

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa	Woleseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, December 3, 2019**

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

**Madam Speaker:** Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 15—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act**

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wharton:** Madam Speaker, Bill 15 amends two acts: The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control, and The Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation acts.

The liquor, gaming and cannabis control amendment creates more options for consumers by expanding liquor sales to take-away and delivery food services. The Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act removes the current reference to beer under the distribution section which limits distribution for private distributors and replaces it with beverage alcohol categories, allowing third-party distributors to distribute a wider variety of products.

Also, pleased to be joined by members and stakeholders in the gallery today.

Thank you.

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

**Bill 13—The Crown Land Dispositions Act (Various Acts Amended)**

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Central Services):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development (Mr. Pedersen), that Bill 13, The Crown Land Dispositions Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Helwer:** This bill will make the overall process of land dispositions more efficient, effective and transparent. The changes proposed in this bill are part of a new governance model that will allow routine land transactions to go forward in a timely manner.

This bill will amend The Crown Lands Act, The Expropriation Act, The Land Acquisition Act, The Public Works Act and The Water Resources Administration Act.

This bill creates new delegated authorities to ensure an appropriate level of oversight and approvals are in place for land sales.

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

**Bill 20—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act**

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services, that Bill 20, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 20, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act.

As part of the Manitoba government's 100-Day Action Plan, this legislation is required to strengthen consumer protection and compliance mechanisms for mandatory entry level training for class 1 commercial truck drivers to support an approved standard of service delivery in Manitoba. Bill 20 will establish regulation-making authorities to require surety bonds from driver-training schools to provide financial protection to students in the event of a school closure and impose administrative penalties for schools and instructors that are noncompliant with legislation.

The legislation will also establish the Licence Suspension Appeal Board as the authority for hearing appeals related to administrative penalties.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 204—The Public Schools Amendment Act  
(Teaching Experience of Principals)**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** I move, and seconded by the member from Transcona, that Bill 204, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Teaching Experience of Principals), now be read the first time.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Wasyliw:** I'm honoured to present to the House Bill 204, The Public Schools Amendment Act, teaching requirements of principals.

Our K-to-12 education system has taken a hit under the Pallister government, from larger class sizes to less support for teachers and those with exceptional needs, and with ongoing uncertainty of what's to come with the K-to-12 review. Bill 204 would provide certainty that our children's education remains in the hands of professionals—qualified teachers—by requiring in legislation that—an individual to have at least two years of teaching experience prior to becoming a principal.

Thank you.

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

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Standing Committee on Human Resources  
First Report**

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Your Standing Committee on Human Resources—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Human Resources presents the following as its First Report.*

**Meetings**

*Your Committee met on December 2, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

**Matters under Consideration**

- *Bill (No. 7) – The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Victims of Interpersonal Violence) / Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé pour les victimes de violence interpersonnelle)*

**Committee Membership**

- Ms. ADAMS
- Ms. GORDON
- Mr. GUENTER
- Hon. Mrs. GUILLEMARD
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MARTIN
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Mr. MOSES
- Hon. Ms. SQUIRES
- Mr. SMITH (*Lagimodière*)

*Your Committee elected Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE as the Chairperson.*

*Your Committee elected Mr. MARTIN as the Vice-Chairperson.*

**Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record**

- Ms. LAMOUREUX

**Public Presentations**

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on Bill (No. 7) – The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Victims of Interpersonal Violence) / Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé pour les victimes de violence interpersonnelle):*

*Michelle Gawronsky, MGEU – Manitoba Government and General Employees Union*

**Bill Considered and Reported**

- *Bill (No. 7) – The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Victims of Interpersonal Violence) / Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé pour les victimes de violence interpersonnelle)*

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, without amendment.*

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Vehicle Impoundment Registry Annual Report for the Department of Justice for the fiscal year 2018-2019.

**Madam Speaker:** Ministerial statements?

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Woodhaven Community Club

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I'd like to put a spotlight on one of the oldest community clubs in our city and one of my favourite places to visit while growing up, the Woodhaven Community Club.

Just off where—Assiniboine River near Sturgeon Creek in Kirkfield Park is where you'll find this gem of a community club. Established in 1940, community members have been coming here for many, many years with their families, including myself. I'll have to say it's a great place to skate, especially in the cold weather.

This year, the club officially turned 60 years old at its current location, and has recently undergone some major renovations to their main hall. I was able to see these updated spaces recently at their fall feast. And the pride of the community has—this space is strong and it's a fantastic-looking facility.

Madam Speaker, the Woodhaven Community Club offers several events—numerous events throughout the year, including opportunities for neighbours to get together to share a meal. These include things like a spring dinner, a fall feast and, most popular event, Christmas on the Hill.

This Christmas, Christmas on the Hill will be held on December 20th from 6 to 9 p.m., featuring toboggan races and sleigh rides, hot chocolate and cider. There's fun for everyone and for all ages, and people are all welcome. I plan on being there, and hope everyone in this Chamber considers that as well.

The current Woodhaven Community Club board is made up of 15 different members and dozens of other dedicated volunteers that run events. The spirit of getting involved and giving back is the heart of what makes Woodhaven Community Club such an important amenity and pillar in our community.

I have the honour to welcome a few of these dedicated community members here today: Club President Mike Weber, as well as Graeme Green, were shining examples of people that dedicate their time to the community clubs, and I'd like to have their names read into the record, Madam Speaker. So, thank you.

\* (13:40)

**Madam Speaker:** The member had indicated he wanted some names entered into Hansard. Were there further names other than the ones he mentioned? No?

The member, then, once he mentioned it, did not have to ask for leave because their names would automatically go into the statement.

### NorWest on Alexander Resource Centre

**Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Madam Speaker, NorWest on Alexander, also known as NOA, is a family resource centre that has been doing an excellent job of meeting the needs of Notre Dame community members. The staff and volunteers at NOA see themselves as a resource for community members to gain support and feel empowered.

Over the years, it has become increasingly apparent that food security is one of the main concerns of folks living in the Brooklands area. In many cases, there have been reports of parents forgoing meals just so that their children can have something to eat until they can obtain their next pay.

This resource centre is open six days a week for up to 10 hours a day. NOA addresses food security issues by providing food- and cooking-oriented supports. These include fruit and vegetable markets, which are provided at affordable prices, and free community lunches. Other food-related programs include Kids in the Kitchen, food bingo and Make and Take cooking programs.

Aside from food-related programming, NOA provides counselling services, phone and computer services, after-school programs, group exercise classes, hans kai self-care which allow community members to participate in conversations about personal health while working on craft or cooking projects.

NorWest on Alexander will kick off the festive season with a holiday dinner and top it off with a brunch on Christmas Eve. This place is committed to spreading hope and promoting physical and mental wellness through their many supports to the community.

And today I'd like to recognize one of NOA's volunteers here in the gallery today, Beverley Martens, and her support bird, Angel.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Further member statements?

### Meaning of Christmas

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** Madam Speaker, in the coming weeks, as well as being a time of giving and receiving gifts, Christmas will offer spiritual meaning for those who celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ.

The coming of Christ as a baby reinforces the inherent value of children, no matter their socio-economic status or location. When sincere care for children is mingled with faith, our hearts become tender and transformed as we serve those who are helpless without us.

The birth of Christ in an animal stable reminds us that our greatest gifts often come through obscurity and humility, and so we are prone to miss them or dismiss them as inconvenience. That Christ was born to a teenage mother shows how inexperienced people can find themselves entrusted with significance to bless a cynical yet needy world. The presence of peasant shepherds, wealthy wise men, of prayerful observers and political despots reveals that Christ came for all who would receive him, irrespective of their economic, social or religious status.

Centuries later these themes are replayed and relived by those who, in the name of Christ, care for children, assist the marginalized, seek for truth, welcome the stranger and make room in their lives, wallets and schedules when it is easier not to.

Madam Speaker, amidst the gifts given and received this Christmas, may we receive the gift of Christ and remember the words of the angels: Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth, peace and goodwill to all.

I wish every member of this House a merry Christmas.

### List of Rights

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Cette semaine, il y a 150 ans, le gouvernement provisoire de Louis Riel a créé leur premier liste de droits. C'est un document inspirant et les idées là-dedans ont eu un impact permanent sur notre province et notre pays.

Ça marque l'établissement du Manitoba sur une fondation de démocratie, de lois, de diversité et de droits humains. La liste inclut que le peuple ait le droit de lire sa propre législature, qu'une part des terres publiques soit affectée au bénéfice des écoles, à la construction des ponts, de chemins et d'édifices publics, que les langues française et anglaise soient communes dans la législature et les cours, et que tous

les documents publics ainsi que les actes de la législature soient publiés dans deux—les deux langues, aussi que les traités entre le Canada et les différentes tribus d'Amérindiens des territoires soient conclus et ratifiés pour assurer la paix à la frontière.

C'est une vision progressiste, moderne et juste.

Merci à tous ceux que—qui soutiennent cette vision jusqu'aujourd'hui.

### Translation

*One hundred and fifty years ago this week, Louis Riel's interim government created its first list of rights. It is an inspiring document and the ideas contained in it have had a permanent impact on our province and our country.*

*It marks the creation of Manitoba on a foundation of democracy, laws, diversity and human rights. The list includes people's right to elect their own legislature; that a portion of the public lands be appropriated to the benefit of schools, the building of bridges, roads and public buildings; that the English and French languages be common in the legislature and courts and that all public documents and acts of the legislature be published in both languages; also that treaties be concluded and ratified between Canada and the several tribes of Indians in the territories to ensure peace on the frontier.*

*This is a vision that is progressive, modern and just.*

*Thank you to all the people who have been supporting this vision until today.*

### Council of School Leaders

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** Today I rise to recognize the important work of the Council of School Leaders, otherwise known as COSL, to people that are part of the Manitoba Teachers' Society. The organization, which exists to provide leadership support and high-quality professional development to principals, vice-principals and aspiring school leaders, and its, of course, very important work.

COSL strives also for the betterment of education in Manitoba by promoting, organizing and conducting relevant professional development, designed to increase the knowledge and enhance the skills of its membership, and again, of aspiring school leaders in the practice of educational leadership.

Had the good fortune myself to be part of the professional development committee of Council of School Leaders about 10 years ago, and in—part of the important work that we did is that we brought in some

very, very important speakers—[*interjection*—what am I—oh, it's over the microphone. I thought it was loud enough.

Okay, so anyway, I was part of the professional development committee, and we, of course, organized a February leadership conference, our October SAGE conferences, for school leaders that came in throughout the province.

I also had the great pleasure of working with some fantastic school leaders as part of this crew. I want read into the record: Margaret Fair, Michelle St. Jean, Judy Hiebert, to name just a few. [*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Altomare:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Today, in the gallery, I would like to welcome the chair of the Council of School Leaders, Myles Blahut—or, is Myles up there? Also, we have the good fortune of having the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, James Bedford, the vice-president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, Nathan Martindale, and, of course—oh, we were going to have the general secretary, but he didn't make it, so.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### Introduction of Guests

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

We have seated in the public gallery from Kildonan-East Collegiate 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Ebony Hunter, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

Also in the public gallery from Neepawa Area Collegiate we have 23 grade 9 students under the direction of Michelle Young, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke).

And also in the public gallery we have with us Nicole and Daniel Beichter, Sidney Last, Claire Malenko, students of Carman and Elm Creek schools and these are the guests of the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development (Mr. Pedersen).

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Education Funding Government Record

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging the representatives of teachers and principals across Manitoba who are with us today, and to thank them for the tremendous work that they do on behalf of all our children and educating the future generation of our province.

Now, we know that while they're working hard, that their work is getting more difficult under this Premier and under this government. They have underfunded education. They have lifted the cap on K-to-3 class sizes and we see the results today. We know that there are new PISA test scores that show that Manitobans were last place in math and science and second last when it came to reading.

It seems as though we are moving backward here in Manitoba under this Premier.

Will the Premier admit—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —that his cuts and lack of investments in education is making things harder for Manitoba students?

\* (13:50)

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, I appreciate the member raising the topic of education. It's obviously tremendously relevant to all of us, who wouldn't be here without the contributions our teachers have made to our lives, and I hope our students in the gallery remember that and respect the work their teachers do on their behalf every single day.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my old MTS union because without them I wouldn't have got through university. I obtained a scholarship from the Manitoba Teachers' Society that helped me, otherwise I'd be back to work and saving again to get back into university.

So I say it on a personal level. I say, thank you, personally, to the MTS for their work on behalf of teachers, on behalf of students all over the province.

The member's assertions are false, Madam Speaker. I'll address that in a subsequent question.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** The numbers don't lie.

I'll table the chart that shows that in every category measured by the PISA test scores that Manitoba is performing worse, at last measure, after three years of this Premier's leadership than they were in 2015.

We know that there are many causes of this, but it's difficult to separate it from the fact that this government has underfunded K-to-12 education since they took office.

Now, of course, this is an important and multi-faceted issue that brings in other topics like mental health and school nutrition programs, but at the heart of it, how can a school system that has more and more students every year and yet is unfunded by this government hope to keep up?

Will the Premier simply stand in his place today and announce that he will start adequately funding the K-to-12 education system in Manitoba?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I think the member would do wise to demonstrate to the students that he's willing to do research and to be honest about it when he does it.

So, \$300 million more invested this year in education than ever under the NDP would be a fact. So, too, would be the fact that the test results were compiled among 15-year-olds, who were educated throughout their entire school life, with the exception of the last year, under a previously administered NDP government; that would be a fact as well. Another fact would be that the results were compiled two years ago and we were in our first year in government at that point in time.

These are all facts, Madam Speaker, which demonstrate that this should not be, as the member attempts to portray it, a partisan issue, but rather should be an issue that motivates us to deal with our education system co-operatively and effectively, as we are doing with our K-to-12 education review, a historic undertaking never undertaken by the previous government despite the fact we were 10th out of 10 in virtually every category under their watch.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the scores are worse after three years of this Premier.

Let me read a quote to you, Madam Speaker.  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** The PISA test scores are, and I quote, more than a wake-up call. They're a compelling indictment of the lack of progress and the lack of action on the part of this provincial government. End quote.

Now, who said that, Madam Speaker? Well, that was this Premier back when he was on the opposition side of the House.

So it seems as though the PISA test scores were the be-all-and-end-all marker of educational progress just a few short years ago, and yet after an entire term in government with the test scores sliding in the wrong direction we see yin-yet again that this government is not willing to accept responsibility.

Will the Premier simply announce today that he's going to stop cutting school funding?

**Mr. Pallister:** Now, the member wants to pin educational outcomes and test score results on a government after one year when the NDP was in power for 17 and doesn't want responsibility for that. I'll let the kids in the gallery today reflect on the injustice of that.

