

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	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

Monday, April 8, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 231—The Indigenous Representation and Related Amendments Act

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from River Heights, that Bill 231, The Indigenous Representation and Related Amendments Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: This is a substantial, historic and perhaps game-changing piece of legislation. The purpose of the legislation is to bring a—add four additional seats to the Manitoba Legislature for indigenous representation, similar to what they do in New Zealand.

Madam Speaker, this bill amends four additional acts. It also empowers all Manitobans to participate in the election process for all the seats; however, from these indigenous seats, an individual may vote either in a special ballot or—for the indigenous seats or right in the regular ballot, but not both. And these indigenous seats are outlined in the legislation, and I'd like to table the following documents to provide further clarification to this House.

Thank you.

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

Bill 230—The Spirit Bear Day Act

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member from St. Johns,

that Bill 230, The Spirit Bear Day Act, be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Smith: I'm honoured to rise today and introduce to this House for consideration Bill 230, the spirit day act. May 10th, 2016, is an important day in the history of Jordan's Principle, as the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal issued its first noncompliance order against the Canadian government.

May 10th is also recognized as spirit day—Spirit Bear's birthday, a bear that has been—has become symbolic of Jordan's Principle. Formally recognized—recognizing May 10th as spirit day will help create awareness of Jordan's Principle and the challenges faced by First Nations children when accessing government services.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Balmoral Hall Blazers

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to congratulate the Balmoral Hall Blazers. For the first time in its hockey program and in Manitoba's history, the Blazers won the Junior Women's Hockey League North American championships, in Burlington, Vermont.

The Blazers overcame much adversity to win this coveted title. They finished first in their pool and, heading to the semifinals, they would face Ridley College from St. Catharines, Ontario. They knew it would be a battle, but the Blazers did not disappoint as they defeated Ontario 5-4 and earned their ticket to the JWHL championship game for the first time ever.

In the final game the Blazers were down 1-0 after the first. Two quick goals in the second left the Blazers ahead 2-1, until Vermont came back with one minute left in the second to tie up the game. Twenty minutes was not enough to solve the tie, so

the game headed into overtime where the Blazers were able to sneak a backhand past the Vermont goalie, and the Blazers won the JWHL championship for the first time in their history. Congratulations, girls. We are so proud of you.

I am honoured to have the coaches, players, including the team captain, Olivia Cvar; Shayna Moore from Thompson, who won league goalie of the year; and Kennesha Miswaggon from Cross Lake, who scored the winning goal in overtime to help clinch the championship.

As well, I would be remiss if I didn't also give a special shout-out to another player who is like a second daughter to me, Kathryn Lyon. Welcome to you all, as well as your friends and family who are here with us in the gallery today.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating the BH Blazers on their new American victory—on their North American victory, to wish them all the best in their future endeavours on and off the ice.

Go Blazers, go.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Families.

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I just wanted to apologize for using props in the House. I know we're not allowed to, but I knew that this wouldn't quite fit me.

But we do send our best to those girls who are here today, and I ask for leave to include the names of the players, coaches, team manager in the gallery today into Hansard.

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

BH Blazers: Olivia Cvar, Kathryn Lyon, Kennesha Miswaggon, Megan Schroeder, Alix Yallowega, team captains; Kaitlyn Basset, Saije Catcheway, Jenae Cockerill, Claudia Levander, Rebecca Thiessen, defence; Chelsea Dinnin, Chiara Esposito, Dana Goertzen, Chelsea Krahenbil, Aidan Roberts, Karine Sandilands, Ashlyn Zaharia, forwards; Shayna Moore, goalie; Regan Boulton, Darlene Sveinson, Sarah Zacharias, coaches; and Hope Minsky, trainer.

Methamphetamine Crisis

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): As we know, the meth crisis is pervasive; reaches across class lines and beyond city limits.

Our province is changing before our eyes. People are turning to crime to maintain their addictions while families are being split up and communities divided. We all have a vested interest in keeping people healthy and addiction-free.

* (13:40)

And yet, what is this Pallister government doing? They're closing emergency rooms despite a record number of ambulances arriving at Winnipeg hospitals in recent months, and despite the number of people having meth-related issues steadily increasing and spiking ER wait times.

Because this government is pushing ahead with their health-care overhaul, there's hospital staff shortages right across the province which means that nurses are working overtime to compensate for the chaos created by this government.

To make matters worse, this government just made the biggest budget cut to health care that this province has ever seen: \$120 million. Appallingly, they have also left \$4.1 million unused to fight addictions treatment here in Manitoba. While the people in this province continue to suffer, this government is sitting on these funds that could save lives; treating people who are struggling with meth, Madam Speaker, is uniquely challenging because they need long-term, intensive, recovery programs and—because meth-induced psychosis can result in violence.

Bottom line: there isn't enough resources being dedicated to addictions and mental health services to have any impact on the meth crisis. The supports that do exist are unequipped to keep up with the current demand, exasperating the sense of desperation that is permeating this province.

We know that Manitobans are struggling and we know that the current system isn't helping them. The question—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Portage Athletes at Canada Games

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I am honoured to recognize athletes Joel Simpson, Chanel Cabak and the McArthur sisters, Alex and Paige, who represented Team Manitoba in the 2019 Canada Games.

Long-track speed skater Joel Simpson participated in six different events at the games, including team pursuit. He note: Being able to

march in wearing Team Manitoba outfits was such an honour, privilege, I will remember it forever.

Figure skater Chanel Cabak qualified to represent Manitoba with her success in Sask Skate and Manitoba sectionals. At the Canada Games she competed in the novice women's event, competing in both short and long programs. Although battling injury, Chanel used her previous experience to compete for—to the best of her ability. She noted that this is the highest level of competition she has experienced so far and it was very exciting.

Alex and Paige McArthur are part of Team Manitoba's female hockey roster. The sisters showed a strong presence on the ice, with Paige scoring their first goal for her team in the tournament. Alex said it is the biggest and most unforgettable thing she has ever been part in. Paige thought the Manitoba Games was amazing and exhilarating experience. Both girls have committed to play university hockey commencing this fall.

As the best in their age group, these young competitors have trained long and hard to be chosen to represent Manitoba.

I ask all honourable members to join me in congratulating these extraordinary athletes for their dedication, perseverance and accomplishments.

Federal Judicial Appointments

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast to coast are concerned about the federal SNC-Lavalin scandal. The evidence strongly suggests the Prime Minister removed the former Attorney General from her portfolio because she refused to bend to his wishes to direct federal Crown attorneys to avoid a criminal prosecution of a Quebec-based company.

It's extremely upsetting to learn about efforts to discredit the former Attorney General. This included putting into the public domain details of an application to the Supreme Court of Canada by a well-respected and experienced Manitoba judge, Mr. Justice Glenn Joyal, who is the Chief Justice of Manitoba's Court of Queen's Bench. Mr. Justice Joyal felt compelled to respond to the media stories and, in fact, shared personal health information about a family member to explain why his application was withdrawn.

These efforts to discredit the former Attorney General expanded to reveal that the former Attorney General planned to elevate former Chief Judge of the

Provincial Court, Judge Ken Champagne, to replace Mr. Justice Joyal in the Queen's Bench.

I have the utmost respect for both of these judges. I know they've worked to improve the justice system outside of any political or ideological bias. It is shameful that the integrity of the application system for federal judicial appointments has been breached and has taken a back seat to crass politics by federal Liberals at the highest level.

Manitoba's Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) has chosen not to comment on this. However, the Manitoba Bar Association and legal experts in Manitoba and beyond have condemned the politicization of the application process and the chilling effect on those who may wish to apply in the future.

I add my voice to those who condemn the efforts by those in the federal Liberal government who ignored the collateral damage of their campaign.

It is a sad day when a Prime Minister and his supporters, trying desperately to hold on to power, choose to try to discredit a Cabinet minister who resigned on principle.

Manitobans and Canadians deserve better, Madam Speaker.

School Bus Drivers

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Madam Speaker, Manitoba school bus drivers provide a very important, though often overlooked, service. Every day they safely transport students in all parts of the province to and from school, sporting events and field trips. That's an immense responsibility, one which they carry out professionally. Manitoba parents know that they can have confidence in the school bus to get their kids to school safely and on time.

