out of the atmosphere directly so that they can then be used to power vehicles and replace the fossil fuels which are in the ground and which

we're taking out. And I believe that such storage and such newly generated fuels, because of the way they're taking carbon out of the atmosphere, can in fact be considered carbon-neutral and would escape the price on pollution because, in fact, they are cleaning the air.

And so that—these approaches—but these approaches were totally missing in the government's document because, in fact, the government was talking about all sorts of other ideas and never decided to focus on things that could make a real difference.

The government decided, in its wisdom, that it was not really interested in doing much in the way of agricultural emissions. Now, agricultural emissions are significant in total of nitrous oxide, methane and the fossil fuels that are used in agriculture, in tractors, in trucks. It adds up close to 40 per cent. Now, the 30 per cent has been well documented in many studies being about half nitrous oxide and about half methane. And the government correctly reported that 30 per cent. But they forgot to report and accurately tally the other 10 per cent, which is the fossil fuels used in agriculture. And if you don't have a plan for agriculture, as the previous government found, you're not going to have an effective way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the whole province.

And there are some areas where we can be very effective in reducing not only the use of fossil fuels in the transition of agriculture to more electric vehicles. That's going to be—take some time, take some work developing them. But interestingly, to the extent that we can be involved in that, that we can then be not only making and manufacturing the product here, we can be selling it to the world if we are ahead. But if we slip behind and have a government like we have now, which is not interested in moving ahead, then we're going to have a problem because we're not going to be producing the services for the future.

Think about, you know, Denmark, which has done pretty well in producing and selling wind turbines around the world. They've created an economy based on the economy of the future, but we have not really done that here in Canada when we had the opportunity. And we are not creating the jobs of the future which we should be creating.

The—one of the amendments that we put forward was to have quarterly and annual reports. You know,

we have quarterly reports in our budget. The quarterly reports in our budget are really important to be able to track how government is spending. We should have quarterly reports when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions and storage. And part of the reason that we should have these quarterly reports is that, as is generally agreed by a large majority of people, this is the single most important area that we must act, addressing climate change, if we're going to save the planet.

And I know that there're some skeptics, but there's a huge weight of evidence which shows that we'd better act in this area. And it is important that we act for our future planet, for the future planet for our kids and their kids. We must not miss this opportunity. There is only a few years left. And when it is so important, tracking it, as this government will do, about every five years, and sometimes tracking only one side of the equation, the reductions in certain areas but not the potential increases in other areas—that this government doesn't have the balance or the wisdom or the foresight that it should have had.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we look at what could have been done, what should have been in this, what we put forward as the amendments to make this a bill which really could have made a big difference, then it is actually a sad day today. What the government took out, which was the made-in-Manitoba plan, it's incredible. After talking for months about having a made-in-Manitoba plan, at the last moment, they yanked it all out and decided they want a made-in-Ottawa plan. Very strange, but that's what happened, and we have to tell it like it is because that's what it is.

And so I stand here in opposition to this bill as it now is, in opposition to this bill because it doesn't do what needs to be done in terms of climate change. It does not do what needs to be done in terms of what we need in Manitoba.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down and let others speak and have an opportunity to put some words on the record.

Thank you.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** I want to thank the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for the words that he put on the record just now and for the ideas that he brought forward during the debate on Bill 16. It was a very good and rare—perhaps sadly rare—moment of bipartisanship between our two

parties, where we supported each other's amendments to a truly horrible plan and legislation brought forward by the Pallister government.

\* (16:00)

It struck me to no end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when the recent poll came out—I believe it was earlier this week or maybe late last week—indicating that only 24 per cent of Manitobans actually believe this government and what it says about climate change. The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) response was, well, that's too bad. He didn't even understand where that could be coming from.

My question is, what's wrong with those remaining 24 per cent? We've got some more public education work to do there, but the vast majority of Manitobans, three quarters of them, have seen through the spin, have seen through the deceptions, have seen the cold-hearted bullying that's going on, and they don't like it. They want this government to be acting on behalf of their futures and their children's future, and this government has done the exact opposite from day one. It is no surprise to me that Manitobans are rejecting this Premier and rejecting this government on climate change. And all the Premier has to do to get an answer for why is it that they don't believe me is look in the mirror.

The Premier wants a brief history. Well, here we go. Here's some actions that he and his government have taken on climate change—bad actions which might just be contributing to the fact that people don't believe him.

Well, he wants to pretend they're serious about climate change. What would we do about energy efficiency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the government was serious about climate change? Well, you would promote it. You would build on the success of the past. Power Smart, enormous expertise: they share it with the world. They have saved Manitobans over \$150 million in the history of that program. What does the Conservative government do? They freeze it. They stop using the name. They forbid Power Smart from even advertising their programs, never mind bringing in any new ones. That's going to sit well with Manitobans. Right as prices for electricity and natural gas are going up, this government says, no, we're not bringing in anything new; we're taking away the stuff that existed in the first place.