But the fact remains that undertaking the challenge is exactly what we've done in consultation with over 15,000 Manitobans, Madam Speaker, who are participating, including the MTS and many, many of its members; including parents across the province; including people who work in every aspect of education and people who are concerned with the quality of education.

We look forward to receiving those recommendations from the K-to-12 education review. We look forward to acting on them in concert and co-operation with the teaching profession, with parents and families and with students right across the province. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

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

### **Manitoba Schools Class Size Limits**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I'll do my best to hold them back, Madam Speaker, but with these terrible non-answers



from this government I don't know how long I'll be successful.

We know that the Premier knows that he has cut education funding in Manitoba for every year that he has been in office.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Now, it turns out that underfunding education and lifting the cap on K-to-3 class sizes doesn't actually improve test scores, Madam Speaker. In fact, it makes them much, much worse. So we see that this government, after a term in office, is failing when it comes to designing and delivering an education that meets the needs of all children in Manitoba.

Will the Premier simply stand in his place today and announce that they are going to limit class sizes in ages K to 3 and also begin to adequately fund education in Manitoba?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I've been very clear, as has the MTS, that we don't want these test results to be a way of measuring the teachers in our system, and I think that's a consistent and clear argument that needs to be made. Nor do I think that it's fair or just to claim that our record on education is anything but one of dedicating ourselves to finding better outcomes after just a year and a half in government, Madam Speaker, which is when these test results were compiled.

I would again say to the member—who is trying desperately to score political points on the backs of students who are struggling in our schools—that that should be something that is non-partisan, and, frankly, we should be working together effectively towards pursuing goals, and that is precisely what this government is doing.

I'd encourage members on the other side of the House to take the attitude of the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), who has shared his perspectives with me—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —and I thank him very much for that.

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

#### **Mental Health Supports**

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, Madam Speaker, we know that there are many barriers that children face even before

they get to the classroom, and this Premier's cuts are making it more difficult on all of them.

Having spoken to many teachers over the past few years, I know that one of the key areas where teachers want more assistance is on mental health. Time and time again we've heard teachers say: I want to teach. I'm not a mental health expert. I'm not a counsellor. Can you get us assistance outside of the classroom so that when students show up into my classroom that they're ready to learn?

After an entire term in office in which they did absolutely nothing to improve the mental health of young Manitobans, the Premier needs to come up with a comprehensive plan that helps not just those students but also teachers to be able to fulfill their educational missions.

What will the Premier commit to today to actually improve the supports for mental health in Manitoba schools?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, again, kids, if you're asking a question down here, you have to do research, but the member opposite missed that memo. On Monday additional resources—\$4.4 million—were announced by this government to enhance mental health and addictions supports in schools.

This is in addition to the more than 100 different initiatives in the categories of mental health and addictions that this government has initiated since coming to office. Madam Speaker, our commitments could not be better demonstrated, I don't think, than these commitments I've outlined today.

Now, the member, of course, can decry our government and does it on a daily basis. But that being said, I would encourage him, before he asks the next question, to do a little research.

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

#### **Nutrition Programs**

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, anyone who has spent time in Manitoba schools over this government's term in office knows that they have done nothing to improve mental health in Manitoba.

We also know that many students are facing other barriers, such as hunger. Unfortunately, too many children in Manitoba don't get a healthy breakfast or even a snack before they head off to school. We've heard from many, many teachers that it's very difficult, if not impossible, for these young students to

learn while they're dealing with such foundational issues as hunger.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society, many community organizations and Manitobans of all political affiliations have been calling for the creation of a province-wide nutritional program so that every child can go to school with a full belly and an aptitude and readiness for learning.

Will the Premier commit today to implementing a Manitoba-wide nutritional program so all of our kids can get a healthy start to their educational careers?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, in addition to the lower tax initiatives—which lead the country, by the way—that we've undertaken to leave more money with families, with single parents, of course, who are struggling to raise their children, we have also introduced dozens of programs to enhance the take-home pay or the money that can stay with families.

We've also introduced programs to expand our Rent Assist offerings to people who need that help to support themselves and their families, and we do this, of course, with a view to encouraging and strengthening the financial well-being of families who struggle in our province.

Now, we'll continue to do this. This, Madam Speaker, is the fastest growing category of investment that we make—hundreds of millions more invested in this category than the NDP ever did—and we continue to focus on making life better for those families who are struggling and facing challenges in our province today, and that includes, of course, the well-being of young children, who we want to get to school and get educated by our wonderful teaching profession in this province.

#### **K-to-12 Education Review Request to Release Report**

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** I think we heard previously, if you care, you care about results for students. That's what the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said four years ago when he was auditioning for his job right now. He said it over and over again for months.

Now his government has been most improved in the communication-spins piece and—but the PISA numbers show that the situation has gotten worse and not better. Turns out that starving education, cutting small class sizes, didn't improve the outcomes. Imagine that, Madam Speaker.

Will this government now change course and meet the needs of our young people?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education):** Madam Speaker, there is a record amount of money that is being invested in the K-to-12 education system today, far more, millions more than there were ever under the NDP. There are 20 new schools that are planned to be built, far more than under the NDP under the same amount of time.

We've invested money, \$4.4 million on Monday and—Monday, when it comes to mental health, we provided additional money to Project 11 for the True North Youth Foundation to help young students who need help when it comes to mental health as well.

Those are all initiatives that happened under this government. I'm not sure why he wants us to change course and cut those things. Maybe the member can tell us why he wants to end those good initiatives, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Altomare:** You know, we get this spin from the other side all the time. And you know what—but he can't avoid two things: first, PISA scores are down and not up; he's on his second term not his first—early, mind you, but that's how it goes sometimes. Four years on the job, Madam Speaker, and things have gotten worse and not better.

But the minister's solution to these challenges has been more cuts. I can think about the Child Nutrition Council piece that we had applied for when I was principal at the school—cut. And those pieces allowed us to build community.

So through matters under advisement we now know that the minister has a copy of the K-to-12 review.

Will the minister release the report today and will he tell us, what does he intend to cut?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I'm going to cut through the misinformation of the member opposite.

I do not have a copy of the K-to-12 commission, although I'm looking forward to getting a copy of the K-to-12 commission. In fact, the PISA results that were officially released today are a justification, a reason why we needed the K-to-12 commission. I'm very pleased that Manitobans agreed with us. More than 15,000 people, whether online or in person or

through written submissions, also agreed that they wanted to have input into education.

The only ones who don't want to talk about education are the NDP, Madam Speaker. They don't want to look at improving a system because they're the ones who broke it.

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

**Mr. Altomare:** I'm sure with all the 15,000 people that made their contributions to the review, they did that because they're afraid of what's going to happen next.

Education is not keeping up with the growing student population and they cut the small class sizes from K to 3. I personally knew how effective that was, allowing teachers and EAs in the classroom to work individually with students.

In the campaign trail in 2016 the Premier (Mr. Pallister) told anyone that would listen that there are two types of answers to a problem: results and excuses. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altomare:** Well, time's up, Madam Speaker, and all this minister has got is a bunch of excuses.

The minister has a copy of the report.

Will he tell us now what does he intend to cut next? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Happy to again cut the misinformation. I do not have a copy of the report, but I look forward to getting a copy of the report.

The PISA results—the tests were almost two years ago. They were done among 15-year-olds, Madam Speaker. Of the 10 years that they were in the public education system, essentially nine of those were when the NDP were in government. It's a condemnation of the NDP government's education system.

The reason why we needed the K-to-12 commission is because, very much, of these results, Madam Speaker. The Premier was right then; he's right now. Results matter. That's why we have the K-to-12 commission.

#### **Teaching Experience of Principals Request to Support Bill 204**

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** Manitoba educators work hard each and every day to provide a rich

learning environment to our children. They've continued to work hard over the last few years since the Pallister government took office to overcome the barriers of increased class sizes with fewer supports.

Every teacher I know is truly passionate about what they do and they're committed to ensuring student success; and for many, being a teacher is a calling, and for those who transition from teacher to principal, the calling is one of leadership, of leading with experience and knowledge.

Will the government support Bill 204 today?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education):** Madam Speaker, certainly I think all of us would agree with the sentiments of the member opposite that teachers, professional teachers in our province do a tremendous job, and I think all of us have been impacted in some way.

The class sizes haven't changed in Manitoba over the last few years and, in fact, the funding is still available. We offered the school divisions the options in terms of how to use that funding—whether they wanted to use it on class sizes or in other ways, Madam Speaker, as we wanted to give them a local choice in how they actually use that funding.

I don't know why the member opposite, who used to sit as a school trustee, is opposed to that. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Naylor:** It seems that the minister opposite did not understand my question about Bill 204. It wasn't answered.

We believe that the minister does in fact have a draft of the K-to-12 commission report sitting on his desk, and we know that this government has a track record of commissioning reports to find so-called efficiencies—or more simply put, cuts. Many fear that these efficiencies will be found by replacing principals with corporate managers.

Will the minister ease the concern of Manitoba parents by supporting our bill, which will ensure that principals will continue to be highly trained, experienced and skilled educators?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, I have not yet received the K-to-12 commission report. I look forward to receiving the K-to-12 commission report.

I'm sure there's going to be many lessons to be learned within there.

Certainly, when I speak to teachers, Madam Speaker, they want to ensure—and they're pleased that resources continue to come into the classrooms at a record level. As a former school trustee who sat on a school division who funnelled tens of millions of dollars into administration, I'm sure if she spoke to teachers, they would say that they were not pleased with the tens of millions of dollars that went into administration, instead of into the classrooms, under her watch.

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

**Ms. Naylor:** Bill 204 would provide certainty that our children's education remains in the hands of the professionals who are qualified educators. By requiring a minimum of two years' teaching experience, our bill will ensure that no outside management can come in and run children's public schools, prioritizing those so-called efficiencies over learning outcomes.

This is an opportunity for the minister to set the record straight for parents and be—given that he's evaded my question—completely ignored my question—two times in a row, I will give him one more opportunity to set the record straight.

Will he ensure that school principals in this province remain experienced educators? Will the minister support Bill 204?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, I am happy to set the record straight for the member opposite.

\*(14:10)

I am happy to report to her that when I speak to teachers they want the resources that are provided through taxpayers, whether that's at the divisional level or through the Province, to go into classrooms, to go into the front lines. That's what they tell me.

The member opposite, who was a school trustee, who watched as the school division added many, many administrators and paid them hundreds of thousands of dollars—and I won't even talk about the travel budgets—never even said anything about that, now she all of a sudden wants to defend the school system. She should have done that when she had a chance to ensure that those millions of dollars were going into the classrooms and not into administration, Madam Speaker.

### **Liquor Mart Robbery Prevention Placing Police at Locations**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** While sitting down with Liquor Mart employees last week you could feel the fear that these individuals are living with.

There is no time to waste, but this government continues to waste time. Employees are asking for one simple thing from this government: to start taking immediate action to curb violence and thefts they are experiencing up to 30 times a day.

Will the government place a police officer in each Liquor Mart location today?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Certainly, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries are taking proactive measures to reduce the theft in liquor stores and certainly to protect, certainly not only the buying clientele, but certainly the people that work in the stores as well.

Certainly, it was interesting conversation we did have with the employees and I know they have come forward with some possible solutions as well, and we will certainly take that under advisement.

We have put together an operations table including police and Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, as well as our Crown prosecuting branch, and certainly positive steps will be taken.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** We know the RFP is posted online for the construction of the new secure entrances, but what the minister is not telling people is that the closing date for the RFP is January 9th. That means no more enhanced security entrances will be built for months, and with the holiday season here we are continuing to see high numbers of thefts in all Liquor Marts across Manitoba.

Will the minister protect employees, customers and bystanders, and place a police officer in each liquor store immediately? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** As I said, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries are taking proactive steps. Certainly, police officers—still visiting those locations on a regular basis.

Certainly, we've also made a number of apprehensions. So these individuals that have been causing theft have been taken off the street. We have arrested

a number of them. A number of them have been prosecuted. A lot of those have led to jail time for these criminal activities, and that is the message to these people that are causing crime in our not only Liquor Marts, but also at the retail level, that there is repercussions for criminal activity.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Employees themselves have heard that the secure entrances will not be completed until March. The use of loss prevention, employees have said that this has helped deter offenders, but there are only five officers for 30-plus Liquor Mart stores in our city alone. And until more can be hired and trained, it seems reasonable that the Liquor Marts could hire police to be in their stores in the interim.

Will the minister place an officer in each store immediately? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** Interesting to see the NDP, a newfound awareness of justice in Manitoba. Certainly, we're taking a proactive approach on many different fronts in terms of dealing with criminal activity. Certainly we are working closely with the prosecutions branch to make sure that individuals are apprehended and they're prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

There's a lot of things going on with Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries. We look forward to expanding our discussion with the retail network, as well, over the next several weeks. I know they'll have some positive input for us, in terms of how they move things forward in making sure that we actually are protecting Manitoba's public.

#### **Civil Service Act Arbitration Requirement**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** We know that the Pallister government bargains in bad faith. That's why it's more important than ever to have strong protections for workers.

Under the current civil service legislation the minister is required to 'point an arbitration board when no agreement has been reached and one of the parties requested—MGEU requested arbitration in July.

By law the minister should have appointed the arbitration panel within seven days. Instead, the Pallister government simply ignored the law.

Why is this government refusing to follow the law?

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister responsible for the Civil Service):** I'm very pleased yesterday to speak to The Civil Service Act, and I know that we're introducing a new act to replace one that's 134 years old. The member opposite may be still stuck in the 19th century, but we're moving ahead with the civil service to make sure that we respect the collective bargaining approach.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** The member from Flin Flon is stuck in following the law. Unfortunately, this government is not.

Section 49(2)—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —of The Civil Service Act states: When the minister has been requested to appoint—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —an arbitration board, one of the party—by one of the parties, he shall establish one. Not maybe, not perhaps, but he shall establish one. Yet this government refuses to follow the law that says they shall establish one.

So in the new law they simply did away with arbitration. So is it just like typical bullies that when they refuse to follow the law, they just change the law?

Will this government quit trampling on workers' rights and follow—

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

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, again, the member opposite wants to go back to the 19th century and we don't want to do that on this side of the House. We're respecting the collective bargaining process and working with the civil service. They are one of our greatest assets, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Maybe we can forgive the minister. He's pretty new to this portfolio, but he shouldn't be new to the requirement for the government—or anyone else, for that matter—to follow the law.

Clauses 48 and 49 in the existing Civil Service Act make this crystal clear. MGEU has requested arbitration. The Pallister government's response has been to just completely ignore that request and to ignore the law. Now they're just going to rewrite the law to take the requirement for arbitration out.