In some remote and rural areas, without the school bus, access to education for some children would be extremely difficult. I think it's important to everyone here to ensure that all Manitobans have access to a good education regardless of where they live, and school bus drivers make that possible.

I had the pleasure of passing bill 214, The School Bus Driver Day Act, on June 30th of 2015, which recognizes the third Wednesday in April of each year known throughout Manitoba as School Bus Driver Day.

School bus drivers are many of our students' first and last points of contact with the education system on a daily basis.

I want to take the opportunity to remind all Manitobans of the need to be careful around school buses. Please remember to stop when that stop sign is extended and to watch for kids crossing the street, and remember that they stop at all railway crossings.

One of those bus drivers, Madam Speaker, was Mr. Arthur Luszeck, who drove me to and from school for 13 years, kindergarten to grade 12. He was a great role model, teacher, adviser and eventually a friend. Unfortunately, Mr. Luszeck passed away in the fall of 2013, at the age of 79. He is sadly missed by his children, his grandchildren and all of us who rode the bus.

School bus drivers provide a truly important service and one that deserves to be recognized. The Progressive Conservative caucus and indeed, I think, this entire House thank our school bus drivers for their hard work and dedication.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests seated in the public gallery.

From Gonzaga Middle School we have 32 grade 6 and 7 students under the direction of Rachael Andrew, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

PC 2016 Election Platform Fixed Election Date

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Madam Speaker, we know that the Premier has broken a lot of promises that he made in the last election campaign.

So I was going back through the PC election platform from 2016, and I've got to tell you, there is some wild stuff in this document. There was no promise to close emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg. I would note there was no promise to allow wait times for surgeries to increase. But there was a pretty interesting promise that the Progressive Conservative Party and this Premier

made on page 32; the second point, in fact, I found very, very interesting in light of recent discussions.

So I'd simply table the election platform for the House today, and I'd ask the Premier to read the second point on page 32 to remind everybody what commitment he made in the last election.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate any question from the NDP on keeping promises.

I remember, and I think Manitobans remember very well, when the NDP candidate came to their door, they knocked, they looked people right in the eye and they said, we promise we won't raise your taxes. That's what they said before the election. They broke that promise and then they broke it again, and then they broke it again as well because what they did was first they broadened the tax to include many things that weren't included before. Then they raised the PST—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —and then, Madam Speaker, they took away the right of Manitobans to even have a vote on it. So I do appreciate any question from the NDP on breaking promises.

* (13:50)

We keep our word, Madam Speaker, and we'll commit to doing our absolute best to fulfill the trust that Manitobans showed in this government when they elected us.

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

Mr. Kinew: So I gather the Premier is against breaking promises. That's how we can interpret that comment, though I would note he did not have the courage to read into the record the commitment he made in the 2016 election.

So I'll go ahead and just read it for the House for everyone's consideration, including all these backbenchers who went door to door, knocking, knocking, knocking, and making this promise. They said, and I'm quoting here, that—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —the PCs, quote, will establish a fixed election period as recommended by Elections Manitoba so that the start date of the election is known while adhering to the current fixed election day act requirement. End quote.

So I think I just underlined the fact that the PCs—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —recognized fully that the fixed election day is a requirement, and also that they should have established a fixed election period.

I would ask the Premier: When does he intend to break that promise and will he break—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.
[interjection]

Order.

Mr. Pallister: I do appreciate any question from the NDP on broken promises, Madam Speaker, and I remind the member opposite of the record that he inherited when he chose to run for the leadership of that party.

He decided that he would run for a political organization that stood by and did nothing when members of its own staff and, subsequently, civil servants as well, were being harassed by members of the Cabinet of that government.

He stood by and did nothing when he had the opportunity to demonstrate something was new over there and help a labour leader who asked for his help. He chose to send her away. And, Madam Speaker, I would like to apologize to Manitobans for telling them, in respect of harassment, that there was no such thing as a wrong door. There is a wrong door and the wrong door would be that member's door.

If you want help protecting people in the civil service, you come everywhere but you don't go to that particular political party for help.

We'll end—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Kinew: So, again, the question is put to the Premier.

He made this commitment, as did every single one of those backbenchers and Cabinet ministers, in the last election, to, quote, establish a fixed election period as recommended by Elections Manitoba so that the start date of the election is known while adhering to the current fixed election day act requirement. End quote.

So it seems that the Premier acknowledges fully, when it's campaign season, that a fixed election day makes sense and, of course, that's why Gary Doer brought in that provision in the first place. And it seems that when campaign season comes along the Premier also wants elections to be fair. But what has changed in the interim that he's going against principles now?

So I'd ask the Premier, again, a final time: When is he planning to break the fixed election day law and when will he break that promise he made in the last election?

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate any question from the NDP leader on respect for the law.

Madam Speaker, we're the first government in Manitoba history to release a complete list of the mandates of every Cabinet minister, to make them public and to pursue them with vigour and enthusiasm.

Madam Speaker, we are making progress, but we did inherit a massive mess from the previous government, and we are going to continue.
[interjection] This is the—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: Actually, this is the first I've heard of the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum). I didn't realize he was here today.

Madam Speaker, the fact remains that we are pursuing the goals that we assigned—were assigned to us by the people of Manitoba with enthusiasm, vigour and principle, and I would appreciate the next preamble from the member to be one that references principles so I can respond further.

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

Safe Consumption Site Government Position

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): So, still won't stand up and say when he's going to break the fixed election day law then, eh, Madam Speaker? That's really too bad.

And I can tell that the backbenchers in caucus, they didn't like that question too much, did they, Madam Speaker? And I can tell why: breaking election promises, nobody really feels good about that—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: –and they're learning time and time again, whether it's cutting health care or breaking the election law, that breaking promises just doesn't work.

Now, of course, one of the other major issues—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: –that Manitobans have been confronted with is the addictions crisis, Madam Speaker, and just recently we know that the issue of addictions has been spreading across Manitoba and it demands an urgent response.

The Premier's own experts released a report on the need for a safe consumption site. I will table it for the House today because the Premier did not put out a press release, did not publicize the release of this information.

And, Madam Speaker, I would ask the Premier whether he supports the creation of a safer consumption site in Winnipeg.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): No such thing as a safe consumption site according to the experts, certainly not for meth, Madam Speaker, and we've consistently said we're going to act in every respect on the issues that matter to Manitobans, including addictions.

In terms of promise keeping, Madam Speaker, I invite any debate with the member that he would like to have on our records on keeping our promises.

That being said, Madam Speaker, we promised we'd raise the basic personal exemption, something the NDP failed to do consistently or significantly—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: –and we did; promise kept.

We promised we'd eliminate bracket creep, the sneaky way the NDP raised more revenue off poor people in this province, and we did. We promised that we would protect front-line workers and we are. We promised we would trim at the top and we do that. We promised, Madam Speaker, to invest over a billion dollars each year in infrastructure and we're doing that, too, and a billion-dollar increase in health care, education and families.

Madam Speaker, we're keeping our word; we're doing the best to clean up the mess the NDP created. They got it wrong; we're getting it right.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to members that, when addressing members in the House, we are not to indicate their presence or absence in the House, and that is a long-standing rule of our House that we do not acknowledge when somebody's here or not here, so I'd appreciate everybody's co-operation.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, Madam Speaker, we know that the addictions crisis is very serious and we also know that the need for a safe consumption site in Winnipeg is very serious. It certainly demands more than the response the Premier just showed in front of the House, which is to throw the report created by his own task force, his own experts, onto the ground.

He could have at least read the report before he decided to throw it away, Madam Speaker, and he would have saw some really interesting information in there, namely, that service providers in Winnipeg support the creation of a safer consumption site for drug use in the city of Winnipeg.

Also, he would have read in that report the drug users themselves agreed that they would visit a safe consumption site, which would provide them access to health care, primary health care included.

So my question was supposed to be to the Premier, whether he supports the creation of the safer consumption site in Winnipeg, but at this point we're asking the even more fundamental question: Will the Premier bother to read the report that his own government asked for when it comes to safe consumption sites?

Mr. Pallister: Well, again, the member's at a—just a titch of a disadvantage, Madam Speaker, in terms of consistency when he talks about reading reports. The NDP commissioned reports, for example, on things like how to improve health care in our province and then chose to disregard the advice they received because they lacked the courage to act.