They even went so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to hire a worker to paint over the Power Smart sign

on that mural at the corner of Portage and 'shaint' James. They do not want to give anyone an opportunity to save money as they crank up costs for them. That might be part of the reason why people don't believe this Premier.

And then he announced Efficiency Manitoba, one of the most ironic names in the political history of the environment in Manitoba. It's so efficient, it has not existed for two a half years. You can't get more ironic than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Where is Efficiency Manitoba? When is it ever going to get started? It has no CEO. It has no budget. It has no plan. It has no programs. People can't access it to make a difference. But why, the Premier wonders, why don't people believe me when I say I'm serious about climate change? Look in the mirror.

Let's go on to transit. Wouldn't you know it, when this Premier was a Cabinet minister—and I know not everyone can stand listening to the truth, some people will decide to leave, some people will decide to stay, the words will be on the record. I'd—I hope that anyone who isn't here has a chance to read it later on, because everything I'm saying is on the public record already. It's a useful reminder.

Let's talk transit. When the Premier was a minister in the Filmon government, what did they do to public transit across Manitoba? Did they support it? Did they give it more money? Did they encourage it? No, they tried to kill it. They got rid of the 50-50 cost-sharing agreement which would see the provincial government and the municipal governments cost share public transit equally. They got rid of that because they don't believe in public transit and they love to beat up and blame poor people for their problems while making it worse for low-income people and anyone trying to live a green lifestyle across Manitoba.

Well, we come to office, we restore the 50-50 transit agreement and support public transit. We even go so far as to partner with Red River and Hydro and Mitsubishi industries and New Flyer and we create a brand-new product by working together; a—dare I say—a made-in-Manitoba solution. Oh—what is it? It's the first made-in-Manitoba all-electric bus. Four of them are put on the roads in the city of Winnipeg. The 50-50 transit agreement is restored. The Pallister government comes off and says, oh my God, we can't have this happening, this is successful: kill it, kill it, kill it. And they did. They killed the 50-50 funding agreement for all public transit fleets across Manitoba.

And where are the electric buses? Where are they? They made entire movies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over who killed the electric car. I can tell you who killed the electric bus. It's the guy who sits in that seat over there and blames everyone else for his own mistakes. It's the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba who's to blame for those electric buses now sitting in New Flyer's yards not being used and nothing to replace them.

And the crazy irony about this is, even for a Tory—a Tory should be able to figure this out if they actually care about money, because—wait for this, Mr. Deputy Speaker; wait for it—an electric bus will save \$60,000 a year—\$60,000 a year in reduced costs on fuel and reduced costs on maintenance. Ah, the environment and the economy working together. No. Kill it. Torpedo it. Get rid of that, says the Premier, and it's gone.

Why don't people believe the Premier when he says he's serious about climate change? Oh, I don't know. Let's look for the electric bus. We will not find it anytime soon.

Oh, and let's—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** —continue. Let's continue—[*interjection*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order. [*interjection*]

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Oh, we'll get to that. Don't worry. We will get to that. Don't worry.

Here's another staunch hotbed of socialist NDP history: the Trucking Association in Manitoba. They came to this government. They had discussions with them. It was understood between the government and the truckers that any funds raised from carbon taxing would go back to help the truckers make their fleets more efficient.

Instead, what happens? The government cuts the wheels—literally—out from under one of our largest local industries, and the truckers end up going public with words like betrayal. They were betrayed by this government.

And the government's now losing thousands of dollars because the companies are quite rightly outraged, and they're registering their rigs in neighbouring provinces, so the provincial government doesn't even get that source of revenue—another brilliant example of business management and environmental protection from the Pallister

government, and he can't understand, as the Premier, why people don't believe him on climate change.

Then there was the solar subsidy. Oh, such a successful program—'fastly' exceeded Manitoba Hydro's projections, vastly exceeded anyone's projections. We will have over 50 megawatts of installed solar power because of that program, which, I might point out, started before this government even took office.

So 'plu' the point from my colleague here in front of me wondering, what did you do in office? Well, that would be an example, just one of many. But there you go. You can think about that.

And lo and behold, what does the Pallister government do? Oh, no. It's economically successful; it's creating hundreds of jobs; it's cleaning up the planet. Kill it. It's got to go. And they're the only jurisdiction in the world that solar companies are even aware of that have done that, all over the world.