Why is this minister rewriting the laws that he is presently breaking?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, the member opposite probably knows well about breaking the laws because they went door to door during the election and promised Manitobans that they would not increase the PST, but then what did they do? They repealed—*[interjection]*—and they went out and, of course, they knew that they were going to—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Helwer:** —not just increase the PST once, but they talked about increasing it twice, Madam Speaker. So I'll take no lessons from this member opposite.

#### **Federal Health Transfers Provincial Health Spending**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** We're concerned the Premier signed a letter yesterday calling on the federal government, simply asking for more money and less accountability. We would like to see health-care spending go up in Manitoba, but it's the Province that has frozen funding.

The annual federal increase for health is 3 per cent. The premiers are asking for about twice that that, but since 2016, in Manitoba actual health-care spending has been—*increase has been zero.*

If the federal government meets those demands, why should we believe that this government will put the money into health care, since they haven't to this point?

\* (14:20)

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I was pleased yesterday, Madam Speaker, to see—and I know those in the House who care about health care were also pleased to see—all premiers unanimously stand up for health care. I encouraged the Liberal leader to do the same. He appears willing to defend the decisions that Ottawa has made in respect of reducing the incremental increases in health-care funding by 50 per cent. We don't support those.

We have led the charge in unifying premiers against this backward initiative that has seen wait

times increase in nine of 10 provinces—not here in Manitoba; but the pressures are growing across the country to provide services to an aging population, a high-needs population. And so all premiers agree, including, I should emphasize to the member, Liberal premiers, New Democratic premiers. All of us stood together for health care while the member appears to want to stand here today against health care.

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

#### **Lake St. Martin Outlet Construction Delays**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** The Premier's joint letter also calls on the federal government to speed up infrastructure projects when, again, it is this province that is dragging its heels.

I table a page from the independent parliamentary budget office that shows that provinces have underspent on infrastructure by hundreds of millions of dollars, including Manitoba. The Lake St. Martin project in particular has been delayed by a provincial submission that was missing basic information like maps, lists and charts, and was relying on outdated legislation. There was no mention of alternatives which this and the previous government spent millions of dollars detailing.

Will the Premier admit that the delays related to infrastructure around the Lake St. Martin outlet are due to the bungling and corner cutting of his own government?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I encourage the member to recognize that it was, after all, Manitobans who sent us here and that it could be in his best interest to defend the interests of Manitobans, not the Trudeau government, in this House. But that would be for him to evaluate and for his constituents to evaluate, as well.

Madam Speaker, the NDP premier in British Columbia has had difficulty with getting local projects built because of an onerous environmental approval process. The mayor of Calgary has spoken out repeatedly. Mayors, premiers across the country are experiencing growing difficulty in getting infrastructure built. This country would be stronger if we could build these projects.

I would encourage the member not to stand against Canadians, but to join us in standing for Canadians and for a stronger Canada, as all premiers are doing.

**Madam Speaker:** Just for the information of the House, prior to proceeding with the next question, just so that everybody knows, that the pops that we've been hearing is from static electricity due to atmospheric conditions, so you don't have to be worried about anything else.

### **National Pharmacare Program Government Position**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Yesterday the premiers across Canada got together, and during this meeting our Premier shut down the idea of a pharmacare plan. What this means is this government is forcing people like our seniors on fixed incomes to choose between food on their table and their prescribed medications.

Madam Speaker, in the North End 10 per cent of people are not taking their prescribed medications due to affordability and this Premier is doing nothing to help them. What Manitobans want is leadership on health care and what they saw yesterday, put simply, is disappointing.

Why won't this Premier get on board like other provinces and support a national pharmacare program?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** The federal Liberal government, which, apparently, the Liberal caucus in Manitoba is here to represent, has eroded the quality and access of health care across the country by failing to maintain commitments made by previous governments, including Liberal governments, by allowing funding support to erode to the point that instead of 50-50, or \$1 in four, Madam Speaker, we're now down to one in five, and it's going south.

The members defend that. Not one premier defends that. Canadians who are waiting for health care aren't defending that.

And, Madam Speaker, I think it's important to understand that all premiers across the country are in agreement that we would like to partner with Ottawa constructively to see better health care available to all Canadians. And I would encourage the members opposite to begin, finally, to represent the best interests of Manitobans on health care, instead of trying to represent the Trudeau government here in this Chamber day after day after day.

### **Keystone Centre New Governance Model**

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** Brandon's Keystone Centre is crucial to the Westman economy.

It hosts over 1,500 events every year, from concerts to trade shows. It contributes over \$62 million to the region's economy and helps make Brandon the centre of agriculture in Canada.

We recently announced that we would be retiring the Keystone Centre's debt to put them on a sustainable financial footing and a new governance model is now in place.

I'd like to ask the Minister for Municipal Relations to please update the House on what our government is doing to support the Keystone Centre and what this means for the people of Westman and all of Manitoba.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I'd like to thank my colleague for that question.

Last week we were very pleased to be in Brandon with all of our colleagues on this side of the House to work with municipal leaders and people in Brandon to share the good news of this government. One of the groups that we met with was the Keystone Centre and—to talk about a new governance model as well as to secure operational funding of \$375,000 a year for the Keystone Centre.

This new governance model and enhanced funding is something that was very welcomed by Mayor Rick Chrest and all folks living in the area that love to enjoy the Keystone Centre. After 17 years of neglect of this wonderful centre, they were very pleased to receive this news last week from our government.

### **Lake Manitoba Outlet First Nations Consultations**

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Madam Speaker, the Pallister government does not consult in good faith. They have not been fair partners in discharging the duties of the Crown.

Yesterday the Minister of Infrastructure said to the media that First Nations involved in a consultation for the channel project are, quote, really not impacted by this project and that slows the process down. So the minister has already made up his mind about this matter before it has even begun.

Is that this government's idea of consultation?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Well, first of all, Madam Speaker, for 17 years, if you were to go through Hansard, you would see that the

Lake Manitoba channels were, if ever, rarely mentioned by the NDP.

And, secondly, our government has consulted. We have engaged with First Nations and we will continue to do so.

I think the member is misrepresenting my words.

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

**Mr. Bushie:** If the Pallister government is to uphold the honour of the Crown it must engage openly in consultation, yet here we have the Infrastructure Minister telling the media that partners at the table are really not impacted and that their presence is a nuisance that slows the process down.

This is disrespectful and is not what good-faith consultation should look like.

Why is the Pallister government consulting in bad faith?

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, Madam Speaker, it's because of the leadership of this Premier and our government that we're even talking about the Lake Manitoba channels.

Madam Speaker, under 17 years of the NDP—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Schuler:** —even with the 2011—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Schuler:** —flood, where there were \$1 billion worth of damage was spent, you never heard a word about the Lake Manitoba channels.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to work with the communities. The member opposite shouldn't represent—misrepresent the words of a minister. We will continue to engage and consult with all partners around Lake Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Bushie:** Moving the yardsticks was the accusation, Madam Speaker. Perhaps this government should get in the game with all the players instead of blaming others for their failures.

And I appreciate that the Premier may want—have to once again clean up the Infrastructure Minister's mess, but the issue here is actually really simple: Pallister government has an obligation to consult in good faith with First Nations.

Undercutting our First Nations partners will get this government nowhere. It's just a bad-faith effort to paper over this government's failures.

Will the Pallister government retract these comments and commit to consulting in good faith? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I encourage the member to do a little homework.

The NDP government proceeded with hydro projects. It eliminated the ability of First Nations to be consulted. It proceeded against the will of northern communities. He knows that and he understands that.

The bipole line, a billion-dollar boondoggle if there ever was one, was built over the backs of indigenous and Metis people in our province.

\* (14:30)

The NDP's answer to these projects, these kinds of projects, is to buy off, to—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —pay David Chartrand—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —\$70 million to try to buy away the rights of young Metis people to have the chance to exert their own right, in days to come, to object to hydro projects. That's not how we do things. We are consulting. We have a gold standard of consultation. We'll continue to exercise—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —that gold standard. We will, Madam Speaker, proceed to protect the people of Manitoba, wherever they live, against flooding and disaster, while the members opposite twiddle their thumbs and do nothing. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, we will protect the people of Manitoba.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for Oral Questions has expired.

## PETITIONS

### Personal-Care Homes

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



The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba elders and seniors have built this province and should receive a high level of support, having earned the right to be treated with due respect, dignity, understanding and compassion as a fundamental human right.

Seniors who reside in personal-care homes have more diverse and complex physical and brain health issues today than those who were in similar homes even just five years ago, yet the staffing formula, or minimum personnel requirement, is over 20 years old.

The issue of the changes to, and more complex nature of, care is being exacerbated by the provincial government policy of discharging people out of hospitals more quickly, leaving many residents still in need of a high level of care.

Manitoba does not have enough health-care aides and nurses specifically trained to care for seniors with high and complex levels of physical and mental issues such as those with dementia, coupled with multiple chronic conditions.

The added complexity of care with such residents is putting additional stress on doctors and family members, as it may take six to eight weeks for a doctor to see a resident in a personal-care home.

Unfortunately, the lack of quality care received by many residents is not unique, causing one person to say that: It was easier to watch my dad die in the personal-care home than to watch him live in the personal-care home.

Staff are so overworked that they are forced to tell senior elders and residents in need: Go in your diaper; I can't help you; or: You will get food eventually.

Relatives are also being told that residents in care homes should not ever expect to walk again after hip or knee replacement surgery because care homes are not set up for rehabilitation.

The provincial government has allowed personal-care homes to serve food that is warmed from frozen instead of being freshly cooked, depriving seniors the taste of good food, which is one of the few real pleasures that they would be able to enjoy at this time of life.

Although residents enter personal-care homes to have the best possible quality of life in their last few days, weeks, months or years, relatives repeatedly hear the words: He came here to die; and: She came here to die.

Relatives are regularly angry, frustrated, disappointed and shocked at the care their loved ones now receive in Manitoba's personal-care homes.

Administrators in personal-care homes respond to complaints by stating they need more and better-trained staff.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase training and staffing requirements for personal-care homes in Manitoba to ensure residents receive high-quality, nutritious food as well as compassionate care.

Signed by Dot Sloik, Lynn White, Fred Lylyk, and many, many others.

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

Further petitions?

#### **Early Learning and Child-Care Programs**

**Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly, the background on the petition is as follows:

Early child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support the system that is in jeopardy.

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

High-quality licensed child care has lasting positive impacts on the child's development and is fundamental for the Manitoba families to contribute to a strong economy.

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

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

Accessible, affordable, quality 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-centre programs in recognition of the importance of early child care—early learning and child care in Manitoba, which is—which will also improve the quality and sustainability of the workforce.

Signed by Emmanuel Meredith, Vanessa Meredith, Melody Meredith and many others.

### **Crown Land Leases**

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Many farmers, specifically cattle ranchers, will be negatively impacted by the changes to leased Crown land announced by the provincial government on September 27th, 2019.

Farmers previously had the ability to strategically plan out the way in which they utilized their leased Crown lands.

The announcement reduced leaseholders by 35 years to 15 years, and the lease changes will create great uncertainty, having the potential to impact an entire farm's operations and even existence.

This uncertainty will take away the incentive for farmers to safely invest in their Crown land leases.

The potential of losing these leases without the afforded time to plan ahead will create additional stress for the current farming generation and the ones to follow.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Agriculture to reconsider the changes to Crown land leases and instead create an agreeable strategy that satisfies all parties, specifically ranchers;

(2) To urge the Minister of Agriculture to recognize the value of agriculture in the province of Manitoba and the value Crown land holds to farmers in sustaining their livelihood;

(3) To urge the Minister of Agriculture and all honourable members to understand the important role farmers play in the Manitoba economy and to allow

them to take part in discussions that directly impact their livelihood.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Would you please call for debate and passage of Bill 9, The Public Services Sustainability Amendment Act; following the passage of that bill, Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; following its passage, Bill 5, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act.

And if time remains following the passage of those three bills, I'd be happy to provide the House with additional bills for debate and passage.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider second readings of bills 9, 4 and 5 this afternoon.

### **SECOND READINGS**

#### **Bill 9—The Public Services Sustainability Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** So starting, then, with second reading of Bill 9, The Public Services Sustainability Amendment Act.

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Central Services):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 9, The Public Services Sustainability Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

\* (14:40)

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Central Services, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice, that Bill 9, The Public Services Sustainability Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

**Mr. Helwer:** I present to you Bill 9, which is new legislation that furthers the government's ongoing commitment to support and encourage collective

bargaining and will enhance opportunities for employers and unions to work together on innovative ideas.

Since the introduction of The Public Services Sustainability Act, the government has listened to suggestions that have come from both employers and unions on how it may be improved. This bill provides amendments that allow for even greater flexibility for public sector employers and unions to bargain while still maintaining our government's commitment to fixing the finances and ensuring sustainability.

This bill allows for greater flexibility and discretion by broadening how sustainability savings can be used. Now all or some of the identified savings can be used to finance an increase in salary. The broader use of sustainability savings provides an opportunity for employers and unions to work towards finding mutual benefits and transformational change.

There is now a greater flexibility on the timing and duration of the sustainability period, which will allow for flexibility around how the sustainability period is met, while still ensuring the sustainability period is temporary and does not exceed four years.

Since the government first introduced The Public Services Sustainability Act, collective bargaining is happening and continues with these amendments. As a result, many more organizations have already reached a collective agreement that meets the sustainability period. The amendments will provide further clarification to first collective agreements negotiated between the date The Public Services Sustainability Act was first introduced up until these amendments.

The bill also provides further clarification regarding employers covered under this act. Health organizations will now be identified through regulation which will allow for improved clarity. Doctors Manitoba will no longer be covered under this act, as they have already reached an agreement that meets the intent of the act.

The amendments also recognize that some employees in certain trades or sectors may need to be exempt to address unique circumstances, such as shortage of skilled trades. The amendments now allow exemptions to address these issues.

The bill also provides for more discretion. As an example, the minister may approve additional remuneration, so long as increases are relatively modest during the sustainability period.

Public sector collective bargaining has certainly continued since this government first introduced The Public Services Sustainability Act in March of 2017. Collective bargaining is happening and will continue with these amendments.

We will continue to encourage employers and unions to work together at the bargaining table to find innovative ideas that will ensure sustainability of our public services. This has been an all-hands-on-deck approach for the benefit of all Manitobans. It will help fix our finances while protecting public services and encourage creative collective bargaining while treating all employees fairly.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** 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; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** It's unfortunate that I have to stand up and ask questions about this bill which is probably unconstitutional, as well as the one that it's trying to fix.