Madam Speaker, we don't; we are, and we'll make the system that they broke better.

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

Mr. Kinew: I'll read a bit more from the report that the Premier just threw away and threw onto the ground very flippantly. This is what the Premier's own report says, and I quote here: Sound evidence shows that SCS—meaning safe consumption sites—allow for safer injection, reduce the transmission of

infectious diseases, are associated with lower overdoses, facilitate referrals to treatment and rehabilitation programs, benefit public order, are cost effective, do not contribute to crime and do not promote initiation into injection use. End quote. All of that is from page 65.

Perhaps the Premier was upset and threw the report on the ground because his own experts are telling him what he and his ministers had been saying in the House for weeks is simply untrue.

So, again, we would like to get to a point in the debate where we can ask the Premier to support a safe consumption site, but will he simply commit today to picking the report up off the floor that he threw away a second ago, Madam Speaker?

*(14:00)

Mr. Pallister: I think, Madam Speaker, the challenge the member has with his one-trick-pony approach to a complex problem is that he's out of ideas even as he tries to convince us that he's done some research.

Madam Speaker, we've had access to half a dozen reports, task forces from around the planet. I just finished reading the Australia task force work which was over—done over a year and a half, cost of millions of dollars. These reports don't recommend safe injection sites for meth, Madam Speaker, because they say that it would be better not to do anything but assist people getting off—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —drugs. The member seems consumed by the idea that if we can get drugs to people, that we'll solve the problem. That's not what the experts are concluding, and, in fact, I just recently spoke to Premier Horgan in British Columbia, and he says: I hope your opposition recognizes the unintended consequences of these actions; we do here in British Columbia.

So, Madam Speaker, I think the member needs to do his own research, and perhaps when he does he'll realize the problem isn't just as simple as he'd like everyone to believe.

Methamphetamine Addiction Safe Consumption Site Request

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Last year the WRHA officials noted that there's a lack of provincial leadership in dealing with the present meth crisis.

Now, the newly released report—the one that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) just threw on the floor—on safer consumption spaces includes statements from service 'providos'—providers echoing that sentiment. One provider said, and I quote: We don't have a Province that is particularly interested in harm reduction or prevention, for that matter. End quote.

Many providers fear reprisal if they speak the truth, saying that the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Fontaine: —key barrier to—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I would call the member to Morris to order, please, so that we can properly hear the question that is being asked.

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

Again, they're scared of reprisal and they indicate that the key barrier for safe consumption services is actually the Pallister government, Madam Speaker.

Will the Premier read this report, pick it up and actually take action to provide safe consumption services to Manitobans who desperately need it?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, I don't know if the member actually read the report, the Government of Canada report she is referring to, but it does say in there, clearly, that this type of assessment would not draw conclusions about whether that approach would be necessary or not.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Over 80 per cent of those who participated with the safe consumption report said that they would likely use a safe consumption service.

But the report describes, and I quote: un-supportive political environment for harm reduction approaches. There's a lack of provincial leadership. In fact, Manitoba is the only province in the country that does not have an action plan dealing with this drug crisis. Every other jurisdiction has submitted their action plan through the Emergency Treatment Fund, except for Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, why, in the face of mounting evidence, won't this minister or Premier (Mr. Pallister) take action and develop, at the very least, an action plan on dealing with this crisis?

Mr. Friesen: Well, the member is quite wrong. She knows that every day we continue to make good investments that are making a difference in the lives of people.

But that member also knows it was less than one week ago when a parliamentary committee was here in Winnipeg visiting Morberg House, and at that time there were multiple respondents and professionals and experts who said, do not invest in a safe meth site in Winnipeg when methamphetamine users would not benefit from such a facility. That was the experts.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Eleven provinces and territories have action plans. Manitoba actually stands alone in the face of this crisis across the country.

Now, the report on safer consumption spaces provides an opportunity to actually do something. Again, over 80 per cent of participants said they would use safe consumption services. Service providers pointed to the changing drug market and rapid increase in injection drug use as a key evidence to support safe consumption sites here in Manitoba.

Why and when will the minister commit to an action plan and actually get onside with Manitobans that need help dealing with this meth crisis?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to have the opportunity to talk about what an action plan looks like. Looks like a \$1-million contribution to Strongest Families Institute to head off youth drug use; it looks like a \$7-million investment in a 75-mental-health-bed consolidation at Victoria hospital; it is the establishment of Canada's first illicit drug task force by three levels of government; it is the addition of six additional mental health in-patient beds at Health Sciences Centre; it is the doubling of women's treatment beds from 12 to 24.

I only regret I cannot continue to talk about the ways our government is taking action.

Ad Campaign—Nurses Apology Request

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): The minister has still not apologized for the social media

advertising campaign for Manitoba nurses, one that was demeaning and insulting to Manitoba nurses.

Immediately suspending the ads and apologizing over Twitter, Madam Speaker, is not a formal apology—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —to nurses who work every single day in this province. Nurses are asking and they deserve an apology.

So will that minister stand up today and have the courage to actually apologize to Manitoba nurses?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): The member is quite wrong.

I—immediately upon viewing the ads, we recognized immediately they were inappropriate, didn't depict nurses in any way that we—would represent the views of this government, and that's why we pulled the ads.

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

Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals Request to Retain ER Services

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): On this side we're listening to the nurses and we'll continue to get up and ask this minister for an apology on their behalf.

The PC government continues to erode and worsen the health-care system here in Manitoba. The Premier's \$240-million cut last year, \$120-million cut this year and the closure of urgent-care centres and emergency rooms are affecting the services that Manitobans rely on. Wait times for hip and knee replacement and cataract surgeries are up; mandatory overtime is up; front-line workers and, frankly, all Manitobans are scared of what's to come in phase 2 after seeing what they've done in phase 1: straight chaos by this government.

Will the Premier commit to keeping Seven Oaks and Concordia ERs open?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, even though the question is madly off in many directions, let me respond by saying the member should understand that investments in health by this government are up \$400 million more than the NDP ever invested in health care. That is up; up is not down.

We continue to invest more to strengthen Manitoba's health-care system. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mrs. Smith: Well, straight chaos is what this government has caused here in Manitoba.

Those on the front lines of Manitoba's health-care system continue to plea to the Premier to stop the cuts, to stop the closures and to stop the destruction that he's caused to the health-care system; however, the Premier continues to ignore Manitobans and front-line workers.

But all Manitobans who are suffering from the repercussions of overworked and understaffed nurses in hospitals is because of this government. The subject line of Réal Cloutier's email the other week laid out a road loud and clear for all to hear, that all this government's actions are doing—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, what is clear is that this NDP continues to clutch to a system—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —that failed to get better results for Manitobans; 10th out of 10 in so many categories under the NDP, and yet what do they do today? They decline to modernize. They decline to improve the system. They declined to put the patient at the centre.

* (14:10)

This plan is based on evidence. It's a plan to get better results for Manitobans. What do they do? They embrace the same failed approaches of the NDP-past. We will get better value for all Manitobans, better care sooner.

Climate Change Government Position

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): This Premier's stance on climate change is confusing Manitobans, obviously, because it's confusing him. He can't seem to make his mind up at all.

The Premier is suing the federal government because he says Manitoba faces a double standard. However, he has some double standards of his own.

He says that new hydro dams were a waste of money, but also wants credit for building them.

The Auditor General said the NDP did nothing on climate change, and then the Premier says that, quote: Clearly, Manitoba's been one of the greenest jurisdictions for a long time, and, clearly, we are not being respected for that. End quote.

Why is a Progressive Conservative premier covering for the NDP's well-documented failures on the climate file?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I wasn't aware I was doing that, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Lamont: The Premier appeared on Power & Politics last week, and he showed Manitobans he's—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lamont: —and showed the Premier is of two minds, or possibly more, on climate change. He says special deals with provinces are unfair, then wants a special deal for Manitoba; that other provinces shouldn't get credit for projects that will reduce emissions, but also wants credit for imaginary coal plants we've never built.

He thinks the NDP wasted 17 years ignore climbing—ignoring climate change, but wants to avoid a carbon tax because of how apparently green we are. He says someone in Ottawa told him he has the best plan—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —yet he also said, and I quote, that Ottawa said it wasn't good enough.