Instead, what you do is you would announce a phase-down. You would phase down a subsidy, if that's what you wanted to do. But, no, Pallister government kills it outright. No more solar subsidy.

Where are all those solar companies now? How many jobs do you think they have confirmed since the subsidy ended? Zero. Zero, Mr. Speaker. Not a single new contract for any of those companies in Manitoba since this Premier killed the solar subsidy. But he doesn't understand why people don't believe him when he talks about climate change.

Now, those are just a few of the bad actions that this government has taken. Let's jump into this so-called plan of theirs for climate change, which is actually a green scam.

It was a green scam when the Premier and the Sustainable Development Minister, last year at about this time, dragged everyone out to Oak Hammock Marsh and announced this new approach that they were going to launch. And they knew it was a scam when they were telling people the exact opposite.

And here's why we know this now: the government, in advance, actually had two economic models conducted—two of them. They've only ever released one. Why do you think that might be, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because the second one didn't tell them what they wanted it to say.

It actually said, if you want to be serious about reducing emissions, you have to increase the price of carbon at a minimum every year. As soon as the

carbon price goes flat, well, then actions to reduce pollution will go flat as well, about as flat as this Premier's lines in question period on climate change and pretty much everything else.

Well, lo and behold, they've never released that second study. They don't want anyone to know about it, but we do know about it now because of FIPPA information that was released, under law, by this government. They have never released it themselves publicly.

That is just absolutely inexcusable that they have been telling people all along that their plan would work, when they knew full well from day one—even before day one—that it would not work and didn't have a hope of doing so.

\* (16:10)

Let's also look at this plan. It is completely devoid of any connection to climate science. And climate science, let's make no mistake, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this Premier's (Mr. Pallister) greatest failure on climate change. The most recent report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was absolutely clear: if we do not become, as a world, carbon neutral by 2050, and if we do not manage to reduce our emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, we're cooked. We have literally cooked our future.

How many people here plan to still be alive in 2030? All right, that's 10 years from now. How many of us would hope that our kids or our grandkids might still be alive 10 years from now, or in 2050? That's every single one of us, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And yet this Premier is telling us that no, no, climate science has no place in his legislation. He didn't put it in his plan. He didn't put it in his legislation.

And, when I brought forward multiple amendments to correct that horrendous oversight, what did his Sustainable Development Minister do? What did he do? They led all the Conservative MLAs in voting every single one of those amendments down. But he doesn't understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why people don't believe him on climate change. That might be one of many reasons that they could choose from.

There's also a slight problem with this so-called plan: It has no targets. I was at a workshop just yesterday. City of Winnipeg now has a climate change reduction target. They've got a timeline. They've got a target. That's really good.

What do you think we have in Manitoba, from the provincial government? We got nothing. We got nothing. No targets anywhere. No timelines—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** —la-di-da. Everything can keep going exactly as it wants and that will be just fine.

No, it won't be.

And wouldn't you know it, the counting system that these so-called bastions of calculators would like to use is devoid of any truth whatsoever, and no one else in the world uses it because it would only count reductions in emissions and ignore all the increases. And it would use this ridiculous thing called accumulative counting, which means if someone reduces their emissions in year one of a five-year plan, the Pallister government's going to steal that and five years later they'll say oh, no, no, that wasn't just one ton, that was five tons.

No, it wasn't. No one in the world does it that way, but that's the level they had to stoop to in order to try and get their numbers to work.

And they still don't work because in their list of actions that they would like to take—which they have never taken, I might point out—they laid out a whole bunch of things and put some numbers next to it. Oh, yes, when we do this, emissions are going to go down by that, and when we get to this in about 400,000 years, well, it will go down by that much.

Well, lo and behold, the numbers aren't accurate, Mr. Speaker. They're completely made up in some categories. They're claiming that reducing the use of coal—reducing the use of coal in Manitoba—that'll be a 100,000 reduction in emissions. One little problem: the Brandon coal-fired plant was the last one in Manitoba. When do you think it stopped using coal? When did it stop operating, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Well, it registered zero emissions for the entire calendar year of 2016. That means it was done operating and polluting two full years before this plan would ever take effect. But this plan's going to claim 100,000 reduction from that action, which was already taken by—oh, who was in office? Ah, who was this? Somebody was in office in 2016, and in January, when that would have started. Who—that would have been the NDP.

You know, that's another thing that happened under us. That's another one. You see? Oh, wow.



What a list we're building here and we've only just got started.

So this so-called plan, which is devoid of science, devoid of targets, devoid of any action, devoid of any sense, now has to actually steal and misrepresent the truth from the record of the previous government to even present its phony ideas to the general public. That is the level to which this government is going to stoop over and over and over again to try and excuse its horrendous behaviour on climate change.