So the Auditor General has already made it very clear that this financial crisis that this government claims to be operating under isn't in existence. So why does this minister feel there is still a need to use this kind of aggressive tactic to take on workers?

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Central Services):** Well, perhaps the member opposite is reading different books than we released in the Public Accounts that still show a deficit for this government. Obviously, we're working hard to return to balance. We're not there yet, and we have been working with many partners along the path here.

He referenced the 'constitutionality' of this—the former bill, and we'll hear from the court how that—they'll rule on that.

We're waiting for their ruling as we continue, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Lindsey:** It's unfortunate that, while this government chooses to wait for the court process to

rule on the unconstitutional bill that they've got before it, they continue to introduce bills like this in a bogus attempt to try and make believe they're fixing the problems with the previous bill.

So why does this government refuse to respect the arbitration process?

**Mr. Helwer:** We're working with all groups along the way here. I'm sure the member opposite participated in committee that listened—that presented the former bill. And we listened to the presenters at that committee, Madam Speaker, and made changes to—in the amendments that we are moving ahead were—with.

We're responsibly manning—managing resources. I'd like to point out that we have since signed 45 collective agreements that represent over 14,000 members of various unions.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, my question is—the original bill is there but not actually implemented—is the minister's intent to implement these changes along with what's left of the original bill after these amendments?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, we are discussing the public services 'sustainbalaine' amendment act.

The previous bill went to committee and it's about—presently in court, so we won't comment on that particular bill, Madam Speaker, but we're looking at how we can improve the situation for both the Manitoba government and the unions and their members.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Clearly, the government isn't really interested in what they claim they are; otherwise, they would have proclaimed the previous bill that they refuse to proclaim. Now he talks about the number of collective agreements that have been negotiated with that threat hanging over working people's heads. So, instead of proclaiming it and taking their chances in court, they try and do an end run.

So will the minister actually 'procran'—proclaim this law, if he passes it, or will he just leave it hanging out there, too?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, I think the member opposite is confused about the powers of this particular minister anyway. I can't proclaim a bill. That is not within my jurisdiction.

We're working with various parties to make sure that we follow the collective bargaining process. And while we have had several agreements already, we expect that another 40,000 employees are soon going

to enter negotiations for bargaining, and we'll see how those outcomes—what those outcomes are, Madam Speaker.

But you enter into collective bargaining with good intentions, and I'm not sure what—the other member is insinuating that we don't. We certainly do, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Lindsey:** It's funny that the minister talks about entering into collective bargaining process with good intentions when in fact, they specifically passed laws and didn't proclaim them that played with the bargaining process and violated the collective bargaining process and made it impossible to actually follow the collective bargaining process for those workers that wanted to negotiate properly and freely.

So will this minister actually just come to his senses and drop this bill and sit down and negotiate properly with workers in this province?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, I 'reitelate'—reiterate that we have 45 collective agreements that have been signed, representing over 14,000 employees. Whether or not the previous bill was passed into law or not, this is similar to several pieces of legislation that I saw when we were in opposition, Madam Speaker, that the previous government sat on and never proclaimed.

So we're moving ahead with collective agreement bargaining, and we expect that to continue, Madam Speaker.

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Lindsey:** It's kind of telling that the government really doesn't have that much faith in the constitutionality of the previous bill that they introduced, because they won't proclaim it. So then, instead of doing that, they introduced this Bill 9; well, for the second time now, they've introduced this bill that, again, doesn't respect the collective bargaining process, doesn't respect the constitutionally protected collective bargaining process.

So will the minister withdraw the bill that's presently before the courts and this bill and actually sit down and negotiate with working people in this province?

**Mr. Helwer:** Again, I'm a little mystified by the questioning here. We have successively signed 45 collector agreements, and we expect that we will be in negotiation for many more.

So we are listening and negotiating with the various unions on this. These amendments that were

presently before us are there to improve the bill that he references, and we've listened to people, and we're acting.

**Mr. Lindsey:** It's unfortunate that the minister talks about they've successfully negotiated 45 collective agreements, but they haven't fairly negotiated 45 collective agreements. There is a rather startling, subtle difference there that the minister refuses to accept.

So why, with this new bill, does the minister wish to continue meddling in the collective bargaining process rather than negotiating in good faith?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, interesting question, Madam Speaker.

Are you—is the member opposite actually accusing the government of bargaining in back-bad faith? Is that is—what he is accusing? Does he wish to step outside, perhaps, make those accusations, Madam Speaker?

We don't force the other party to sign a collective agreement. They come forward in negotiations in good faith, as does the government. But perhaps he doesn't understand that both parties come to that negotiation and decides whether to sign that collective 'agreenerment' or not, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** This minister is amending a law that the courts have not yet determined is legal.

Has the minister sought out legal advice to determine whether his amendments are likely to survive a court challenge?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, I guess in answer to that, we can only deal with what we know. There is a court challenge for the bill that this amends, and we'll wait to see what the court rules on that.

In the meantime, we have worked with various members through committees and listened to people, listened to Manitobans, listened to unions and come up with some solutions that we believe improve that particular act in these amendments.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I did participate in some of the committee hearings into the bill that's under the purview of the court at the moment. And clearly the minister didn't listen to a goodly portion of Manitobans who came out and talked about the unconstitutional aspects of that bill, talked about how it wasn't bargaining in good faith by mandating as

opposed to negotiating. So the minister's threats to take me outside really are meaningless.

So I'll ask the minister again: Will he withdraw his unconstitutional bills and sit down and negotiate freely and fairly with workers in this province?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, the member opposite seems to have appointed himself a judge, which I don't recall seeing that publicly occur.

The bill, the previous bill, is before the court. We'll await the court's decision. We don't presuppose what's going to happen. The government presents its case, the union has presented its case, and we will await to see what the court decides. I don't imagine that the member opposite has the ability to make that decision, but he can always surprise me with things.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Does the minister admit that these changes that he's made in this bill now will potentially show favouritism towards one group of employees as opposed to another group of employees, by deciding that some employees may get a raise while the others will not?

**Mr. Helwer:** Perhaps I have a different understanding of the collective bargaining process and the agreements that are signed, but those dictate what we do with the various members of that particular agreement do, Madam Speaker. It's not something that the government can pick and choose. We do feel that we will maintain our commitment to fix the finances and protect public services, but through this, we're also creating more flexibility and opportunities for employers and unions to bargain and work together.

**Mr. Lindsey:** It's unfortunate that, clearly, the minister doesn't understand what's in this Bill 9, because it very clearly makes exceptions that says that some groups can get a raise, but then it says, well, the rest of the employees in that group will have to bear the brunt of that. So, clearly, the minister is picking sides in who can get ahead and who can't, rather than negotiating fairly and honestly with workers.

So will he withdraw those provisions and negotiate in good faith with workers?

**Mr. Helwer:** We continue to negotiate in good faith as we have in the past. I'm not sure what the member's referring to. Perhaps, he's—he was referring to the fact that Doctors Manitoba don't have to be a part of this bill anymore, because they have agreed and they have moved ahead with an agreement that was signed and—through the normal collective bargaining process, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Yes, the Doctors Manitoba did successfully arbitrate an increase in their pay. So, now, this new bill, and some of the other things that the government has introduced in some other bills, takes away the right of arbitration, and, in fact, this bill says, now, if you arbitrate—get an arbitrated increase, that it's null and void. So not only have they interfered with the collective bargaining process, now they're interfering with arbitrators' ability to make rulings.

Will the minister withdraw this bill?

**Mr. Helwer:** I think we should emphasize that, by broadening how sustainability savings can be used to encourage the kind of mutual approach taken in the Doctors Manitoba agreement, we can be more flexible around the timing and duration of the sustainability period. There's more discretion around non-salary remuneration and benefits. And it's just a continuous work, Madam Speaker, that we work through to make sure that we are appropriately bargaining through our process.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Well, Madam Speaker, you know, this government has been found guilty of bargaining in bear—bad faith in the past. And I don't want to see them found guilty of bargaining in bad faith again. And apparently neither to do they. That's why they've instituted these bills that supercede collective bargaining.

Will this minister really sit down with public sector workers, show them the respect they deserve and negotiate fairly and freely, as they are protected under the constitution to do so? Will this minister do that now and withdraw these bills?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, I'd like to reinforce that we did inherit a long-term legacy of debt and challenges from the previous government, and fixing that is going to take some time. The public sector bargaining is just one part of the all-hands-on-deck approach and we have been successful with 45 collective agreements that have been signed, representing over 14,000 employees, Madam Speaker. So I think success speaks for itself.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for this question period has ended.

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** The floor is open for debate.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]* Oh, wow, thank

you so much. Thank you to my very supportive colleagues over on the side in our caucus.

\* (15:00)

So, Madam Speaker, I think I'd like to spend my time really speaking through the lens of being a registered psychiatric nurse, because that's what I've spent, you know—previous to being elected the MLA for Union Station, for which I'm very grateful, I was a nurse—technically still am a registered psychiatric nurse—for well over a decade, and part of the reason why I ran under the NDP banner is because our team really values our public services.

So the NDP, as a whole, has historically—and certainly currently and ongoingly—just really values our public services like health care, like education, and really respects and values the dedicated front-line workers who work very, very hard, day in and day out, to provide them. I think that's evident by, you know, a lot of the relationship building that we continue to do in community. It's evidenced by the many folks in all of those areas that are reaching out to us on a daily basis to express their concerns and their experiences and frustrations with what's been going on under this current government.

And it's also evidenced by—and as evidenced by, just in case folks don't know, is a term that we use in health care when we document. When we do any charting, we say as evidenced by when we're explaining something in our documentation.

So I would argue that, you know, as evidenced by the folks in our caucus, we have, you know, former educators and folks who are currently still doing a lot of education in communities. We have folks in our caucus who, you know, have worked front-line worker jobs, whether that's, for example, the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), who, you know, did a lot of front-line work with youth in communities and really understands on that level, as well, the importance of making sure that our front-line service providers and public service workers aren't under, you know, the undue stress and dealing with some of the circumstances that have been created due to this government's approach.

*Mr. Greg Nesbitt, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

And speaking specifically to this bill, you know, it's because of the value that we place in our public service workers and health-care providers and educators and front-line workers that we strongly oppose this bill. We believe that all Manitobans and all Manitoban workers, rather, have the right to fair

wages, have the right to bargain in good faith, and have the right to have their collective bargaining agreements respected.

You know, for myself, I remember—and I was working as a nurse at that time—I remember that this Premier (Mr. Pallister)—and I'm sure Manitobans will not forget that this Premier campaigned on a promise to protect front-line workers and public services back in 2016, and the Premier has broken that promise—and you know, members opposite like to talk a lot about promises kept. Well, that's a promise that was broken, and I can see that as somebody who, you know, was working as a nurse, and to see that promise not only broken but basically immediately to see, you know, folks in government giving them—they gave themselves a 20 per cent raise while freezing the wages of public service workers, which is really—it's pretty shameful, actually, I would say.

And, you know, when you have folks who are—and to be honest, I don't really know—I would argue that, you know, not everyone may be, across the way, members opposite—but certainly I would argue that there's a lack of real understanding in terms of what it is, and I'll speak specifically to nurses in terms of front-line service workers.

A lack of understanding as to what, you know, nurses are really dealing with day in and day out on the job, and that was made pretty clear to many of my nursing colleagues who I heard from on a—multiple times a day when—I don't think it was even a year ago that ad campaign came out that had, I think nurses, like, skiing or something, and spa, face masks, and just this truly, quite insulting, actually, I would say, campaign, that really offended so many front-line service providers, and really upset, understandably, nurses who felt like, you know, this government couldn't possibly understand what they were doing at their jobs to put out a campaign like that.

And, you know, I still hear from nurses who, inevitably, when they're under the tremendous amount of stress that they are at their jobs, working just ongoing hours, mandated overtime hours, they reflect on that and think, you know, it's disappointing.

And for them, it's—they reflect on that campaign and think, yes, we knew then that this government really didn't understand, or doesn't understand, what we do, doesn't maybe even respectfully how hard we're working to provide care every single day to Manitobans across this province.

And, you know, when we look at a decision like freezing wages or trying to interfere with, you know, the right to collectively bargain, I don't think many folks across the way understand, perhaps, you know, the realities of what it means to be a nurse working generally, never mind in a system that is right now lacking capacity.

And, you know, I think about the fact that I used to work many mandated overtime shifts at times. And I know people; I'm hearing from them daily, from colleagues of mine who are working mandated overtime at various hospitals, and they're telling me that, you know, it's hard enough to work an eight-hour shift and have any energy to go home and spend time with their families, to take care of their lives, to have a good work-life balance, to decompress and debrief.

It's hard enough when a system's been thrown into chaos and there's a serious lack of capacity. It's hard enough to have a balance in their lives, you know, when they're working an eight-hour shift, never mind working these tremendous amounts of mandated overtime hours that we're seeing. It really—and I'm not sure if—how many people really know what that could look like.

So, you know, I can say that, you know, if you're working, you know, a mandated overtime shift, and also knowing that you're not going to see an increase in your wages for quite some time, for potentially several years, knowing that not only am I, you know, going into my job and I have no idea if I'm going to be able to go home at the end of the day to my family, no idea if I'm going home at the end of the day to the plans that I had arranged to make dinner, to just, you know, watch a show and relax, but also, as well, no idea when I might see, you know, an increase in what I'm earning, that just creates another level of compounded impactful stress on our front-line workers, on our nurses, when we're asking them to, you know, provide the absolute best care to patients on a daily basis.

I remember, you know—I remember working an overtime shift once and being so exhausted at the end of the shift that I couldn't even make the drive home. I remember being so tired at the end of this particular overtime shift that I actually had to pull over and sleep in my car because I knew it wasn't safe for me to keep driving on the highway to get home.

And when I think about how I felt at that time and I hear from folks working right now in our hospitals, when I hear from them that they're working mandated overtime in a way they've never had to do before and

I reflect on what that was like for myself at times and nowhere near the way that we're seeing this happen with nurses right now, I have a tremendous amount of concern for, you know, my nurse colleagues and friends and community members in terms of how they're able to take care of themselves and how they—you know, you get home after working a 16-hour day; you've only got a certain amount of time where you can maybe get home and have something to eat, decompress after what was probably a very busy shift, you know.