I can't make this stuff up, Madam Speaker. I will leave that to the Premier.

Why did the Premier wait until after the price on carbon was introduced to launch a lawsuit? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: Isn't this closing the barn door once the horses have bolted?

Mr. Pallister: Okay, Madam Speaker. The NDP overbuilt Manitoba Hydro without the permission or involvement of Manitobans. They spent billions of

dollars they shouldn't have spent, but that is no reason for us not to get credit for the mistake the NDP made, Madam Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, Manitobans won't—*[interjection]*—the fact is that Manitobans won't get a return—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —they won't get a return on the investments the NDP made for 40 or 50 years, but that doesn't mean that the federal government shouldn't give us credit for the actual investments the NDP made.

I guess what I'm trying to explain to the member, Madam Speaker—they say if you—if you're explaining, you're losing, so I'm probably losing, but I've got to try to explain to the member that Ottawa doesn't respect Manitoba's investments in green. We think they should. I don't know why he and his Liberal colleagues don't think so too. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Lamont: The Premier told the CBC that he's only pulling one page out of a 77-page plan. This is a truly remarkable feat, since the plan is only actually 60 pages and several of those are blank. But the Premier's been inconsistent about whether the federal government rejected his plan or whether he walked away.

He's also said many times that his plan was described as the best in Canada by federal officials—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lamont: Could the Premier please explain exactly when and where this statement took place, if it took place at all?

Mr. Pallister: So the member appears all too willing to take Ottawa's bait here. Ottawa has a sneaky plan. It's a sneaky plan, yes. What it does, Madam Speaker, it's designed to be portrayed to Manitobans and Canadians as if they're doing something about fighting green, and then it also tells them, on the other hand, they get all their money back. That's not going to change behaviours, Madam Speaker.

It's a deceptive plan. It's pure politics. The Liberals polled in Ottawa and said let's run an election on this. That's what this is about.

Instead of fighting about a carbon tax, which the member apparently has bought into and wants to do, why don't we all agree that we should be fighting carbon?

And that's what Manitoba's made-in-Manitoba plan's about—worked with hundreds of Manitobans directly, thousands indirectly, on the development of a plan to fight carbon. Instead of fighting about carbon tax, as Ottawa wants us to do, we've decided we're going to fight carbon instead.

The Pas Volunteer Firefighters Insurance Company Lawsuit

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The minister continues to put on the record that the government is not suing individual firefighters, but the insurance company is.

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries is currently paying money to this company for their services, a company that is suing six individual firefighters. The minister's done nothing—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —to stop this. Nobody knows who this insurance company is. They deserve to know.

So will the minister tell this House today: Who is the insurance company that's suing six individual firefighters in The Pas?

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): It's a merry-go-round, and we've been on that for 17 years here, going around and around with false information from the members of the opposition, repeatedly.

Again, I'm going to repeat and maybe I'll mention it a little more slowly so that the member can understand: the government did not instruct Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries. In fact, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries was unaware that they were named on that documentation.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Well, Madam Speaker, the Liquor & Lotteries is a Crown corporation. It operates under the control of this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and this minister.

This insurance company, their actions are wrong, suing six individual firefighters. The minister needs to step in, stop this threat of a lawsuit from

destroying the lives of those firefighters. She needs to take action now.

Will she stop all contracts with this insurance company in order to try and convince them, if she can't convince them otherwise, to drop this lawsuit against firefighters who risk their lives every day?

Mrs. Mayer: I heard the question. I've answered the question. I don't think I need to go further.

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

Mr. Lindsey: I'm sure the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —minister has heard the question. She's heard it any number of times. So far she's refused to tell us who the insurance company is that's suing firefighters. So far she's refused to tell us that Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries is going to cease to do business with that corporation that is suing firefighters.

So will she at the very least indemnify those firefighters against the horrendous cost of—potential from this lawsuit? Will she at least do that?

Mrs. Mayer: Let's try this one more time, Madam Speaker.

To clarify: Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries was not advised of the filing of the statement of claim. To the best of their knowledge this was a subrogated claim on the part of the insurance company. They received the payment in full from the Town Centre Hotel VLTs in June of 2018 and therefore have no reason to be participate in this statement of claim.

I will table documentation once more again so that maybe this time the member opposite will understand.

Family Violence Prevention Program Women's Resource Centre Investments

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Manitoba has some of the highest rates of gender-based violence in Canada. That's why it is so important for government to invest in programs that help to break the cycle of violence and provide the supports needed for victims of gender-based violence to build better lives with the focus on safety, healing and wellness.

Earlier today, the minister response for the Status of Women announced a significant investment

by our government through the Family Violence Prevention Program.

Can the minister please tell the House about this important investment in women's resource centres?

* (14:20)

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): I appreciate the question from my friend from Seine River.

I was very pleased this morning to make an announcement with the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson) at the West Central Women's Resource Centre.

Our government recognizes that when we support women, we're supporting their families, and when we're supporting families, we're building communities. And that's exactly what we did this morning at West Central Women's Resource Centre: announced core stable funding, something that the NDP had ignored for 17 years. They failed to fund them.

We brought them into the Family Violence Prevention Program to give them that money year after year after year so that they can perform those vital services to the women who need it most.

CancerCare Manitoba Government Review

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, let me start today by paying tribute to Arnold Frieman, a great entrepreneur and builder who was eulogized this morning by Rabbi Alan Green.

My question today is about CancerCare Manitoba. The government's review process didn't work.

Why didn't it work, and what is the government's next step with respect to CancerCare Manitoba?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I thank the member for the question. It's important to undertake this operational review of CancerCare Manitoba. We believe that every opportunity should be explored to be able to deliver cancer programming and services to Manitobans.

This is something that is agreed to by CancerCare Manitoba and I can tell you that the CEO for CancerCare was there that day when we

announced this. I look forward to answering the question of the member even further in my next response.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, so the government will continue with a review.

What's the process for the review? What's the timeline for the review? What will be the goal of the review? Will it be to find efficiencies, the word the government uses for spending cuts, or will it be to build on what has been achieved so far so that CancerCare Manitoba can provide even better cancer prevention and treatment for Manitobans?

Indeed, I note in this context that the Premier has already dramatically reduced funding for Research Manitoba, the very body that funds the research needed to improve prevention and care.

Mr. Friesen: We would have preferred, of course, that the request for proposals would have returned a successful proponent.

The member should understand, though, that when it came to undertaking to secure a third party for this engagement it is a complicated thing to look for someone with the necessary clinical, operational and financial expertise in acute medicine, including cancer care.

So in this case, we are committed to the goal that we originally stated. We will look for other ways to advance this exercise, but we need to make sure that CancerCare is delivering those services to the very best of their ability because we know that the demand is only going to increase in future.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I note the Minister of Health is copying the previous NDP minister of Health in answering by saying that, oh, it's too complex and therefore we can't do much about it.

Let me follow-up: Will the government focus on improving prevention and care, or will it, as it has done with previous reviews, focus primarily on where there can be cuts in funding, focusing on cuts in funding and putting people at CancerCare Manitoba into the valley of despair to which this government has subjected so many other health-care workers?

Is that what the government's goal is?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, now the member has just entered into the valley of misinformation.

Madam Speaker, to be clear, the changes undertaken in our amendments in Bill 10 establish CancerCare Manitoba as the cancer care delivery organization for this province. We need to ensure that everything is being done to make sure that there is capacity not just now, but five years from now, 10 years from now.

I remind that member that these were the same things that the CEO for CancerCare said when we took this engagement on and said this is the way we build capacity for the future.

We're getting better health care sooner for all Manitobans. That includes CancerCare.

Infrastructure Investment Long-Term Strategy Request

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Premier.

Madam Speaker, Don Leitch, president of the Business Council of Manitoba, wrote on the weekend: The Province is missing an infrastructure investment strategy. He says that even the most basic of investments are not happening; instead, public political squabbles have become the norm that is now beginning to define our province. It could be different. As Mr. Leitch says, with a strategic approach and committed investment we can grow the economy and avoid the squabbles that now define the state of infrastructure in Manitoba.