They know what they're doing. They've known it from day one. They've known what they're saying isn't true. And they're going to continue to do it.

Now here's a few other minor little problems with that so-called plan they brought forward. The price would have gone up for everybody. My constituents, the renters living in an apartment block in West Broadway—well, when the price of natural gas goes up under this government's plan, there's no new programs available for them to try and reduce it; for a homeowner, the same thing; for a community centre, for a place of worship, for a school division, for a university, a college, anybody—all the prices go up, no new programs available.

What do you think this government would ask large emitters to do? What would make sense if you had even a modicum of fairness in your body? What would make sense if there's someone creating a lot of pollution over here and then a whole bunch of people who don't have nearly as much money, you know, creating a little bit, well, who—maybe everyone, at a bare minimum, should be asked to participate, or maybe you start with the large emitters. No, no, large emitters wouldn't have to do anything under this provincial government's plan, not a thing; large emitters completely off the hook and everyone else gets it in the shorts. Why do people not believe the Premier (Mr. Pallister) when he complains no one understands his words on climate change?

Well, and it gets worse on a rich-poor front because, with the revenue that this government would've been receiving, would they have put even a nickel of it into climate action? Would they have done anything with that carbon revenue to actually address the severity of climate change, drop our emissions in half in a decade? Would they have done any—no, of course not. This is a Conservative government that governs for itself and its own tiny 1 per cent of the population; that's the only people they care about. And that is reflected in what they

would've done with the carbon revenue. Would any of it gone to carbon—climate action? Not a whiff. Would more of it gone to low-income people than the rich? Yes, that's a good one. No, of course not. It's the reverse, because the rich need to be incented to, you know, do whatever it is they do. They deserve more money than the poor do under the Tory world view. That's what they would've done with the revenue. The wealthiest 10 per cent of families in Manitoba would've got 10 times more money in a rebate from this government on the carbon tax than the poorest families in Manitoba.

Every single Tory MLA has voted over and over and over again to implement their plan before the Premier threw a hissy fit and threw it all out the window, of course. But they were fine with that concept because that's what Tories do; they do not govern for everyone. They do not govern for the future. They govern for themselves. They govern for greed. And that is reflected in their plan over and over and over again.

I also need to take them to task because, of all of the emissions coming out of Manitoba, in their plan, only about half of them would've had any carbon pricing assigned to them at all. Again, it gets back to the challenge of why is it that they are fine with hurting all of the low-income people, the middle-income people, but the largest sources of the problem, of course, are being given a free ride.

Now, here is probably the part that befuddles me the most. We live in a province where nearly all of our electricity is created without burning fossil fuels. The four examples that I know of are still the off-grid communities in the North of Brochet, Lac Brochet and Shamattawa. And those communities still operate on diesel. Everywhere else we are using electricity that does not require fossil fuels to generate. And yet our Premier thinks it's a better use of his time as the premier of a fossil-fuel-electricity province to pick fights with everybody in his path and even some people who aren't on his path, rather than looking at the transition to a green economy as a huge opportunity for Manitoba. There is no rational reason why anyone should believe this Premier gets that, and he's the last one who should be surprised when we live in this type of a province generating more electricity than we ourselves need, putting us in a position to help other jurisdictions reduce their emissions and create more jobs here in Manitoba and earn more money here in Manitoba. But no, no, he doesn't get it.

And it's not just that idea he doesn't get. He doesn't get any of the ideas that are out there. And these aren't just mine. Let's look at composting. Oh, my goodness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you wanted to pick one project that would make a huge impact, composting would be a great way to start. But where are we? The green plan doesn't even mention waste reduction issues in it. They totally miss that in their so-called four-pillars approach. They missed it in their legislation.

\* (16:20)

They had nothing on recycling and certainly nothing on organics recycling, also known as composting. And composting can help climate change twice: it helps because we have fewer organics going into the landfill; it's that part of the waste stream which creates the most methane, and that methane then escapes from the landfill and that's why three of our top 10 large emitters in Manitoba are, in fact, landfills. When you reduce the amount of material going into a landfill, you reduce your emissions.

And, lo and behold, are we going to create jobs in this province by setting up composting in Manitoba? Well, I don't know. Maybe the trucks will all be operated by volunteer Tories who will just happily get up at 6 o'clock in the morning and cycle around on their bicycles and then pick up the buckets of organics and cycle them out to Brady landfill.

No, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is an opportunity to create hundreds of jobs, not just in Winnipeg, but in every major city, every city. Let's start with in Manitoba. We could set up urban composting and that would reduce our emissions and create jobs. And, you know what? It could even end up saving farmers money.