\*(15:10)

Best of days an eight-hour shift, you're doing so, so much—I'm doing this so that you can also hear what I'm—my—*[interjection]* You're welcome. You know, you're working an eight-hour shift sometimes where you don't get to—you don't even use the washroom. I remember times working where it's like it's so busy you're running around so much and you want to provide the best care. You don't want to leave folks waiting for their medications, you know, their as-needed medications. You want to make sure you meet with every family member who's coming in to see their loved one. You want to make sure that as soon as that person is saying they need your help or they want to talk to you that you can give them that attention, and sometimes you just completely don't even realize that you haven't had lunch; you haven't taken a break; you haven't used the washroom. You just forget those things.

Now, multiply that by two when you're working twice as long. You're working in a system with less capacity. You have been stuck at the same wage for, you know, so long and you don't know when that's going to end or change. You don't know what your collective bargaining rights are going to look like. You're stressed out about what's going on right now with this government because you know that, you know, year after year and seemingly month after month, the cost of living is going up. You know, things are getting more expensive.

You know, maybe you're like one of the nurses that was basic—that was fired by this government and you had to reapply for a position that you didn't even anticipate you'd have to reapply for because, you know, you've got your nursing education and you specialized and you focused on a stream that you are passionate about, and then all of a sudden, you know, this government comes in, freezes your wages, tells you, you can't work that job that you specialized in for your studies and that you've been continuing your

'competencies' for every single year, going to professional development, doing work in community, and says, you know what, can't have that job anymore; we're firing you from that position; go ahead—in a tunnel, go look at a posting with a bunch of other nurses who are in the same position, if not worse, than you and apply for something else that maybe you're not quite as passionate about.

You've got all of that on your plate in your mind, on your heart, and you're still showing up, day in and day out, at your job because you love what you do. You want to do the best for your patients and you're doing all of that knowing that you're not going to see a wage increase. You can't keep up with bills. You—maybe you even had to change where you live. Maybe you chose your place of employment, like many people do, like many people who are gain—have the privilege to be gainfully employed do, you chose the place that you work because it was close to where your kids go to school or it was close to a family member who you provide support for.

And, you know, not only did you lose the position and have to reapply for a job somewhere else that's not as convenient, but now your children's school and your daycare and your loved one who you lived by that you could provide support for, they're way over there and now you're working somewhere else and you're making not the amount of money that you would need to make because now you've got to go even further to get to this job, and you're making, you know, no more money than you were previously.

You don't know when you're going to be seeing any more dollars. Maybe you're paying more for child care because now your kids are—they're still going there, but you've got to extend the hours that they're being seen because it takes you that much longer.

Like, there are so many things that I hear from nurses on a regular basis that they're having to navigate and deal with as a result of this government, and I really and truly think fundamentally as a result of this government really not understanding nor respecting, really and truly, what nurses do in their day-to-day jobs and careers and what nurses do their very best to do.

You know, it is no shock to maybe some, certainly not to myself based on what I know to the history of, you know, Conservative caucuses and government to do, that nurses in a profession that is still highly—that highly employs women, those who identify as women, it's disappointing to see a very



obvious and strategic attack on front-line service workers who are nurses.

I'm not quite sure how else to name it other than it really appears to be something that is rooted in sexism, and I say that knowing the weight of the words that I use. You know, when you look at who is most impacted by these—the freezing of wages, by a bill that would, you know, really deny folks the right, their fundamental right, to collective bargaining, it is women. You know, when you look at who's impacted by even the campaign that we saw, that really insulting ad campaign that we saw, it was women.

And so I would say that primarily the folks that I'm actually hearing from, who are expressing their frustration and disappointment and concern and fears as to what's to come now rurally, because we know face—we know phase two is going to look a lot like what's been going on in Winnipeg. It's women I'm hearing from, really and truly.

And, you know, when I think about phase two and what's to come, I think we already know what's to come—more cuts, more closures and more front-line service workers not being heard, not being involved in conversations that they should, not be listened to, not being respected as workers who provide care that all Manitobans are trying desperately to access in an equitable way.

And, you know, it's something that we have to make sure, and I certainly, as the critic for Health, I want to make sure that we can shine a light on him and be really clear about what's actually going on here.

So, when I share these stories and I think I'll probably share, you know, ones that folks have told me personally—and I've heard a number of them now, you know, even before the election wrapped up, folks were—folks knew that I, you know, am a registered psychiatric nurse, an addictions specialist and all this community work and folks really seemed comfortable sharing with me what their experiences have been.

And, you know, when we talk about what's going on right now, we can't separate, you know, a bill like this from, you know, the impact that this agenda that this government is moving forward with is having on Manitoba families. You know, because it's Manitoba families that are accessing the services where front-line workers are trying to perform their best and are really, you know, in the midst of all of this chaos that has been created as a result of this government's decision making—reckless decision making at times.

It really is the families that I know nurses and front-line workers are truly most concerned about. You know, every nurse that I know—and I have nurses that are very close to me, you know, whether that's through family and friends and community.

It's actually, you know, their concerns about the unconstitutional bills are secondary to their concerns about how Manitoba families are accessing the services that they are providing. You know, I got—I have a message actually just today from somebody who was at a hospital and is concerned about what they're seeing when they go in there. They're, you know, someone who's saying, you know, front-line service workers are doing their absolute best under just a tremendous amount of stress and looming unconstitutional bills like Bill 9 that would further undermine their abilities to just, you know, be gainfully employed and equipped with what they need in order to feel competent and secure in their roles, whether that be, you know, nurses who work in community; whether that be nurses who work in hospital; maybe nurses who do both; you know, even nurses who work, you know, semi-independently.

There are nurses who work in a number of different roles now and all are expressing their concerns but, again, I would say that their concerns about potential unconstitutional bills like Bill 9 are really secondary to their concerns about, you know, the way that Manitoba families are able to access services in this province and certainly now hearing from folks who are concerned about what that means accessing services in rural areas.

You know, it's no surprise to me because, like I said, I knew back when I saw that ad come out that this government really and truly had a serious lack of understanding, respect for the work that our nurses are putting in day in and day out and so I'm not—I wasn't surprised at all that phase two made absolutely no commitment to hire the people—the actual people not, you know—they had a lot of graphs and some other images in there, and a lot of vague and broad speak. But there is no commitment in phase two to hire the people to provide the care.

\* (15:20)

You know, for a government to fire nurses—and actually I think it was the Minister for Health—his language was something along the lines of—it was: We've given nurses an opportunity to reinvent themselves.

And I actually want to talk a bit about just how insulting that line was, just how deeply not respectful that kind of statement is in regards to nurses having an opportunity to reinvent themselves. And, again, I think it speaks to also a lack of understanding.

You know, many nurses—all nurses spend years to get their degree, but there's a significant amount of education and training and process and maintaining of standards and core competencies that you have to work at to maintain your licence.

So it's not just a matter of showing up and working, you know, 1,800 to 2,000 hours every time in a four-year cycle. It's—or, sorry, in a one-year cycle. It's actually about maintaining your core competencies.

And, if I want to specialize in something else, again, for example, I want to get my advanced cardiac training as a nurse, that is a specialized type of training. It's a specialized type of training that costs a lot of money, you know, money that a lot of nurses probably won't be able to afford given that their wages have been frozen, given that, you know, this government is trying to look at ways to prevent nurses from earning more money in a career and a job that has a tremendous amount of stress and responsibility.

But, going back to my point, the fact that in order to be in any stream where you specialize in nursing, or just to maintain your licensure, you have to maintain your core competencies. You have to get training in education, and if you take any sort of advanced training where you specialize in a specific way, then that requires training that often—most often requires ongoing recertification.

So, when, you know, the Minister for Health makes statements that it's an opportunity for nurses to reinvent themselves, I really think he lacks an understanding of just how much time and money and personal resource and passion and commitment goes into learning those skills, maintaining those skills.

Some aspects of specializing requires nurses to take off a full year. You don't even—you just focus on that stream for a full year and that's what you're doing to learn that specialized skill, to make sure that when a family shows up in that specific department in the hospital, they have someone who is solely dedicated to that—that has put the time and the work in, and is an expert in that area.

And to just, you know, kind of flippantly say that it's an opportunity to reinvent themselves really dismisses the significance of that level of commitment

and passion and education and personal investment that folks have made.

And, again, I reiterate, you know, that folks may not be able to make should decisions or attempts to pass bills like this continue and really prohibit nurses from simply being able to earn an equitable living and keep up with the cost of living and everything else that we're seeing. That's not an unreal—an unreasonable expectation or part of, you know, working in this health-care system.

And so, you know, it didn't—it disappointed me, but it didn't surprise me given what we've seen, given what I saw as a registered psychiatric nurse, working in our systems doing the absolute best alongside some really incredible, incredible nurses who I won't name as I don't know if they'd be totally comfortable with that here, but just really and truly incredible nurses who show up every day on the job, so excited to be there, wanting to put their best effort forward for going—like I said, breaks and lunches, time with their own families, to make sure that Manitoba families who are accessing health care have the best possible experience.

And sometimes, you know, you're meeting families on their worst day. You're meeting families during their worst time, and you're doing the best that you can to make it the most comfortable, respectful, dignified process that you possibly can. And the last thing that our front-line service workers need is to be further stressed and undermined as they're simply trying to do their jobs and provide the best care they can for Manitobans.

And so, again, I wasn't too surprised, but I was disappointed, that phase 2 made absolutely no commitment whatsoever to hire the people to provide care to—not a single commitment or mention of hiring nurses or doctors or other critically needed front-line workers in rural Manitoba.

I mean, you know, the interesting thing is that, in fact, when we're talking about phase 2 and the impact on rural Manitoba, I think about the initiatives that actually have been cut by this government that would've incentivized folks to work rurally, which, to me, is just like, you know, it doesn't even really make a whole lot of sense, you know.

It's—we all know it's—it can be challenging to, for a number of reasons, a myriad of reasons, to staff rurally, but it doesn't mean that you undermine and you cut resources rurally. It means that you start listening to the folks who are there, who have the

expertise; you listen to them, you work alongside them, you figure out what they need, and none of that is mentioned in phase 2. No front-line workers were even meaningfully consulted; you know, again, none of those commitments made, after they've already actually cancelled a \$4.2-million program that recruited doctors to work in rural communities.

So, I mean, none of that really, when you think about what we know is to come in rural Manitoba, we have a system here in Winnipeg that is still reeling—reeling—after these rushed and reckless cuts and closures, firing of nurses, just this callous approach to—I mean, you can't even call it relationship building with front-line service workers or nurses. You can't call it that because it's absolutely not what it is.

So, you know, when we see phase 2 being presented, the concerns that folks are already expressing are entirely valid, and I think it's just—it's really important to—for me to say that, you know, I'm proud to be a part of this NDP caucus and this team, this NDP team, that is on the side of Manitoba workers. *[interjection]* Yes, it was good. We're just—yes, we're a team.

You know, we're going to continue to fight for the rights of workers. We're going to continue to fight for better pensions and fair wages while this Pallister government continues to attack labour and attack nurses and attack front-line service workers and not listen to the folks who are the experts and who know what's going on and who are really and truly just asking for their voices to be heard, who are really and truly just asking for the resources to do their jobs the best way possible.

And that's not really a big ask; that's a fair ask. And the least that this government can do is not only listen but actually work actively alongside the folks who are providing this care and these services, day in and day out.

And so I think, you know, lastly, what I'd like to talk about is, you know, the fact that it is—it's really a privilege to be in a position, as I'm sure it is for all of my colleagues, you know, in the House, but it's really a privilege to be in a position where Manitoba families, front-line service workers, public service workers reach out and share what is actually going on.

And, you know, the government can, and this Pallister government can, you know, kind of present things as they want to and as they will to try and make things appear better than they are, to minimize the

realities that folks are continuing to show up and perform in every single day in Manitoba.

But it's really a privilege and an honour to be able to be a public servant in this role and to be someone that folks are coming to and sharing their experiences with and their concerns and their hopes—and their hopes—not just the things that they're worried about, but their actual hopes, because, really, everybody wants a health-care system that is equitable and fair for not only front-line service workers and public servants, but for Manitoba families, actually, I would say, first and foremost.

And, you know, we don't support this bill because it doesn't support our front-line service workers and public sector workers and—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The member's time has expired.

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** It is my honour, my duty, my privilege and my expectation that I get up here and stand and speak on behalf of Bill 9, against Bill 9, and against the intent of Bill 9.

This is nothing more than a distraction, nothing more than a dictatorship that is being imposed on Manitobans, hard-working Manitobans, that this government claims to represent, claims to speak on behalf of, claims to have consulted with. With Bill 28 being challenged in court by the Federation of Labour, the minister puts forward Bill 9 to distract from the substance of Bill 28.

Bill 9—this bill undermines the role of arbitrators, gives the minister the authority to determine wages for public sector workers. Changes to the collective bargain process should be done in good faith, with negotiators, not through heavy-handed legislation.

As it's clear, this is now becoming a dictatorship; it's not a democracy. It's something that's being imposed, being heavy-handed. We believe that all Manitoban workers have the right to fair wages, the right to bargain in good faith and to have their collective bargaining agreements respected and honoured.

We spoke the words bad faith earlier in question period, and that's exactly the tone of what Bill 9 is all about. It's about—it's bad faith negotiations, if you can even call it and use the word negotiations. It's a heavy-handed approach and a dictatorship, and something that is just trying to be imposed, and that's why we are strongly opposed to this bill.

The Supreme Court of Canada has clearly ruled that collective bargaining is a protected right under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and let's not forget that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) campaigned on a promise to protect front-line workers and public services in 2016, and again the second term, and now here he is interfering with worker's rights. He's made deep cuts to health care and education, including casting \$1 billion in health projects, underspending by over \$200 million, now phase 2 is about to roll out, and we know even more health-care services will be cut, putting Manitobans at risk.

It's no more than a bait and switch. I'm going to cut, I'm going to cut, I'm going to cut, then I'm going to reinvest that same money that I cut, so now I can look like I'm going ahead and giving, giving, giving, when meanwhile, behind your back, I take and take and take it.

It reminds of a simple thing of just going to a retail store that you're used to buying the same product over and over. How would we feel if somebody went and bought a jug of milk, a four litre jug of milk, every day, every day, every day, and slowly, a quarter of it is taken this year, a quarter next year, a quarter next year, until really you're only getting a quarter of what you spent, but somebody comes to you and says, here, I'm going to put three quarters back. Well, where are you? You're exactly where you were in the beginning.

So, again, it's that dictatorship and that bait and switch of being able to try and interfere and dictate with how we live our lives here in Manitoba.

While the Premier is heading into the new year with a budget surplus, he refuses to raise minimum wage, hikes up tuition fees, lays off workers, and cancels important health and education infrastructure projects that are beneficial to Manitobans. Again, not reflective of the cost of living, and, in particular, as I stand here, not reflective of the cost of living of people in the North. Not exactly fair to what they do and what they need, and what their paycheques are.