Why is the Pallister government opposed to this approach?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): We're injecting over \$1 billion a year in infrastructure investments as a government, Madam Speaker, and we're doing it strategically to effect the maximum possible positive results for the people of Manitoba. The previous administration had an approach of raiding that department year after year after year after year, and then running a parade for themselves just before elections.

And that isn't the approach we're taking, Madam Speaker, so we're actually getting more value for money for Manitobans and investing in strategic infrastructure at the same time.

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

Mr. Maloway: Madam Speaker, Terry Shaw from the Manitoba Trucking Association describes the Pallister government's approach as successive severe cuts—the highway budget. Wow. He's right. Over three years strategic infrastructure was cut by three quarters of a billion dollars. It's a mistake, but one that the Premier can reverse.

Will he take the advice of those like Don Leitch and Terry Shaw who want long-term and strategic infrastructure investments in Manitoba?

Mr. Pallister: To be fair, the business council—Manitoba business council did encourage the previous NDP government to raise the PST, which it said it wouldn't, but then did. To be fair, we are investing more in infrastructure, specifically in road construction, than the NDP did in 15 of 17 years when they were in government.

But we are not going to continue the crazy time that preceded the last election when unsustainable, poor-value-for-money investments were thrown at the public along with billboards that said steady growth.

Madam Speaker, the only signs of steady growth in the province under the NDP were the signs. With our government—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —strategic investment in infrastructure will be the norm and it will be steady investment that achieves better value for money.

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

Mr. Maloway: I think he just makes it up as he goes along.

Madam Speaker, three quarters of a billion dollars, that's how much has been cut from the Province's strategic infrastructure spending over the last three years. That's the biggest cut in all of Canada, and the Province is projected to underspend its target for last year by \$450 million.

Cuts and underspending in infrastructure will do long-term damage to our province's economy and competitiveness.

Why is the Premier deaf to those like Don Leitch and Terry Shaw who urge the Premier not to take the scissors to necessary infrastructure investment?

Mr. Pallister: There were no scissors available, Madam Speaker. The member used them to cut NDP off his election signs—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pallister: And the fact remains—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pallister: The fact remains that—*[interjection]*—Madam Speaker, the fact remains that the member opposite just cited reductions in spending that were unsustainable from 2015 fiscal year. That is also, unfortunately, what Chris Lorenc at the Heavy—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —Construction Association does. That is also, unfortunately, what other people do. They quote a figure that was unsustainable, ill-advised, did not get value for money, didn't get the job done for Manitobans and say there's a reduction, when in fact, our steady investments in infrastructure exceed the average investments made by the NDP in 15 of the 17 years they were in government, inflation adjusted.

So we're making a steady commitment to infrastructure. The previous government made an erratic and ill-advised non-commitment to infrastructure, Madam Speaker.

I want to thank the leaders of the opposition for their comments today. I enjoyed and appreciated having a chance to sit down with them, and I do appreciate on an ongoing basis their advice on issues of mutual concern that I think we can deal with better together than we can separately.

Thank you.

* (14:30)

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

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

On Friday, March 15th, 2019, the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) raised a matter of privilege regarding the impact of electoral financing legislation on the general public, which she contended violated the privileges of the House.

At the conclusion of her remarks, she moved, and I quote, "that this matter be referred to an all-party committee immediately". End quote.

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) also offered advice to the Chair. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. I thank both honourable members for their contributions to the matter of privilege.

In raising privilege, members must satisfy two conditions in order for the matter to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. It needs to be demonstrated that the issue was raised at the earliest opportunity and also that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order for the matter to be put to the House.

The honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) asserted that she was raising the matter at the earliest opportunity as she needed to consult authorities regarding the legislation. However, given that the bill in question she was referring to was introduced in the House of—on March 7th, 2019, this does not fulfill the criteria of raising the issue at the earliest opportunity.

On the second issue of whether a prima facie case of privilege was demonstrated, the issue raised does not qualify as a breach of the privileges of the House. Potential impacts of legislation on the general public does not breach the privileges of the House, as parliamentary privilege does not apply to the general public.

In addition, disagreement by members with proposed legislation does not fulfill the criteria of a breach of privilege. Rather, it is an issue of a difference of opinion and beliefs. There will be opportunities for members to debate the merits of the legislation when it comes forward for debate at the various legislative stages and to explore these differences of opinion and beliefs in greater detail.

I must therefore rule, with the greatest of respect, that the matter raised does not fulfill the criteria of a prima facie case of privilege.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Respectfully, I challenge the ruling.

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Ms. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, a recorded vote, please.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (15:30)

Order.

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am therefore directing that the division bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

Division

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

Yeas

Bindle, Clarke, Cox, Curry, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Klassen, 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, Altemeyer, Fontaine, Kinew, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Smith (Point Douglas), Swan, Wiebe.

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

Madam Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

House Business

Ms. Fontaine: On House business.

Madam Speaker: On House business.

Ms. Fontaine: In accordance with rule 2(9), I would like to table a list of the two bills designated so far by the official opposition of this Fourth Session of the 41st Legislature.

I had previously designated Bill 10, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Health System Governance and Accountability). Today, I am designating Bill 4, The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On House business, the Official Opposition House Leader has announced their second designated bill for this session, Bill 4, The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act, and she has tabled a revised list, and I thank the member for that.

PETITIONS

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly—to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early-childhood educators has continued to increase. Quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately 'renumerated'.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

*(15:40)

Madam Speaker: In—I would just ask the member that, when she has finished reading the petition, she does need to indicate that it has been signed by Manitobans. So I would just ask the member to add that last sentence. She doesn't have to read any names, but if she could just read that one sentence, that would take care of this rule issue.

Ms. Klassen: This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Thank you.

The honourable—or the—in accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are read, they are deemed to be received by the House.

Daylight Savings Time

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly and the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition has been signed by Bryan Rodewald, Patsy Gregoire, Sandra Blundell and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly. To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Alyssa Hart, Justin Crane, Phyllis Hart and many, many others.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Kelda Palmer, Elana Agosti, Leah Onigbinde and many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

* (15:50)

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Melissa Baker, Erin Crawford, Nadia Douglas and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Always a pleasure. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

And, Madam Speaker, this petition was signed by Ana Quintos, Mac Macatula, Hui Wen and many others.

Thank you.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the financial—no, pardon me, Madam Speaker—the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget as all operating expenses continue to increase.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Robert Bidder [*phonetic*], Tina-Marie Guthridge and Lindsay Allum [*phonetic*] and many more concerned Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to members when finishing off the petitions that the members are

allowed to indicate many other Manitobans or many more Manitobans but not to add any more wording into that, and I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Access to quality health care is a fundamental right of all Manitobans no matter where they live.

(2) The Premier has slashed budgets and cancelled projects for northern communities, making it harder for families to get the primary health care they need.

(3) The budget of the northern regional health authority has been slashed by over \$6 million, which has negatively affected doctor retention programs and the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

(4) With limited services in the North, the Premier is forcing families and seniors to travel further for the health care they need.

(5) On November 6th, 2018, the northern regional health authority announced that obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital would be suspended with no discussion regarding when they will be reinstated.

(6) The result of this decision is that mothers in Flin Flon and the surrounding area will have to travel at least a half—excuse me—will have to travel at least an hour and a half to The Pas creating unnecessary risk for mothers and their babies.

(7) The people of Flin Flon are concerned for the health and safety of mothers-to-be and their babies, including the extra physical and financial stress that will be placed upon them by this decision of the provincial government.

(8) There has been no commitment from the provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

* (16:00)

(9) The Flin Flon General Hospital is a regional hub that serves several communities on both sides of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

(10) Because this provincial government has refused to invest in much-needed health-care services in The Pas, the hospital in The Pas may not be able to handle the extra workload created by this decision.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to re-instate obstetric delivery services at the Flin Flon General Hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to ensure obstetric services continue to be available on a regional basis.

And this petition has been signed by Murray Gordon, Caitlin Waly, Greg Pruden and many other Manitobans.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I wish to present the—

Madam Speaker: Oh, can the member just hang on for one sec.

Just some information for the House, that when members are choosing to read three names, it has to be the first three names. Members are not allowed to cherry-pick the names; you have to read the first three if members are going to read the names. Otherwise, members could just say, and, you know, tabled on behalf of Manitobans.