Oh my goodness, what did I just say? Did I just say saving farmers money? That's not going to get anyone's attention on the opposition bench, I'm sure, because, lo and behold, what's the finished product of composting? It's compost. It's good for the soil. It make plant grow—very simple. You put that on your fields and you don't have to buy as much of the artificial fertilizer from the Koch brothers' plant in Brandon.

Yes, the same Koch brothers who have used their billions in profits worldwide to fund pseudo-climate science and to give a kick-start to the Tea Party and the right-wing populism that we now see running amok in the United States.

Why on earth would we want to reduce the—our dependence on their product by using our own natural resource here, keeping it out of the landfill, creating jobs, reducing our emissions, saving people money, and saving the world?

Well, that sounds like a horrible idea. You're right, Mr. Premier (Mr. Pallister). No way that should ever happen. That was actually the first announcement that I made after becoming environment critic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was, like, well over a year ago; a year and a half now, maybe, and there's been zero action on that front anywhere.

Electric vehicles—I already touched on the electric bus, another idea I put out there, electric vehicles. They are cheaper to own and operate already over the lifespan of the vehicle. The main problems are charging infrastructure, which this government could very easily set up, but they're not doing it. The technology exists now that didn't exist even a few years ago. It's being rapidly adopted elsewhere. They're sitting on the idea and not doing anything with it. So we do need better charging infrastructure, but the biggest challenge by far is, for most consumers, it's the higher up-front price.

So what do all the bean-counting geniuses in the Tory caucus do? Well, they don't do anything. It's like, well, it costs more, therefore we're not going to do anything about it. Yes, that's it.

No; all you've got to—well, that's assuming they have caucus meetings at all, which it doesn't sound like they do because when the Premier ripped everything up, nobody in caucus knew about it. So, you know, it's always fun to find out you're living in a dictatorship.

But the electric vehicles, all you'd have to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, crazy idea, why don't we take a little bit of the money raised by a carbon tax and you put it in a fund and then you make that money available to Manitobans so they can afford to purchase the electric vehicle? You don't even have to give it to them as a grant, which is what has happened in other jurisdictions, because the problem with that, one—very expensive for government, and two, most of the money ends up going to higher income folks who can still afford to buy the more expensive vehicle.

So how about this instead? I pitched this idea almost a year ago this February, south steps of the Legislature, and the idea is very simple: You make a

no-interest long-term loan available to people in Manitoba so they can afford the higher price of the electric vehicle, and then when they're operating costs drop by thousands of dollars a year they have the ability to pay the loan back and actually come out ahead, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So wait a minute; let's review this now, okay. Let's review this. We have one approach which—you know, fossil fuel vehicle, we have to import the fossil fuels from elsewhere and when we use them they kill the planet, or—or wait for it—we could use an electric vehicle and we use electricity made in Manitoba which would earn more money for Manitoba Hydro and the government doesn't have to spend money to do it because the money comes back as people pay off their loan and people actually save money.

You want to know how much it costs to operate a—an electric vehicle—how much it costs in gas to operate an electric vehicle in Winnipeg for the entire year? You can ask any of the members of MEVA; they'll give you their own experiences. If many of them are over \$200 a year, I'd be shocked. Like, you have to put a lot of kilometres on your vehicle.

Think of that: \$200 a year to power your vehicle for the entire year, including winter driving—including winter driving. You can even warm up the vehicle before you get in the car. And they can work on the rural areas if you've got yourself a charging station, which I know this government's ideologically opposed to—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** —charging it up, you know? They're—you know, they're ideologically opposed to it.

But, if you did these tiny things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, oh my goodness, you would again be creating more money in Manitoba. You'd be creating more wealth in Manitoba. We would not have billions of dollars leaking out of our economy to pay for fossil fuel imports which we shouldn't be using in the first place, because if we do keep using them, we're going to cook ourselves.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that one's a pretty good idea.

Has anything happened other than the killing of the electric bus? No. Oh, and where did my good friend go? He just—he was here. Oh, I got another one for him, because there was a program we

brought in, the hybrid vehicle program. Anyone remember that? Wildly successful. Wildly successful. That was something that we did while we were in office. And for the government of the day, they've done absolutely nothing. There's been no new incentives brought in at all, and we're right on the cusp of the electrification revolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But they don't want to believe it.

Let's talk retrofits. Let's talk housing retrofits. Do you know how many jobs you can create with—how much of—your GDP will go up with every dollar amount you put into energy efficiency work—actually helping Manitobans, even helping Manitoba businesses. I'll just say that; I'm sorry to whisper it, but I know they don't want people to know how bad their approach to this is. But you can help businesses in Manitoba save money.