I've heard talk of more money on the kitchen table. I wish I had money to put on the kitchen table. I want money in my wallet so I can go out and provide for my family. What do you leave on the kitchen table? You leave loose change on the kitchen table.

So that's exactly what this government is doing—nothing but loose change, handouts, crumbs, and then telling those hard-working Manitobans, oh, by the way, I'm going to limit what you make, anyway. You can't go out and make a decent living because I'm

going to limit what you can take home, and that is, quite frankly, disgusting.

The Premier claims to be a team player, yet from him we've seen—from him so far we've seen everything to suggest otherwise. He refuses to sit down at the bargaining table with the unions, and instead imposes anti-worker legislation. He refuses to work with the federal government to come up with a health-care deal and Manitoba is still the last province to sign on to the agreement. He'd rather sit here and blame, blame, blame. It's easy to blame everybody else when you have no answers for yourself.

Again, switching, switching, switching, deflecting exactly what this means. Deflecting—trying to sit there and take credit for I'm balancing the books, of getting us ahead. I have a surplus, but really at the expense of what? It's at the expense of hard-working Manitobans. Manitobans that aren't getting rich, they're not winning the lottery. They're just simply trying to make a living, trying to get by, trying to be treated fairly. Something that, in a democracy, should be something that's a standard, not something that's the exception; it should be the rule. Again, that gets in to being the word I use—dictatorship. I know what's best for you, that's the clear message from this Premier, it's: I know what's best for you.

We're extremely disappointed to see that this government's tactic is not to negotiate or collaborate with Manitoba's public sector workers, but to box them into a corner, using anti-worker legislation. And, again, I get back to the kitchen table, because that—seems to be the phrase—there's a number of catchphrases that this government uses: money on your kitchen table.

But, again, pennies on your kitchen table. Who sits there and puts thousands of dollars on your kitchen table? Nobody does. You sit there and you put your loose change on your kitchen table. And how exactly can you go with that loose change and provide for your family? That's exactly what that is, nothing but crumbs and peanuts.

So, we sit here and we wonder, okay, I'm going to take my paycheque. What's my paycheque going to be? Can I leave my paycheque on my kitchen table? Probably could, because it amounts to nothing less than loose change at the end of the day. And that's exactly what Bill 9 is encompassed to do. It is going to do that.

There's no financial crisis. Millions of dollars have been stowed away in the Province's rainy day

fund. The Premier took a 20 per cent raise for himself, locked it in and then called it a wage freeze. Again, dictatorship. How can the Premier look a hard-working Manitoban in the eye and cut and freeze their wages while he continually fills his own pockets, at their expense, of the hard-working Manitobans?

For lack of a better term, he might as well be there scooping up all that loose change off the kitchen table, because that's exactly what's happening. These are not the actions of a government dealing with a financial crisis.

You cut sales taxes, spend \$173,000 in marketing campaigns to promote the cuts and now the government is pledging to eliminate the PST on expensive haircuts. Most people wishes they can afford to get a haircut. They're going to sit there and cut their own hair—*[interjection]*—for a simple matter of the fact that—*[interjection]*—for the simple matter of the fact that the—those apply, again, to certain Manitobans, high-level Manitobans. *[interjection]*

Should I wait to be called order? I don't know. Seems to be we're getting a little bit out of hand already. *[interjection]*

But I love that, I love the fact that we're hitting home, we're making a difference, we're impacting.

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** It's good to know the other side of the House is actually listening.

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order.

Just ask for a little respect for the speaker, please. Thank you.

**Mr. Bushie:** The Finance Minister and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) have refused to rule out the possibility of wage rollbacks, unpaid days off, changes to pensions. Workers and their families deserve to know what the Premier's plan really is. Not all of a sudden, another bait and switch from I'm going to cut, cut, cut—oh, by the way, I have a grand announcement to make.

The grand announcement, in reality, is, this is where I've been hiding all your money I'm going to give you back.

The Premier's required by law to appoint an arbitration board when no agreement has been reached, so long as one parties makes this request. Clause 49(2) of The Civil Service Act clearly says, that when the minister has been requested to appoint an arbitration board by one of the parties, he shall establish one.

We know this didn't happen. MGEU made this request back in July. By law, the minister should have established an arbitration panel within seven days. We know that the government ignored that request. The government ignored the law and defied the act. The government was unhappy with the responsibilities under the law, and so now they go ahead and change it. Again, dictatorship.

Last month, Manitoba unions representing tens of thousands of public sector workers took the Province to court over their unconstitutional wage freeze bill. Dozens of witnesses have been called to testify that the government is not respecting workers' rights. Unions will be in court until Thursday, December 5th, and they get—then again in February.

This government has chosen to spend their money fighting workers in court, as opposed to staying down with them and showing respect for the collective bargaining process and, in fact, respect for Manitobans.

This government to the—this speaks to the government's pattern of not thinking through the consequences of their penny-pinching and, again, on backs of hard-working Manitobans. Instead, choosing to move full speed ahead with their plans to save money by any means necessary and leaving the rest of us to pick up the pieces, to pick up the crumbs, to pick up the loose change to put on my kitchen table, so I can, in fact, go to the store and buy myself something to eat. This speaks to the government's pattern, again, of not thinking through the process. And again, dictatorship, not consulting.

In the fall, the Pallister government attempted to start—to stall the court case by trying to get the court challenge adjourned by introducing a Public Services Sustainability Amendment Act as Bill 2, now Bill 9. Bill 9 does not change the substance of the wage freeze bill that is being challenged in court. Bill 9 is a sloppy attempt by the government to sidestep the consequences of the court ruling that is to come in the new year.

\* (15:40)

Reckless cuts—that's exactly where this all leads. Somebody somewhere, sometime has to answer for exactly what the Pallister government is doing.

And who's paying for that? Hard-working Manitobans, hard-working Manitobans that are taking that money and they might as well put their penny pinchers and give it to the government, put it in Pallister's pocket, because that's exactly what he's

going to do. He's going to recycle those safe cuts—  
[interjection]

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order. I'd just like to remind the member that we refer to members in here by their position or their constituency.

**Mr. Bushie:** There are no services that are safe under this Premier (Mr. Pallister), including health care and education. Our NDP team knows that cuts are not the answer. We will continue to fight for Manitobans and the services they care about.

In the three and a half years since taking office—three and half, not four, mind you—three and a half years, the Premier has decimated public services. It is not surprising that the government now wants to move forward with undermining Manitoba public sector workers.

Again—dictatorship, paternalistic approach—I know what's best for you; I'm not going to talk with you; I'm not going to consult with you; this is exactly what I'm going to do.

Bill 9 has such an overlapping effect into all kinds of things—education, health care. The Premier also laid off hundreds of health-care professionals, only to suggest in the Throne Speech that he plans to create 200 new nursing positions.

Well, that's great. I'm going to lay you off and I'll hire you back at less money than they had in the first place, by the way, because they want to freeze your wage.

Let's not forget that this Premier is the one talking about hiring back some of these nurses that he, in fact, fired on a regular basis.

We see in phase 2 of the Premier's health-care plan that he plans to export the dysfunction of the health-care changes in Winnipeg to the rest of the province, and I asked the Premier, is this what's going to happen in the North. And so, you know, North in Manitoba is north of Selkirk; it is north of Lac du Bonnet, and I encouraged the Premier to ask his northern MLAs, but I forgot the fact that they have no northern MLAs on that side of this Chamber to be able to discuss with them exactly what the needs are in the North.

The North clearly said: We reject what's being done here. We reject the cuts that are happening. They have no reflection of anything in this Throne Speech, anything in Bill 9 that reflects exactly the needs of northern Manitobans.

Phase 2 made no commitment to hire people to provide the care, not a mention about a single nurse, doctor, or other critically needed front-line workers in rural Manitoba after they already cancelled the \$4.2-million program to recruit doctors to work in rural communities.

So we know that local services continue to be cut under this government, putting them further out of reach with the local residents and northern residents.

Recruitment, retention—it's not a factor here. How do you recruit? They sit in the Chamber; the opposition, the government sit in the Chamber and they talk about, we can't get people to work in the North.

Well, with Bill 9, how do you expect anybody to come and want to work anywhere.

We talk about bringing in Manitobans, treating Manitobans fairly—fairly and honestly and being upfront, negotiating in good faith, recruitment, retention—we want you to work. We want you to have your careers here, but how can that happen when something like Bill 9 is in place?

How do you retain people in the North when you freeze their wage—oh, by the way, we're going to jack the prices on everything for you, also, so you can't afford to survive. You can't afford to live in the North. You can't afford to live in the south. You can't afford to live in rural Manitoba, urban centres—anywhere else for the fact of the matter of your paycheck is going to be the equivalent of social assistance.

The Pallister government also made a promise to consult with front-line services along the way. Another promise broken. Not only consult but cut behind their backs, so this is bad faith.

We spoke earlier in question period about bad faith consultation, bad faith negotiations, and that's exactly what this is. We really can't even call it bad faith because there is no negotiations. There is no consultations, so how can we even refer to it as consultations in bad faith, good faith. There just is none at all.

The front-line workers have been consulted through the drafting of the phase 2 plan. Again, another myth that happened. This plant was primary patient care, further out of reach for rural Manitobans. When they finally get to see their doctor, they're going to have no way to get there because they continued to cut transportation services for patients. They privatized Lifeflight, cut subsidies to the

Northern Patient Transportation Program and reduced bus transportation. So how can these northern Manitobans get out to supposedly health care sooner, quicker?

Is that the reality? Exactly who was consulted in this process because that sure didn't happen in any of our communities. There was no thought to the North. There was no thought to them when this bill is now being imposed, is being shoved down the throats of hard-working Manitobans because the Pallister government claims to know: I know what's best for you.

So we've spoke about health care. We spoke about education. We spoke about how Bill 9 is going to affect hard-working Manitobans in those areas.

The cuts to the Crown. The government continues to put—to cut more than it needs, putting Manitoba families at risk. Thousands of civil service positions have been cut, more than planned. Crown corporations are being ordered to make cuts across all staffing levels, managerial and non-managerial. We don't think that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) realizes that these are real people losing their jobs when he makes these choices because he is absolutely out of touch with hard-working Manitobans.

People are trying to support themselves, their family, become victims of this Premier's rash cuts. Even when Crown corporations meet their target reductions, they are being encouraged to look at—for more opportunities to make cuts. Making cuts to management at Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries has exaggerated the crisis and they are continuing to see unfold at our liquor stores in the province.

When the Premier talks about cuts, he says, I'm cutting at the top—I'm cutting the fat, when in all reality, he's cutting out the legs and the backbone of these workers—the backbone and legs of hard-working Manitobans so they don't have anything to stand on. They can't go to their kitchen table and get that money that's supposedly there—the change, the crumbs that are there because they're going to give them nothing to stand on because this Premier has nothing to stand for.

This government has finally stepped up and promised to pay a new security measure in Liquor Marts across Winnipeg. We want to know whether reduction overhead costs that 'exacerbates' this issue balances out how expensive it will be to implement these new security measures that have now become necessary to ensure safety of staff.

It seems that this government goal is to actually finally, maybe to that's credit—maybe that's the ultimate goal—is to put a dollar figure on the life of a Manitoban. This is exactly what it's going to cost to spare the life of a Manitoban. Perhaps that's exactly the number that needs to be raised and a number that they're looking for on the other side of this Chamber.

Health-care cuts, education cuts, Crown corporation cuts—again, all reflective in Bill 9 that represents hard-working Manitobans.

This government, in regards to education, is also frustrating Manitoba teachers by not showing respect for what they need to do in order to have success in a classroom. The Premier's increased the workload for Manitoba educators by eliminating legislation that restricted K-3 classroom sizes to 20 students, making classroom management nearly impossible and disproportionately affecting students with learning disabilities.

Again, not wanting to put a dollar—now they're wanting to put a dollar amount on a child's life—not just an adult. Now they're going a—one step further again, putting a dollar value on a child's life, a child's education. This is what it's going to cost. And that, in fact, comes down to bullying by telling a child this is what you're worth.

He's also added more barriers for Manitobans simply trying to get post-secondary education to join the workforce. By eliminating the tuition fee income tax rebate, advanced tuition income tax rebate, cutting funding to post-secondary institutions, cutting access programs that make post-secondary education more viable for indigenous and northern students.

Again, the Premier also claims to stand up for the North. I remember a time when I was working in my community and the Premier's, in 2016, not long after his election. The Premier drove by, stopped by where we were working and asked where he was, asked for directions. He didn't even know where he was in, supposedly northern Manitoba but again, claims to represent, claims to speak on our behalf. And all he was doing was looking for a First Nation.

Perhaps Google maps could have helped him out and showed him exactly where he needed to go but again, Google maps is now what makes north and that's what it comes down to. We live in First Nations. My riding is 95 per cent First Nation communities, and it takes more than just growing up next to a First

Nation to, in fact, know what happens in a First Nation.

This government has collapsed post-secondary education with economic development and training, proving that they're not only interested in turning Manitoba workers into cogs in a machine to boost a bottom line. This government is also undermining professors at Manitoba universities, promising to send out mandate letters to post-secondary institutions outlining expected students' outcomes and financial accountability—again, putting a price tag on Manitobans.

\* (15:50)

What's next? Are we going to go around with T-shirts saying this is what I'm worth, this is what my value is, this is what I'm worth to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba?

This is not the government—the government has meddled with the responsibilities and compensation for professors by interfering in the collective bargaining at the University of Manitoba back in 2016. The government helped precipitate a strike that cost Manitoba students weeks of schooling, the ramifications of the strike still being felt by students who have had to extend their graduation deadline.

And again, now they're taking away that livelihood for those students. They're now not becoming workers of Manitoba. They're still now spinning their wheels in the education system because of stalling tactics by this government. This government is much less interested in educating Manitobans as they are in profiting off of them.

And again, dictatorship, a militant state: that's exactly what that is. That's exactly all the methods and methodology and thinking of a militant state and a dictatorship.

Our NDP team is on the side of Manitoba workers. We will continue to fight for the rights of workers, for better pensions, fair wages, and against the Pallister's attacks on labour. We recognize the important role of unions and the rights of Manitoban workers to negotiate in good faith. This government has demonstrated—[interjection]—the Pallister government, my apologies—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order.

Just want to caution the member again about referencing a member by their name. It's by their constituency or their position.

**An Honourable Member:** My apologies. Our NDP team—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Sorry.

The honourable member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie).

**Mr. Bushie:** Our NDP team is on the side of Manitoba workers and will continue to fight for the rights of workers, for better pensions, fair wages, against the Pallister government attacks on labour. We recognize the important role of unions, the rights of Manitoba workers to negotiate in good faith.