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

Ms. Marcelino: I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Addictions Services— Brandon and Western Manitoba

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Addictions are a health and social problem that require co-ordinated responses from the health care, social services, education and justice systems.

(2) It is well known that the number of people addicted to drugs, alcohol—or alcohol, drugs and other substances is on the rise in Manitoba, with a notable increase in use of methamphetamine and opioids, two highly addictive and very destructive drugs.

(3) Between April 2015 and April 2018, drug abuse and alcohol abuse were two of the top three risk factors identified by the community mobilization Westman HUB when dealing with persons with acutely elevated risk.

(4) Recent Brandon Police Service annual reports show a steady increase in calls for service for crimes against property and person.

(5) In Brandon and western Manitoba, individuals seeking addictions treatment and the families trying to help them do not have local access to the services or supports they need. Trying to help them—oh, sorry.

(6) There is no publicly available, centralized list of addictions facilities in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request that the provincial government consider establishing a cross-departmental team to provide leadership on a culturally appropriate, co-ordinated response to the growing addictions crisis in our province that includes an aggressive, widespread education campaign on the dangers of using methamphetamine and opioids, along with addictions education for front-line medical staff in health-care facilities.

(2) To request that the provincial government consider providing additional addictions services in Brandon and western Manitoba across the continuum of care, including acute response, detoxification, long-term rehabilitation, transitional housing and support for managing co-occurring disorders.

(3) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider establishing a publicly available inventory of all addiction facilities in Manitoba.

(4) To request that the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living consider providing supports for the families of people struggling with addictions, including counselling, patient navigation and advocacy, and direct access to free 'naloxalone.'

* (16:10)

And this, Madam Speaker, is signed by J. Campbell, Sam Bana, Kallie Brooks and many, many other Manitobans.

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Tim Bujak, Taylor Campbell, Chris Miller and many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

Just checking my mic is working, Madam Speaker.

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting impact—my apologies, Madam Speaker.

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

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

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase.

Quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately 'renumerated'.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader): And we wish to move to Interim Supply, 2020.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider Interim Supply this afternoon.

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Interim Supply

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

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

The first resolution representing the operating expenditures for the Interim Supply reads as follows:

RESOLVED that for 2020 to 2021 fiscal year, 75 per cent of the total amount authorized by operating expenditures for—authorizing for the 2019-2020—I'll repeat this.

RESOLVED that the 2020—RESOLVED that for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, 75 per cent of the total

amount authorized for Operating Expenditures for the 2019-2020 fiscal year by the appropriation act for that year that is not an act or Interim Supply—or act for Interim Supply, may be paid out of the Consolidated Fund and applied to Operating Expenditures of the Public Service according to the appropriations set out on part A of—in part A of 2019 Estimates.

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

Does the official opposition Finance critic have any opening comments? No?

Does the second opposition Finance critic have any opening comments?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to put on the record that this is an unusual procedure. In fact, my understanding is that there is no precedent for this, and given that it is a procedure without precedent, it is highly unusual that this would be introduced by the minister without any explanation whatsoever.

This is the budget for—or the Interim Supply for a year from now. This would be normally brought in next year. We're wondering, on this side of the House, whether the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is going to try and prorogue the House for a year or do something strange.

* (16:20)

But, certainly, there has been, to date, no credible explanation for why we would be dealing, today, with the Interim Supply for 2020. And I hope that the minister will pipe up and give us an explanation for this highly unusual measure coming forward today instead of us dealing with Estimates or even with the BITSA bill, which would have been a little bit more logical.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there any other members that have any opening comments? No? Okay.

The floor is now open for questions. Any questions?

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I'd like to ask the Finance Minister what's the reason for this bill, for this Interim Supply?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Well, thank you, Mr.—oh, you don't have to—thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In March, opposition members, after several days of using tactics, delays, blocked government's Interim Supply legislation from passing. This was an unprecedented action and has caused significant uncertainty for public servants and Manitobans who require government services. Introducing the bill now will guarantee its passage by November so that the NDP cannot play games with the livelihoods of Manitobans.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I think it's pretty clear, having a look at the situation, that the government had the opportunity to manage the Legislature in an improved fashion, so that the Interim Supply bill got before the Legislature a little bit earlier.

And, if that would have been the normal procedure to make sure that it passed in time, that a good case—yes, can be made, that it was the government's fault—and as well as, you know, problem with this government. But that's not an excuse for bringing in the supply bill for 2020 a year before it's actually needed.

Mr. Fielding: Well, thank you. And we know that to all members the Legislative Assembly have recommended that the government bring appropriation bills before the Assembly an earlier date, to ensure adequate review and time to move the bills through the legislative process, here in the Assembly; Manitoba's well in advance of the beginning of the fiscal year.

We want to make sure that public servants weren't put in the same position as they were just recently by the opposition members, where you have appropriations that are there. We think this is entirely appropriate to make sure that civil servants aren't somehow being used by a pawn by the opposition to somehow stall and delay passage of these things, plus things like provincial sales tax cuts.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Well, and I appreciate that—I'm sure members have lots of questions, I know we certainly have many questions to ask of this minister, and want to ensure that we're getting a full picture.

And I do hope that the minister takes some time to review his notes and make sure he's ready for the question period, which I do think is coming up just a couple of steps from now in the process, so that he might actually answer some questions rather than

simply just reading off of prepared notes from the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) office.

But I do understand that this time that we're spending here in the Committee of the Whole contributes, or has an effect on, the number of hours of Estimates time that all opposition parties certainly appreciate and relish the opportunity to question the government on.

So I do hope the minister is more prepared, and I do anticipate that there'll be lots more questions during the question and answer and the debate period when it comes to debating this bill further.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the honourable minister have any comments of the question—no?

The honourable member for River Heights.

Mr. Gerrard: Oh, I will wait for further questions until later steps.

Mr. Chairperson: So is the committee ready for the question?

Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

Now we'll go on to the second resolution respecting capital investments for the Interim Supply, reads as follows:

RESOLVED that for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, 90 per cent of the total amount authorized for Capital Investments for the 2019-2020 fiscal year by the appropriation act for that year that is not an act for Interim Supply, may be paid out by a consolidated fund—I'm sorry—paid out of the Consolidated Fund and applied to Capital Investments, according to the appropriations set out in part B of the 2019 Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening comments? No?

Mr. Chairperson: Does the opposition Finance critic have any opening comments? No?

Does the second opposition Finance critic have any opening comments?

Mr. Gerrard: Not at this time.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Is the floor ready for the— is open—any questions? No?

Is the committee ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

That concludes business for the—before the committee.

The committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered the adopt two resolutions with respect to Interim Supply.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Interim Supply Motion

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that there be granted to Her Majesty on account of Certain Expenditures of the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021, out of the Consolidated Fund, 75 per cent of the total amount authorized for Operating Expenditures for the 2019-20 fiscal year by the appropriation act for that year that is not an act for Interim Supply, to be voted as set out in part A, Operating Expenditure, and 90 per cent of total amount authorized for Capital Investments for the 2019 fiscal year by the appropriation act for that year that is not an act for Interim Supply, to be voted as set out in part B of Capital—*[interjection]*—Investments for 2019-2020 fiscal year by appropriation act for that year that is not an act for Interim Supply, to be voted as set out in part B, Capital Investment, of the 2019 Estimates.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education, that there be granted to Her Majesty on account of Certain Expenditures of the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021, out of the Consolidated Fund, 75 per cent of the total amount authorized for Operating Expenditures for the 2019-2020 fiscal year by the appropriation act for that year that is not an act for Interim Supply, to be voted as set out in part A, Operating Expenditure, and 90 per cent of the total amount authorized for Capital Investments for the 2019-2020 fiscal year by the appropriation act for that year that is not an act for Interim Supply, to be

voted as set out in part B, Capital Investment, of the 2019 Estimates.

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

* (16:30)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 30—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2020

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 30, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2020, now be read a first time and ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 30—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2020

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 30, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2020, be now read a second time and referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: Bill 30 is required to provide interim spending and commitment authority for the 2020-21—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —fiscal year pending the tabling of the 2020-21 budget and approval of the 2020 appropriation act.