You could create jobs. You would create between 30 and 50 jobs for every million dollars of economic activity going into retrofits, helping people save money, helping our local economy here, helping create jobs, helping training opportunities and, oh yes, not cooking our future.

But here we have a government and a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who just can't understand why people don't believe him when he talks about climate change. Oh, the poor guy. I hope I—I hope my speech here has helped clarify it for him. The single biggest problem, that single biggest obstacle in addressing climate change in Manitoba is the Premier of Manitoba. Full stop.

And a final message to the Premier, this incredibly destructive Premier and his apparently completely irrelevant Sustainable Development Minister who learns along with the rest of us what the guy is doing: you cannot cut your way out of the climate crisis. You cannot stick your head in the sand in the face of overwhelming climate science and tell anyone you're doing a good job of governing this province now and into the future.

The only thing that I can hope for—what I hope for, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is for that day when the good people of Manitoba do to this Premier what he's been doing to them since he came to office two and a half years ago: cut him loose. Get him out of here, same with every other Conservative government in this country and in this world. That's the only way we're going to have a shot at addressing climate change and saving ourselves, is getting rid of this incredible cruel, cold-hearted, incompetent, ignorant government of Manitoba.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 16.

This is an issue—very concerned about and something that I've been raising directly and indirectly, really, since I was first—or, even before I was elected in—federally in 2003.

The—part of the solution to the objectives that I think we all share is an interprovincial grid.

\* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker, I am going to table about a dozen articles of—that provide a sampling of my comments on GHG reductions and power reduction costs for the average Canadian, and these include articles that been published in the Edmonton Journal, in papers in Ontario, on national publications, Winnipeg Free Press, of course.

But the point is, this is not even—this is just a micro sample of what I have said publicly and what I have said in the Parliament of Canada. And Manitoba can be the keystone to solving not just Manitoba's GHG issues but much of Canada's GHG issues. And, when we talk about Bill 16, we need to talk about what the better alternatives are. And the member who spoke prior to me, the member from Wolseley, has come to the same conclusion. The member from Elmwood and I have talked about it when we were both in Ottawa as members of Parliament. And the fact is—and, by the way, I have the papers here to table. I'm not sure that a page has come by to pick them up. It's right here.

And I also would like to refer readers to the Canada West report that was published just this week on the interconnection between provinces and the effect that it would have on GHGs, which is really what we want to do. I do want to make something very clear, though, and I want to correct the member from Wolseley who kept on referring to Tories.

I don't know how often we need to—there are no Tories in this place, except for the person of the perpendicular pronoun, and I look across and there are no Tories, because Tories believe in accountability, transparency, results, and we do believe in fairness for the average person. Now, I don't blame the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) for making the observation that a—that the government is not acting in the common interest, for example, ridiculous programs that will cost the average Manitoban more and for no results.

Let's take, for example, the question that I have on today's Order Paper. And, on today's Order Paper, it discusses what is the benefit of reducing Manitoba electric power consumption when it comes to GHGs. What is the point, because when you reduce Manitoba electric consumption, either through demand-side management or through wind power or solar panels, you're not reducing GHGs, greenhouse gases?

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

You're just screwing up Manitoba's economy and costing the average person more money. Where are the people in the social housing going to put their solar panels? In Assiniboia, there is an incredible number of social housing buildings, 30, 40 buildings? Where are those people going to put their solar panels or their windmills to generate the electricity? But they have to pay for it because it costs at least five, 10 times as much than Manitoba Hydro-generated power and there's environmental effects that are not measured.

Windmills are notorious for disrupting migratory birds. There's a whole supply chain of mining the material, transporting the material, questionable work practices where there may be—China or the solar panels and the rare earth metals and how you dispose of these items at the end of their work life. These are all environmental consequences that are never calculated, never talked about, but we're sure going to pay for it in the short term and the long term in Manitoba.

And then, it reduced the number—the amount of power consumed in the name of reducing GHGs, but the only thing that accomplishes in the Manitoba context is reduced revenue for Manitoba Hydro—doesn't affect the amount of GHGs by one CO<sub>2</sub> molecule.

In fact, I will give the answer to my written question on the Order Paper right now to the Chamber. On the Order Paper, it asks how much GHGs will be reduced by implementing a demand-side management program for electric power, and will it cost—how many billions over time?

The answer, in both cases, involve zeros. Zero GHGs will be reduced by demand-side management, but the cost involves at least nine zeros, maybe nine zeros times three. \$3 billion? \$20 billion? Time will tell, but it's in the billions, depending on the time frame you use.

So instead of being practical and working out what can be done and advocating a strategy to ensure that the Province can continue economic development and help the environment, the government decided to buy into this carbon tax introduced by the federal government.