This government has demonstrated, time and time again, that it is not on the side of Manitoba workers and Manitoba families. The Premier and the minister are out of touch with Manitobans, but that's nothing new because they are not consulting with Manitobans.

When we talk about consultation, I would love to see the list of people, groups, organizations, communities that were consulted in all these government processes. It was said this morning that the government has consulted with 1.2 million Manitobans.

Well, I must be one of the lucky ones because I sure was never consulted. My communities were never consulted, but I guess we should be grateful for the fact that we get included in the lump sum consultation process that really never happened.

This Premier has a record of putting workers at risk by opposing measures to create safer work places, protecting families. When he was a Cabinet minister in the Filmon government, they fought against legislation to protect highway workers in construction zones; tried to end a speed reduction for cars passing emergency workers that would have put safety of first responders at risk.

One of the very first acts as a new government was to introduce Bill 7, a union-busting law intended to weaken the ability to organize a workplace. Their introduction of Bill 7 was nothing but an ideological attack on unions, weakening protection of workers, and undermining the right to collective bargaining.

But, again, at the expense of hard-working Manitobans—which again is how this government's methods, methodology, way of thinking seems to be. I'm going to make all the cuts on the back of hard-working Manitobans.

I'm going to line my pockets so I look good to somebody else. I don't look—I don't care what



Manitobans think. I have supposedly unlimited say. I can do what I want. I have the government that's going to back me and I can do what I want: again, dictatorship, paternalistic, militant.

Unfortunately, we've seen this kind of anti-worker legislation from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) before. In the 1990s, when the Premier was a Cabinet minister, they imposed mandatory reduced work weeks, impacting civil service incomes and pensions.

Again, I wonder now, does the Pallister government have a wish-list of: this is what I wanted to do, this is what I wanted to do for 20 years, so this is what I'm going to do? I'm going to make the communities, make the Manitobans, make them all suffer because I'm going to get what I want, regardless of what anybody has to say because I have the authority, I have the power, and I have the will to get that done no matter what anybody has to say. And again, that's the sign—exact sign of a dictatorship.

This government also interfered with collective bargaining at the U of M, helping to precipitate a strike that cost Manitoba students weeks of schooling, and he doesn't care about protecting Manitoba workers and their families. He does not understand the consequences of his cut to public services.

It's hard to sit there and say, I represent Manitobans, I understand what you're going through, when I'm sitting here in the ivory tower, when I'm vacationing in Costa Rica at my vacation home. And here I am, looking down on Manitobans that in some cases don't even have a home to begin with, let alone a secondary home or a multi-million-dollar home. They don't even have a shack to live in. They don't have a roof over their head. They don't have clean water. They don't have access to affordable food, affordable education. But, again, from the ivory tower, I guess that's very hard to see.

The Premier doesn't understand that—the kind of challenges that Manitoba's families face every day. He's very out of touch with exactly what Manitobans go through, what Manitobans live through, what they have every single day. Rather than negotiating with workers, the Premier has chosen a heavy-handed approach that ignores the needs of Manitoba families. And, again, a dictatorship.

I think of the story in my campaigning and going around communities in my 20-plus years of being able to have the luxury and the availability to go out and talk to our communities and see exactly what they go through on a day-to-day basis. There's sometimes a lot

of Manitobans that, quite honestly, don't care what happens in this Chamber, don't know what it means for them. But when we get there and we talk about, okay, the nuts and bolts—especially for myself and the First Nation communities, we get out there and there's a lot of balance between federal government, provincial government. What do you do for me and what do they do for me? How do I vote for you? What does it matter? What does it matter if I vote?

So we sit there and we talk about the quality of education; we talk about exactly what that means. We talk about them being able to get off of social assistance, get off of welfare, get out there and get jobs. So we should be trying to engage, we should be trying to recruit, we should be trying to retain all these workers.

But, when you talk about Bill 9, how is that any kind of recruitment process? How does that look when I go up to somebody on welfare? In my community, \$220 a month; that's what that person makes. So what's next? Bill 9? What's the ramification of Bill 9? What is it? Is it a gateway?

Is it—now it's going to lead to the point where the fact that \$220 a month—oh, by the way, in 10 years, that's going to be your paycheque. It's not going to be your welfare cheque; that's going to be your paycheque, because we feel—as a Pallister government, we feel that's all you should make. And we feel that's all you should make so I look good over here, so I can establish more money in the rainy day fund, so I can bait and switch Manitobans and say I'm cutting, cutting, cutting—by the way, I'm going to give you back.

Now I'm going to go back and your \$220 a month that you're getting on welfare, now that's going to be your paycheque. By the way, I'm going to cut that \$220 a month. I'm going to make it \$150. But in a year from now, I'll give you that back to \$220 so you can say I boosted more money into your paycheque. And what is that in reality? That's nothing more than cloak and masking exactly what's happening here—cut, cut, cut. And it's something that we can't afford to keep on surviving on.

As Manitobans, we need to encourage Manitobans to get off of social assistance, to get out there and get jobs, get education. But at the same time, we want to bring those people back. We want to be able to say this is an awesome place to live. This is exactly where you want to work. This is where you want to raise your family. And not have them say, well, you know what? My grandpa used to work in

this province but he got limited to what he could do, so now, I'm sorry, son, daughter, now you've got to go work in a different province; you've got to go work in a different country, because you just can't make a living here.

Cost of living gets to be at a certain rate, and it changes every year. It rises every year. But, again, this legislation will limit the fact of what you can make. It will limit the fact of what you can do. It will limit the fact of how much you can grow. It will limit the fact of how much your family can grow, how much you can support for your family.

And again, that ties—this all ties into a whole bunch of different issues. That ties into mental health. How can I get there and say, well, you know what, I'm sorry, I worked as hard as I possibly could; I'm as educated as much as I can go, but this is the max I can make because the government said that's the max I could make.

I want to be able to negotiate in good faith. I want to be able to get out there and progress, make a better life for my family, make a better life for my children, my grandchildren, but I'm limited. Why is that? Because somebody somewhere is tying me down.

And that's exactly what Bill 9 is doing. It's tying people down, tying people, limiting what they can do, limiting them from growing, limiting them from expanding, limiting them from growing out to be more successful Manitobans.

\* (16:00)

And, again, it gets into almost—you can categorize it as bullying. I'm not going to let you grow. I'm not going to let you speak. I'm not going to let you enhance and make a better life for yourself, for your family, for your children, because I said so. Me, as government, said you can't do that. Me, as government, said you can't grow. Me, as government, goes out and imposes a legislation such as Bill 9, and says, no, you're not going to be able to live your life. You're not going to be able to grow. If you go somewhere else, I'll just put you in another stat and say you know what, another stat of people that left the country—left the province, went to work somewhere else, and blame somebody else for it. Blame the Trudeau government for it; blame the previous government for it—instead of accepting responsibility for the fact that those people feel they can't make a go in Manitoba because of this government.

Not because of anybody else, not because of the Trudeau government, not because of the past government, not because of anything else but the fact of the matter of they feel they can't get a fair shake in this province, they can't make a fair living in this province just simply because they're legislated to do so. They're told this is what you can make, this is the limits. You're not allowed to grow.

Just imagine somebody growing up to be five feet tall and everybody else in their family is six-five. But no, you're not allowed to grow anymore. This is exactly where you're going to be. That's the limit because I said that's the limit you're going to be.

So conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in regards to Bill 9, that is—all those are the reasons why we are strongly opposed to this bill, and thank you for your consideration.

Miigwech.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** It's a pleasure to just put a few short words on the record today about Manitoba's workers and their right to freely and fairly bargain.

The Public Services Sustainability Act, which this bill amends, unilaterally freezes the wages of more than 120,000 hard-working public sector workers like nurses, paramedics, health-care aides, teachers, school bus drivers, custodians, group home staff, social workers, snow plow drivers, construction workers, plumbers, electricians and many more—the people who provide the services that Manitoba families count on every day.

This government is putting forward legislation which disregards the right to free and fair collective bargaining for Manitoba workers. Collective bargaining has been affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada as a Charter right. Collective bargaining provides stability for workers and employers through the life of their contract.

Further to ensuring predictability, collective bargaining also provides greater access to skilled workers. Sudhir Sandhu of Manitoba Building Trades says project labour agreements enhance the pool of skilled workers in the province and slow the tide of cheap labour coming from outside Manitoba's borders. The government should be doing more to encourage and enhance our skilled worker pool rather than taking away protections to having more efficient workforces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this amendment bill is concerning that it brings in the definition of minister to the act. A section reads: The minister may approve a collective agreement that provides for an increase to existing, additional 'renumeration' or for new additional 'renumeration.' Further to this change, the bill is amended in one section to have a clause read: Respecting any matter the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council considers necessary or advisable to carry out the purposes of this act.

It is clear that this bill allows Cabinet to dictate increases in rates of pay. This is a clear sign that control and changes to collective agreements are to be centralized in Cabinet. This is extremely problematic, because the power is left in the hands of the ministers and Cabinet to pick and choose as they wish.

Ultimately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it just doesn't seem to make sense to be bringing forward this amendment to a bill while the bill is currently in the courts. I think it would be wise for this government to wait for the bill to be resolved in the courts and we find out what the conclusion of the bill is before we start making amendments to it.

On that note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will not be supporting this bill.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** Thank you for that kind applause.

Glad to have an opportunity to speak here about Bill 9, a bill which seeks to make some minor tweaks to a bill which removes the right to collective bargaining for 120,000 Manitoban public servants.

We should make no mistake: Bill 9, along with bill 28, are simply an attack on Manitoban workers. These bills are concerning, as they remove the right to bargain and places compensation decisions directly into the office of the minister responsible, or the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) office.

Their enactment are tantamount to wage cuts as inflation and costs of living are increasing yearly while wages stagnate. The decision takes money off the proverbial kitchen table that our peers across the way love to reference all the time for about 120,000 Manitobans, making life more unaffordable for a huge number of people in our province.

And maybe most disconcertingly, this PC government is moving forward with this bill, even after the Supreme Court of Canada recently affirmed collective bargaining as a Charter right. Useful to

point out, that considering Mr. Pallister's recent interest—[interjection] Sorry, I apologize—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order.

In this House, we refer to the members by their constituency or their position.

**Mr. Sala:** I apologize for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'll do my best to avoid doing so going forward.

Considering this Premier's interest in defending Charter rights, as with his recent challenge to Bill 21 in Quebec, I would invite the Premier to extend his willingness to defend Charter rights of Canadians to supporting the rights of Manitobans to collectively bargain, instead of fighting aggressively to rip those rights away.

So, as with many decisions made by this government, the decision to advance this bill is rooted in a lack of concern and a lack of connectedness or understanding or relationship to, or any type of true understanding, to the realities facing Manitobans on a daily basis here in our province.

As someone who has previously worked as a civil servant, with the Department of Housing and Community Development, and who had an opportunity to work broadly with civil servants across the entire province in my capacity, and to familiarize myself with their realities, I can confirm to this House that the vast majority of individuals who are going to bear the brunt of the impact of this bill are not fat cats.

So who are the people who are going to suffer the impacts of this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The list, I assure you, is long: it's 120,000 people long. And it includes many of the people who we rely on in this province most: our Manitoba nurses, our paramedics, our health-care aides, our teachers, our school bus drivers, our custodians, group home staff, social workers, construction workers, plumbers, electricians—in other words, the people that provide services to Manitobans day in and day out; the people that we count on here in this province every single day.

When I think of the people who will be impacted by this bill, I think of the many people that I came to know during my time as a civil servant here in the province of Manitoba. The fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the people this bill will impact are regular working people. Many of our public servants are making modest wages and are coping with the same affordability challenges as their peers outside the public service.

And in the last several years, as many of us know here, we have seen significant increases in the costs of housing, in the costs of food. Look at what's happening in our grocery stores, look at what's happening when you go to visit the produce aisle in the last several years. We've seen significant increases in the basic costs of living way beyond the basic, normal cost of inflation.

And this government is compounding these affordability challenges. They're compounding them by increasing Hydro rates at a rate which far exceed those that are required to ensure that that crown jewel is sustainable. They've supported increases to rates of near eight per cent for Manitoba Hydro, which again, are clearly unnecessary and were identified as being completely unnecessary by the PUB during their analysis that was conducted in 2014, with the help of many, many experts—world-renowned experts. And that is exactly why that request, which was outrageous, was rejected by the PUB when they made that request only a couple years ago.

\* (16:10)

During my time working as a civil servant, I was fortunate to get to know many individuals working in government. Individuals who are proud of their jobs, who are proud of the service that they're providing to Manitobans, who decided to pursue a life of public service with the understanding that when it came time to renew collective agreements that govern their compensation, that their right—that they would have a right to have their voice be heard in those processes, and that their voice would be heard through those collective bargaining processes which, currently, this government is in the process of trying to take away from them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I think of who this bill will impact and who it is already impacting, I think of the many individuals, again, that I said I came to know in my own working experience, working on the front lines of our Department of Families.

People are working in programs that provide services to our youth in need, to youth in care. People are giving so much of themselves every single day to help members of our province and citizens in our province.

I can confirm with one hundred per cent certainty that this bill will have and is already having a detrimental effect on the lives of many of the individuals that I came to know throughout my time working in government.

I don't think this government understands the realities of working people in Manitoba. And, when I think of the impact of these cuts, I think of those impacts through my own lens, I think of them as a father to two kids who once worked as a civil servant, working in a modest role; as someone who has a partner who's still completing her education as a single-income family.

And I think about how my own family would have coped with the equivalent of a 1.5 per cent cut to my salary on a yearly basis. I can assure you that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those cuts would have had a significant impact on the ability of my family to make ends meet, to cover the basic cost of living, to cover the costs of tuition, to cover the costs of food, to cover the costs of stowing a little bit of money away for retirement.

We know that this Premier (Mr. Pallister), with his multi-month outings to Costa Rica, has some challenges in connecting to everyday Manitobans, but that doesn't excuse him for supporting this type of action in ripping away the collective bargaining rights of 120,000 Manitobans who are giving themselves every single day to provide services to this province.

Plain and simple, this bill is an attack on our public servants. It's an attack on everyday Manitobans, and even the advancement of this bill is a dangerous affront to workers' rights here in Manitoba. Imagine the precedent that's being set here with the advancement of this bill. Imagine the message that it's sending to workers in Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is, in many ways, simply an extension of the many cuts we've seen from this government since they took office here only three years ago. They're reckless and they're hurting everyday working families here in Manitoba.