Our government is taking responsible action with The Interim Appropriation Act, 2020, to ensure front-line services that Manitobans depend on are not subject to legislative tactics in the next fiscal year by introducing this appropriation bill in a timely manner that will allow for the Assembly to fully consider it and act responsibly and proactively to ensure business continues for government and civil servants.

Madam Speaker, many members of the Assembly have recommended that the government bring appropriations bills before the Assembly at an earlier date to ensure adequate review and time to move the bill to the legislative process here in the Assembly well in advance to the beginning of a fiscal year. I encourage members to move this bill

through the Assembly to ensure that the services Manitobans depend on will continue to be funded 'adequately' in the next fiscal year.

We know that many of the opposition members, including the Finance critic and former Finance critic, as well as independent members, have expressed their support for the government in being proactive to ensuring interim appropriation bills and budget bills and appropriation bills are passed easily. So I expect to see the opposition working to move the bill along through the House as quickly as possible, Madam Speaker. I know the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) and members from Concordia and members for—and other members will also be glad, based on their prior statements that they have made in these debates, that this bill is being introduced as early as possible.

We want Manitobans to know that their government will ensure that delays witnessed in the Legislature of late will not generate uncertainty when April 1st, 2020, rolls around.

Budget—further to—we know that it cannot take some time—sorry—further, we know, Madam Speaker, that it can take some time for budgets and appropriation acts to move through the Legislative Assembly due to the opposition's delay tactics and rules that encourage healthy debate, so it is critical with the next year's drop-dead deadline for the next election in October, that we ensure adequate funding for government services.

We also know that Manitobans have a short construction season and that we are assuring that the bulk of capital for 2020 is authorized so that important projects can move forward even if there are delays at the legislative—Legislature next year. I know that the Heavy Construction Association will not want a pending election or opposition delay tactics to delay the tendering and completion of projects next year. We know that Winnipeggers want their potholes filled and their residential streets worked on, and so that it is essential that we are ready April 1st, 2020, to flow funding for capital projects—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —and grant funding, Madam Speaker, to our municipalities so they can move with the spring construction season. Clearly, springtime can also present challenges for emergency expenditures related to flooding, and this interim appropriation act helps to ensure sufficient funding is available in

those situations and to avoid unnecessary process delays during the spring flooding season.

Members may also know that other jurisdictions other than ours have done—here in Manitoba have historically done this.

I can tell you that Saskatchewan, they have authorized in their financial administration act legislative authority for an annual interim period until an appropriation act is passed.

We have considered that approach, which has pros and cons, but today, we have chosen to introduce our regular interim approach—appropriation act for 2020, but earlier in the fiscal year than it has traditionally been introduced.

Another option, that PEI has adopted, is a combined interim appropriation with the previous year's appropriation act. Ontario includes interim appropriations in the prior year's budget implementation act.

After evaluating other jurisdictions and what they do to ensure interim appropriations are passed in a timely manner, we are asking Legislative Counsel for advice. The recommendations, Madam Speaker, that came forward was to introduce an interim appropriations act based upon the previous year's budget, which is what we are doing.

They made it—we—they made this recommendation because it would ensure unforeseen issues within the Manitoba statutes and allow for independent consideration of interim appropriations by the Legislature, which has been the tradition here in Manitoba for many, many years.

* (16:40)

I know the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), who has been elected representative for some time, has spoke in—has spoken during our recent interim appropriation bill about how the government should avoid the potential crisis—avoid the potential crisis, Madam Speaker, that entails on April 1st, if appropriations have not been made by the Legislature—will want to support this effort to ensure civil servants are paid next year, so it's an important opportunity for that member to stand up on behalf of our citizens and on behalf of our public servants.

Our Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) spoke about how the government was looking for

solutions on what occurred just weeks ago with years—this year's interim appropriation act. Solutions to deal with the delays created by the opposition is something that is unproductive and we need to get ahead of it, Madam Speaker.

Well, today, I present the Assembly with this solution as a responsible path for the Legislative Assembly to take going forward to ensure the stability of our services and to put the minds of civil servants at ease. We're putting it to ease, the civil servants, Madam Speaker, that their pay will no longer be put in jeopardy by potential irresponsible opposition tactics.

This measure will ensure Manitobans that their front-line services that they depend on will be protected from unnecessary delays by—caused by members of the opposition, NDP, Liberal, and other independent members.

This solution has the benefit of allowing the Assembly ample time to consider interim appropriations for the next fiscal year, but I encourage the Assembly to move it along quickly as there will be plenty of opportunity to debate and discuss appropriations in this year's appropriation act as well as with budget implementation bill and a Committee of Supply which we have closed—close to 100 hours left for discussions on the government fiscal plan.

As much as I know the opposition wants to talk about how they're opposed to reducing the PST for Manitobans on July 1st, I know that's a major priority for them—delay, delay, delay, making sure that Manitobans are stuck with a bigger tax bill that they imposed. There will be plenty more opportunities to discuss that during Committee of Supply.

I know they don't like to talk about fiscal plans because their only path tends to be—resolve around more debt, bigger deficits, and throwing money down a black hole. Very experienced at that.

The opposition resists talking about lowering the deficit, balancing the budget, Madam Speaker, and responsibly looking for value for money and returns for in-government investments. They would rather talk about just about anything else than the deficits that they created amongst themselves.

The NDP would have had \$1.7 billion deficit in 2019 if Manitoba had continued on the same path that they had set us on.

But Manitobans were smarter than that, and they knew they had to change course. They knew they could no longer tolerate the NDP's missed targets year after year, after year, after year. Instead they chose to put their trust in a new PC government.

They have been meeting the challenges—we have been meeting the challenges, reducing the deficit each and every year, moving towards balance, Madam Speaker, while investing in front-line services.

I just met with three credit-rating agencies and they were very positive about Manitoba's renewed commitment to sound fiscal planning. They were a little surprised because of past practices of the government over 17 years but are over—but are very happy with the approach that our government has taken over the last three years.

Manitobans deserve credit for improved fiscal picture, rejecting the NDP's mismanagement of our finances and instead choosing new PC leadership. We are now—we are not out of the woods yet, but we are making progress and that rating agencies are noting this.

At the same time, we are making responsible long-term transformation within the government that will put Manitobans on a sound fiscal footing for years to come.

We are focused on our summary financials and ensuring our Crown's special operating agencies and other reporting entities that affect our bottom line are being responsibly managed, and that our financial statements are as accurate as possible.

The Auditor General has acknowledged that these improvements that he has recommended in the previous government what were ignored for far, far too long.

I could go on and on for some time on our full fiscal plan, but I wish—I would like to focus on this interim spending authority in the act. Now, the amount of interim spending authority includes in section 2(1) of Bill 30, a 75 per cent of total operating expenditures to be voted on in the 2019-20 appropriation act as set out in part A, the Estimates of Operating Expenditures, in the 2019 Estimates of Expenditures. Section 2(2) of Bill 30 includes the amount of capital investment authority of 90 per cent of the total capital investment to be voted in the 2019 appropriation act, as set out in part B, Estimates for Capital Investments in the 2019 Estimates of Expenditures.

Section 2(3) simply affirms that money expended under the authority of this act must be duly accounted for in the appropriate department in the event that there is a shifting of responsibilities during the fiscal year.

Section 3, authority up to the amount will be included in the 2019 appropriation act, is being provided for the development of acquisition of inventory, primary for the development of cottage lots in 2020-21.

When these lots are sold and their titles transferred to new owners, the related expenditures and revenues will be included in the main Estimates for that fiscal year.

Section 4, authority of the \$71,466,000, Madam Speaker, is being provided for payments occurring in 2020-21, which reduced the long-term liability previously occurred in the environmental and other liabilities.

Section 5 provides authority in an amount that is not to exceed the total future commitment to be included in the 2019-20 Appropriation Act. This authority is provided to make commitments beyond the 2020-21 fiscal year, to ensure the completion of projects or fulfillment of contracts initiated but not completed prior to March 31st, 2021.

Madam Speaker, Chairman, these commitment—with these comments, I commend the bill, and members of the committee to review and support.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

Madam Speaker: Do members have any questions on the bill?