Now, a carbon tax is very different than carbon pricing. Let's make that clear. Carbon pricing and a carbon-carbon tax is a very specific type of carbon pricing. A carbon tax is the way the federal government has decided to go. Fine. Let the federal government make that case.

But, instead, Manitoba agreed with the federal government on the principle of taxes, carbon tax. They've-provincial government's like, yes, provincial carbon tax, that will reduce our GHGs by x amount. And by doing so, they got a legal opinion saying the federal government has the power to impose a tax.

Of course, they have the power to do it, but the Province-Manitoba didn't have to make it easy for the federal government to make their case for them, but that's exactly what the Province has done with Bill 16 in its original form. And by flip-flopping on the carbon tax-which the Province of Manitoba should never have agreed to, the carbon tax carbon pricing-they now have got the worst of all worlds.

\* (16:40)

They've agreed with the principles of a carbon tax and, in doing so, they've undermined the governments of Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and the federal Conservative Party and, most importantly, Canadians coast to coast. They've let the Liberal-federal Liberals off the hook by accepting, in principle, the effects of a carbon tax, and any legal challenge. That's what happened. That's what Premier Pallister has done with Bill 16. He has managed to undermine everyone. And now he's undermining the very principles that he stood for-or said he stood for-a few months ago.

You would never know that the mining industry in Manitoba is dying with all the undermining the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) doing to the environment, to the economy. Well, I guess you would, because the mining industry is dying in Manitoba as well. It's dying.

And the problem with poor economic policy is the people we want to help the most-the people on the fringes, people on the edge of socio-economic spectrum are the ones that are hurt the most: the

vulnerable, the seniors, the disabled. They're the ones that are hurt.

Then the environment is hurt, because now the government has no plan. It has a bunch of red tape that's left in Bill 16, and there's hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue that the government had booked and now can't book, which means they have this-the expenditures and none of the revenue. They haven't got rid of the expenditures. Just the revenue.

And that's the problem with a carbon tax. It is a tax grab. Nothing more, nothing less. And the government-provincial government should have been ashamed to even suggest that it was anything but. They should have just said, straight up, we're going to introduce a tax and we're going to skip the referendum. We're going to be-it's about the same amount as the PST increase from the previous NDP government. And, well, there's really no difference, because that was what it amounts to.

Now I know, Madam Speaker, that this self-evident truth was explained, but not listened to. It was sent in letters and binders, but not read. I know that because I said it and I wrote it. And no one listened. No one cared. Fast-forward a few months and I'm outside the Progressive Conservative caucus because I just said what was obvious, that the environmental plan, the made-in-Manitoba plan, was fatally flawed. It was ill conceived; it was not going to do anything to reduce GHGs, greenhouse gases, and it was just going to harm the economy.

Now, Madam Speaker, the Premier misled, in my view and the view as-his caucus. He led them down a rabbit trail, and then flip-flopped. And now he's leading them down another rabbit trail and trying to deflect responsibility to Ottawa, deflect responsibility. It's the Premier that's responsible for this made-in-Manitoba fiscal and environmental fiasco. It's the Premier that's responsible.

My former caucus colleagues believed in their leader, and they were let down by their leader. And, in doing so, Manitobans were let down.

This is relevant to Bill 16 because that is the core of what the government's been promoting for the last 18 months, is some sort of make-believe legislation, like, where are the unicorns? Might as well-blue skies, puffy clouds-that's about as relevant as the bill is to the environment.

Madam Speaker, there are decisions that governments can make and change position, or even, as was mentioned earlier today, and by the Premier

(Mr. Pallister), and I wouldn't normally raise it, but the Premier used it in question period and he points to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Kinew) and says, oh, well, the Leader of the Opposition apologized.

Well, you know what? Why doesn't the Premier of Manitoba apologize for the made-in-Manitoba financial fiasco and the harm that this ill-conceived bill will do to the environment?

Now, it might be a little while before the public sees the harm that this bill does, but the harm, which will be hidden until past the next election, is done because nothing is being done, and by doing nothing is harm in itself. And we see that in the Canada West Foundation report that was released this week, and I wish I had copies to table. It was—it's very clear. The best way to reduce GHGs is to use Manitoba hydro power to displace fossil-fuel-generated power, and that is exactly what the dozen or so articles that I tabled earlier in this speech say. Send the power east or west, and it's greener than whatever the alternatives are.

In fact, when I was Minister of State for Transport, I had the responsibility, Madam Speaker, of helping create the Building Canada Fund with my colleague, the honourable Denis Lebel from Quebec. And, when we were creating this fund, which, at least to that time, was the largest fund infrastructure program in Canadian history, we had set aside \$4 billion for projects of interprovincial significance, and interprovincial significance was defined as cross-boundary issue. So, if you cross a provincial boundary, that was—that would be eligible for this fund, and specifically transmission lines.