A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members; no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I'm wondering if the minister could just lay out the legislative steps that we have in this Legislature in order to ensure accountability that the government must undertake to pass its budgetary agenda in any given year.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): The legislative process is straightforward that's before us. You need to pass appropriations act. The problem we've seen in the past just few months, where the leaders of the opposition and independent members were willing to jeopardize public servants, in terms of their approach, really using them as pawns in terms of some sort of strange political game of delays, Madam Speaker.

We don't think that's appropriate; we want to make sure that we're ahead of the curve. We've heard from other members, Madam Speaker, in terms of the delays. This is entirely 'appropriate'; we want to make sure the Manitobans get paid.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, I find it passing strange that the minister talks about strange political games. He seems to be practicing this at the moment.

This is an extraordinary measure; it is—never been done before because it's never been considered necessary, and this Province has operated for almost 150 years without having to have, you know, this sort of charade happen now.

The fact is that this—bringing this forward at this point, the minister has—

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

Mr. Fielding: Well, and I guess that old adage, a Liberal is a Liberal is a Liberal, because he's supports one side as friends and other side as friends, where he doesn't know which side to support.

I can tell you that the member opposite clearly said that we should stop the delays and pass this. This is something that some of the major sector unions said this should never happen again.

This is something well—that will ensure that public servants aren't being made as pawns; that the members opposite—shame on you for doing that, in terms of putting the lives of public sector employees at risk, in terms of their paycheques.

One thing is for sure, that this has never done before in the past. You've never had opposition that looked to block interim appropriation.

* (16:50)

Mr. Wiebe: Well, the hyperbole is off the charts here, Madam Speaker, but, you know, obviously, the minister knows—I think, anyway, that he should know a few extra steps in the legislative process that he seems to be skipping over. He did mention them

in his speech, so I'm surprised he wouldn't mention them when I asked the question.

The budget implementation and tax statutes act, which is before this Legislature, the Estimates process of which we have 100 hours in order to go through the budget, make sure that the numbers are doing what they're supposed to be doing, and yet, this minister is now jumping to next year's budget.

Why won't he go through the steps that are required of him in this Legislature?

Mr. Fielding: Two reasons: our major public sector unions said never again; and never have we had an opposition that wants to block and put the risk of public sector employees 'afred'—in front of their political needs. I think this is something that's entirely appropriate.

We want to make sure and, clearly, the public sector unions, Michelle Gawronsky, who's the MGEU, clearly laid out the fact that we need to put things in place that this can never happen again; that leaders and members of the opposition are going to blame this and get in the way of public sector employees.

We don't think they should be used as pawns, Madam Speaker. We want to get the job done to make sure that public sector employees are paid.

Mr. Gerrard: It is my understanding that the financial calculations in this interim appropriation are based not on the '20-21 budget because that hasn't been delivered, but are based on the '19-20 budget, which was delivered not that long ago.

And as—has there been any additional items which might be included in this appropriation which the government is expecting to spend on in '20-21 as opposed to the '19-20 year?

Mr. Fielding: I can tell you that all appropriate steps have been taken and this is the exact same number that was passed just last week.

In fact, I think the member may have supported—after his long, long delays have threatened the salaries of public sector unions—nothing in here that's any different in terms of the range for capital and operating dollars.

What this clearly does is it ensures that this is not politicizing—it's not an Americanization that the member opposite enjoyed last week when he put delays on the record in terms of impacting public sector employees.

This is an insurance policy to make sure they're not politicized. They're not the ones in the middle, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wiebe: Unfortunately, the minister can't have it both ways. He can't talk about this as being part of the debate that is necessary to pass the legislation. In fact, calling it in his opening remarks, healthy debate. And then complain when the opposition takes that opportunity to engage in that debate.

Obviously, it was their mismanagement which led to the not passing of the bill in a timely way last time. It's unfortunate the minister would go to such lengths now.

And, as the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) mentioned, you know, extrapolate these numbers based on last year's budget, or—this year's budget looking forward to next year's budget.

What ability does this minister have to amend the legislation if his numbers are—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Fielding: Well, Madam Speaker, let's correct the record. I was here sitting the week where we were supposed to pass interim appropriation before our constituency week where the members opposite delayed—in fact, we couldn't even get to question period many of the days because of all the delays that were put in place. They put the—they jeopardized public sector employees that are there.

Fact, Madam Speaker, today, what I witnessed was members of the opposition slow-walking—slow-talking our way through petitions for delay tactics. We don't think that public sector employees should be threatened, be used as pawns in some sort of weird political game by the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —members of the opposition, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: My follow-up question has to do with the fact that, in fact, on the recent procedures, there—was my understanding—not one single civil servant who didn't get their paycheque on time; that, in fact, in spite of all the rhetoric, the last interim

appropriation for this year passed probably half an hour or an hour after the legislation—legislative session began on that Monday.

Why is the government not bringing in something which will correct the problem if they see a problem in the long run, rather than just doing it for one year?

Mr. Fielding: And what I can put on the record is a few things. I'll say that this is an interim appropriation act which is always introduced prior to the next budget. There's nothing unusual about this at all, Madam Speaker. It would not fund any new programs until a new budget appropriation is passed.

I clearly identified, in our comments, of some options we did review of other provinces—Saskatchewan, PEI, and Ontario, with advice from our counsel. We think this is entirely appropriate to ensure that the opposition is not going to use public sector employees as a pawn in their strange political games.

Their calculations, Madam Speaker, somehow find some sort of advantage to somehow shut the government down and use public sector employees along the way. We reject that notion.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, Madam Speaker, it's very nice that the Minister of Finance is trying to cover for his House leader here today, try to pretend now that, oh, well, I know he did everything he could to try to manage the House, and I'm sure there was some circumstance that led him to totally mismanage the situation that he found himself in on the last day before break week.

And when the opposition said, well, we will give leave and, in fact, I think the members of the opposition were more than happy to come in on break week. I'm happy to come into this Legislature any time, Madam Speaker, to talk about issues important to Manitobans.

And, again, now the minister wants to call this an unhealthy part of the democratic process. I disagree. I'm wondering why the minister is now questioning this process we have before the Legislature.

Mr. Fielding: Well, Madam Speaker, and you know what I'm glad about? I'm glad that the opposition critic has found his voice because what we heard

about 10 minutes ago is him slow-walking through petitions.

What was that for, Madam Speaker? It's to delay. We saw what they did prior to this, putting public sector employees' salaries at risk. We know what they're doing again. We know what they've done already this week.

Madam Speaker, we need to pass this to ensure that public sector employees are not used as pawns in their political games for their political advantages. We will not do that.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, in fact, the procedure for getting Interim Supply is fairly robust. When we are not sitting, the Interim Supply, in fact, can come in through order-in-council, and so the member and his government had abundant opportunities to do that ahead of time but forgot to do it, apparently.

I would ask, why is the Minister of Finance not putting—making sure we're getting to Estimates and getting to debating the BITSA bill and other bills which the government has on the table?

Why are we not doing that? Why are we doing a-year-from-now Interim Supply right now?

Mr. Fielding: Well, if this morning is—or this afternoon, the early part of this afternoon is any indication of what this session is going to be like, we know that they're going to be slow talking their way, somehow delaying everything—delay, delay, delay.

They're not afraid to use anything, Madam Speaker. They try to use public sector employees, their salaries, as some sort of hostage to their political campaign to somehow get advantage.

We don't agree with that. We don't think that's right. We think it's important to support public sector unions in terms of making sure that employees get paid on time. This is entirely appropriate.

We would anticipate—we would hope that the opposition parties would join us to make sure that public sectors—or public sector employees are not being used by pawns.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, this minister wants to question the process of bringing petitions from our constituents to this Legislature and reading them on their behalf and calling that a delay tactic?

That is democracy. That is what democracy looks like, and if this minister wants to go past that, well, he's going to find out that members on this side will stand up every single time, and if he wants to talk about public sector workers and how important they are, they know who is standing on their side.

Front-line workers in this province know very well that it is this side of the House that is standing up for them every single day and we'll continue to do as long as we can.

Mr. Fielding: Well, Madam Speaker, and we hear from members of the opposition somehow they

represent working folks and, clearly, that's not the case.

What they're telling employees of the Province of Manitoba—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, there will be three minutes remaining in this question period.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 8, 2019

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