There is federal funding in the bank, or there used to be, but there were—has been, for a long time, to even help create these interconnections between provinces.

\* (16:50)

So I would argue that without government subsidy that these interconnections would be economically viable, but certainly with a little bit of an assist from the government they would be.

And see Denis Lebel and myself had something in common when it came to transmission, and that is we both came from hydro-rich provinces. Quebec and Manitoba, there's a lot in common between the two, not the least of which is green electric power. And it was in the interests of everyone, especially

Canadians and the economy, to create a mechanism to help with interprovincial connections.

Madam Speaker, there are frustrating things about the Canadian constitution and the way things have evolved over time in Canada, and one is the north-south grid system, very few interconnections between provinces.

But that's not because of a technical issue; that's a simple political issue, a political issue which can be solved and solve a lot of other political issues, including the fiscal fiasco Manitoba finds itself in due to previous governments and their management of Hydro and this government's management of Hydro, and answer here, the finances should not be a barrier.

If the main goal is the environment, that's fine, because Manitoba could win if the main issue is the economy. It would—it's actually one of those few win-win situations if the government would renege on this bill, put it away and focus on things that can make a difference.

But another with the Canada partnership, New West Partnership, why did they not include transmission or electricity in that? If you want free trade between provinces, why not trade the commodity that we have too much of and no market? Well, that's the obvious thing, but the government failed to seize that opportunity, obvious opportunity.

In the articles that I tabled, they discuss the oil sands. And what a huge benefit it would be to Alberta to use Manitoba-generated power to displace the fossil fuel usage in Alberta or the coal-fired power generation in Saskatchewan.

And, Madam Speaker, interesting thing that I bring out in the article is the distance between Conawapa and Fort McMurray—which is in northern Alberta—is shorter than the distance between Conawapa and Winnipeg. Isn't that interesting? And a corridor can be found to Saskatchewan and through Saskatchewan to Alberta.

That corridor, rightly or wrongly, exists now for sure, due to what the NDP did with Bipole III. But—so that's a lemon, so let's make lemonade. Let's take the lemonade, create a juice, a power juice, juice as in electricity. Let's help our friends to the east and to the west.

And, by the way, this would be a nation-building exercise: keystone Manitoba; be like the railway. But, no, the government has failed that. Instead they

want to pursue some sort of vague—you know what, Madam Speaker?

If—the greatest contribution the government can make, it seems, to reducing greenhouse gases is just to stop talking. Stop talking now, given all the conversations that are going on in the Chamber at the moment, or stop discussing poor public policy. Gee, think of all the air that would save from—or save us from hot air anyway.

Madam Speaker, the way that—one of the greatest emissions of pollutants seems to be from the Chamber—this Chamber, from one side of the Chamber. You can almost see the pollutants. Even when you look through pollutants and the hot air, there are no Tories. There are people sitting in chairs that don't say things when it's time to stand up and be counted saying, oh, carbon tax is bad, don't do it, Premier Pallister.

Oh, but it happens, and then the Premier (Mr. Pallister) flip-flops on that—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

A reminder to the member that when referring to members, they are to be referred to not by their personal names. So I would remind the member to please heed that rule.

**Mr. Fletcher:** The Premier, the member from Fort Whyte, makes a decision, and—either for the carbon tax or against the carbon tax, but doesn't talk to the caucus, doesn't talk to the Cabinet, doesn't talk to anyone. Of course, there were lots of opportunities.

And, ultimately, when it was time, when the rubber hit the road and the very inefficient Efficiency Manitoba legislation came to the books, which was clearly going to cost Manitobans a huge amount of money, I did the only thing I knew that I could do as an MLA, as a representative of the people, and that is ask the relevant questions at committee, even though I wasn't a member of the committee.

And the first question is: What is the purpose of this bill? And when the minister could not answer that question, and when the Premier cannot answer

that question, that leads to more questions and, eventually, few—soon as the House rose that summer, I found myself outside the PC caucus.

And that is fine because I am proud to be able to speak on behalf of the people in my riding. And I am profoundly disappointed that my caucus colleagues of the day would not stand up, not ask questions, allow for these flippant flip-flops to proceed.

And now another flip-flop, which is obviously the Premier's refusal to do what is right for the environment. He's proceeding with this bill unfunded, leaving a flip-flop financial fiasco.

Madam Speaker, the Premier should resign and get rid of this bill.

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

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), that the debate on Bill 16 be now adjourned.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** All—is there—all in favour? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it agreed or not agreed to—oh.

#### **Voice Vote**

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

\* \* \*

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

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