And it's clear that none of our services are safe from cuts under this Premier, including in the critical areas of health and education. We know this government continues to put essential services on the chopping block.

Phase 1 of the Premier's health-care roll out, he closed half of the city's emergency rooms. He closed five out of six QuickCare clinics, including one just a few blocks from here, and he closed dozens of other clinics and health-care programs like lactation counselling and universal health care for international students.

Now, I can share with this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I know that some of these programs

that have been on the chopping block would have impacted my own family. Personally, I know my wife was hugely reliant on some of these lactation counselling support services.

And I can confirm that those supports provide an incredible service to our family. They helped ensure that my child was healthy through a difficult period for my wife when we were struggling to ensure that she got the nutrition required.

And this is an example of the kind of cut that is absolutely an embarrassment to this province and to the rights of all Manitobans. We should have access to these types of services and programs and it's horrifying to see what this government has been willing to cut in the name of the bottom-line paradigm.

This Premier (Mr. Pallister) has also laid off hundreds of health-care professionals, only to suggest in the Throne Speech that, of course, they're living in a Bizarro opposite world where they're planning to create 200 new nursing positions.

So let's not forget that the Premier is just talking about hiring back any of the nurses that he had fired. *[interjection]* I'd argue that—I think it's noteworthy, and I think it's telling, that some of our colleagues across the way are laughing at comments about the firing of nurses. That this is humorous or comical to them is, frankly, embarrassing.

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order.

**Mr. Sala:** And I think it's—*[interjection]*—I appreciate that it's difficult for some of my colleagues to hear this information laid out so plainly, and that they choose to laugh at this information instead of dealing with it seriously or contemplating the impacts of the cuts that they're supporting, thinking about the way these cuts are impacting regular, every day Manitobans.

This is a life-and-death question for many people in our province. And instead, they're choosing to make light of a very difficult reality, not only for Manitoban patients who have been so negatively impacted by the actions of this government and the cuts that we've seen from them, but also the lives of those support staff for our health-care system: the nurses, the health-care aides that are working every single day, that have been impacted by the decisions to make these cuts that have changed lives, that have caused enormous stress, have caused enormous difficulty for a lot of families here in our province.

I would ask that, when we talk about these things and we reference the cuts that this government has made, that we think and we act respectfully towards those individuals who have been impacted so negatively.

You know, in addition to those cuts to nurses, we've seen that this government has closed rural ERs, putting emergency care further out of reach by many Manitobans. And this phase 2 of the health-care cuts that we were seeing rolled out as of late is also very much anti-worker at its core.

The report that was released shows the lack of priority this government has on filling chronic vacancies in our rural centres. You know, phase 2 makes no commitment of any kind to hire the people to provide the care—not a mention of a single nurse, not a mention of a single doctor, or any of the other critically needed front-line workers who are needed in rural Manitoba, after they already cancelled the \$4.2-million program that recruited doctors to work in rural communities.

We know that local services continue to be cut under this government, putting them further out of reach to rural residents. They made no commitment to reopening Flin Flon obstetrics. Again, another affront to women's health in this province—one of many cuts that are impacting women's health.

And, again, what is this causing? How is this going to impact women in Manitoba's North? We can only guess, very negatively, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we on this side of the House intend to continue fighting to support women, not only in the North, but throughout Manitoba, and to fight against these types of cuts that we've been seeing from this Premier and his caucus.

The Pallister government—or—the Mr. Premier—the Premier's also made a promise to consult with front-line services along the way. Another promise that's been broken. No front-line workers have been consulted with throughout the drafting of the phase 2 plan.

I know, myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, throughout the course of the campaign, walking and talking through—to residents and constituents in St. James, I had the opportunity to meet a large number of nurses and health-care providers in my community and to talk to them about some of the changes that this government has been advancing in their modifications to our health-care system. And I can say that none of them were aware of consultations, of any form of

engagement, any kind of curiosity, even, about what they thought as experts on the Manitoban health-care system.

\*(16:20)

I can share with this House, as someone who was himself involved in organizational change prior to this—to having the privilege of taking on this role, I worked in something of an internal business consultant capacity with a large financial institution here in Manitoba, and I can tell you, at any time when we were seeking to advance any kind of major or significant change organizationally, there was always a major focus placed on ensuring that we consulted with the experts who understood the processes that would be impacted more than anyone else.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those experts are the people who are on the ground. Those people—those are the people who are actually doing the work, and the reason why that's best practice in any business environment, in any modern business context, is because businesses understand that when you're going to make any kind of a significant change in an organization, it's important to understand the perspectives of the people who work in those processes who deliver those services, who deliver that value and to understand how we could—should seek to improve it.

This government completely failed in that regard to engage with front-line service providers in the development of their health care—in their health-care plan, in the development of this phase 2 plan, and I heard about this day in and day out while I walked and knocked on doors, hearing from people and having the good fortune of meeting some of those front-line service providers.

So I can assure this House and I can assure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this plan is not a reflection of the expertise of the knowledge of the people who understand our system and the ways we should be seeking to improve it.

This plan puts primary patient care further out of the reach of rural Manitobans. When they finally get to see a doctor, they're going to have no way to get there because they continue to cut transportation services for patients. They privatized Lifeflight. I can actually speak to a very personal story from a constituent that lives in the West End, a constituent who was a pilot for Lifeflight and was released from his duties shortly before he was able to earn his pension.

This was a horrifying story that I was privileged to learn about from this constituent and it was a really great example of how this government is completely—is willing to move ahead with cuts that will have a tremendously negative impact on the lives of Manitobans, and their carelessness, frankly, in letting individuals go who've been providing services to Manitobans for an extended period of time, working every day to ensure that the health of our northern brothers and sisters is well taken care of.

They also cut subsidies to the northern patient transport program. Again, more cuts to the health services for our families in the North, and they reduced bus transportation.

So, again, we know—we want to talk about improving the health-care system across Manitoba. That's not of much use if people can't even get to their appointments, and that is certainly not being assisted through the kinds of cuts that we've seen from this government to date.

You know, speaking about cuts, I think it's important we turn our attention to the cuts that we've seen in Crown Services. We know that Crown corporations are being ordered to make cuts across all staffing levels—managerial and non-managerial, and we don't think that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) realizes that there are real people losing their jobs when he makes these kinds of choices.

I also don't think that this Premier recognizes the potential impact of these cuts on some of the broader abilities of our Crown corps to provide important services, if I think about the giant storm that occurred in October here in Manitoba. We know that Manitoba Hydro faced 900 job cuts, many of which were line workers, were hard-working Manitobans that ensure that in emergency situations, that we have the privilege of ensuring that we have that confidence that that power is going to be turned back on.

And I have serious questions and I think many Manitobans have serious questions about whether or not those 900 cuts, many of which were line workers where the people who can respond to emergency situations in our province, whether or not those cuts had an impact in delaying the restoration of power to many of our Manitoban communities.

I want to be clear. I know that those Manitoba Hydro workers that did perform that work over an extended period of time were, often cases, resorting to heroics and were performing at a level that many of us in this Chamber can only imagine, and working

around the clock to ensure that we had that power restored.

But what were the impacts of those cuts? What was the real impact of our Crown jewel having 900 fewer employees who were in a position to respond to that emergency? Did that result in some of our smaller communities up north facing a delay in getting access to power for a day, an extra day?

That, from my perspective, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is completely unacceptable and is another example of the kinds of concerning impacts that we can see when we make reckless cuts across Crown corporations here in Manitoba.

If I turn my gaze over to the cuts we've seen, again, over at Liquor & Lotteries, same request: 15 per cent cuts across the board. In a context where we've got a Crown corporation that's been asked to make such drastic cuts, such heavy cuts to their employee base, how can we expect that executive, operating within that kind of environment, will feel supported to make the kinds of significant investments required to respond to the scourge of theft and violence that we've seen in our communities and theft that we've seen in our liquor stores?

I would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it's very likely that the executive working at Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries had a lot of skepticism and concern about the receptiveness of this government and, specifically, our Premier (Mr. Pallister), to the potential for increasing their operational costs at such a significant level within that kind of a context. When we're forcing our Crown corps to go that deep in cutting to the bone and removing FTEs to that degree, I think there is reason to be concerned about their ability to respond operationally to those kinds of issues, especially those that we've seen recently in our liquor stores.

We know that when our Crown—even when our Crown corporations meet their target reductions, they're still being encouraged to look for more opportunities to make cuts, and we've clearly seen a problem of information dissemination in training when it comes to educating staff on how they can protect themselves when dealing with thefts that have become a daily incurrence.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask, what are the impacts of those cuts, and how is that impacting the ability of our Crown corporations to respond to the kinds of challenges that we've seen as of late?

I want to turn my attention to cuts to education, and we're seeing that this government is frustrating workers and frustrating Manitoba teachers by not showing respect for what they need in order to have success in the classroom. The Premier has increased the workload for Manitoba educators by eliminating legislation that restricted K-3 classroom sizes to 20 students, making classroom management nearly impossible and disproportionately affecting students with learning disabilities.

Again, this is a change to legislation that was massively concerning to constituents in St. James. And I know, myself as a father to two little girls, one of whom is currently in grade 1, I've had the opportunity to engage with teachers in her school; I've had the opportunity to engage with leadership in that school and to understand their concerns, the lack of consultation that went into this and the realities of the impacts of those changes.

I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the vast majority of our teachers—at least I have not met a single teacher who was in support of that particular change, and so that is a huge concern to the quality of our education in the province, to the impact on numeracy and literacy abilities of our children, especially in light of the—of today's release with the PISA numbers that reflect on the lack of success that we've seen from this government in turning around some of those numbers.

Now is certainly not the time that we need to be pursuing further cuts in the classroom and creating greater challenges for our educators who are already working not only as teachers but they're working as social workers; they're working as, sometimes, health-care providers; they're working as connectors to community programs. We do not need to be piling on more work to these individuals who are already giving their all to ensure that our kids have what they need to be successful here in this province.

\* (16:30)

We know that this Premier's also added more barriers to Manitobans who are simply trying to get a post-secondary education and join the workforce by eliminating the tuition fee income tax rebate and the advance tuition fee income tax rebate as well; cutting funding to post-secondary institutions; cutting access to programs that make post-secondary education more viable for indigenous and northern students.

This government has conflated post-secondary education with economic development and training,

proving that they are only interested in turning Manitoban workers into cogs to a machine to boost the bottom line. Bill 9, and bill 28 that it seeks to slightly amend—likely in response to the fact that it's unconstitutional and is concerning in many ways.

This government is also—sorry, this government is also undermining professors at Manitoba universities, promising to send out mandate letters to post-secondary institutions outlining expected student outcomes and financial accountability.

This is not—the government has meddled with the responsibilities and compensation of professors. By interfering in the collective bargaining at the University of Manitoba back in 2016, the government helped precipitate a strike that cost Manitoban students weeks of schooling.

I know, actually, personally, many students who were impacted by that. The amount of stress that was created, the amount of hardship, the amount of worry that was created for Manitoban students, frankly, Mr. Speaker—or Mr. Deputy Speaker, was unacceptable.

So we know that this government is—seems to be interested in one thing and one thing alone, and that is cuts to the services that Manitobans depend on. And on this side of the House, we are with Manitoban workers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We recognize the important role of labour and unions, and the rights of Manitoban workers to bargain in good faith.

And this government has demonstrated, time and time again, that it is not on the side of Manitoban workers or Manitoban families, and that they're completely out of reach with regular people on this province, and that's proven in the content of Bill 9 and bill 28.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this legislation seems sort of familiar, it's because we've seen anti-worker legislation from this Premier (Mr. Pallister) before. In the '90s, when the Premier was a Cabinet minister, they imposed mandatory reduced work weeks, impacting civil servants' income and pension.

So again, here we are in a bit of a spin cycle and a repeat of things that we've seen in the past from this party and members of this party when they were participants in that Filmon government.

So, in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's important that, at the end of the day, we recognize that Bill 9, in seeking to make small modifications to an amendment to bill 28, does not, in any way

substantially alter the core concerns that we have with the substance of these bills, of that bill 28, and that is that fundamentally, we are taking away the collective bargaining rights of 120,000 Manitoban workers.

And we, on this side of the House, will continue to fight for Manitoban workers. We'll continue to stand alongside Manitoban workers, stand alongside Manitoban families, and we will fight this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I'd like to thank all my colleagues on this side of the House for all the work that you do and that you will continue to do in opposition to this unfair bill.

So thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** I would start saying that MLAs are not to be laughed at. They are, rather, to be respected.

We, in this House, represent hundreds of thousands of Manitobans. Laughing at each other means laughing at Manitobans, so we need to learn to respect each other and we need to learn to respect Manitobans who voted us to be here to represent them.

When we talk about sustainability, not everyone understands it in a similar manner or to the same extent. Sustainability is important in every aspect, in every department, in every walk of life. But we need to understand whether we are really understanding the concept of sustainability in a desired manner. We need to understand whether we are misunderstanding what sustainability means.

Being in agriculture for so many years, I understand that we need to follow the food production practices which are sustainable. What that means is we have to use our natural resources judiciously so that while producing food, while cultivating land, while raising crops, we are not headed to a direction where the whole system collapses and we are no more able to produce food.

It's nice to be aware well in time that what we do today, the practices we follow today, the decisions we make today, what impact would they have on us and our generations to come. When we talk about sustainability of businesses, that means we should not be going into negative to the date when your system, your organization, your department, your system, your department, whatever you're working in, or your school or your university, it collapses. We are sustaining things at some cost.

If we talk about public service sustainability, well, we can cut budgets, but to what extent? We need



to think what impact that cut or that decision would be on the people who are concerned. We need to understand that is it too expensive to follow the policies that we are following today? We need to understand how much a happiness of a family means. We need to understand how much impact the wage freeze has on the kids who belong to those families of 120,000 workers who are directly impacted, not to talk about the people, Manitobans, who are indirectly impacted. We need to understand this.

\* (16:40)

It's not just about saving money; it's about prosperity; it's about happiness; it's about the future of kids who depend upon those public servants. We cannot simply, as government, dictate them that how much they should be earning. We need to take into consideration what their needs are, what their priorities are.

We need to understand that the decisions we as a government make or take today, it's going to impact the future, the careers, the choices, those kids, those future generations are going to face.

Talking about a friend who comes to me saying: I handled my boy well today. I was like, how? He was insisting for dinner, dining out. He was hungry. You know what he said? The smart dad, he said, I would buy you candies. The kid was still insisting and angry with the dad that, no, I am hungry, I want to go out for dinner.

And then, the dad negotiates. He goes: how about three Bear Paws? The kid was convinced. But still, he didn't eat to the appetite. When I asked the smart dad, why did he do so? He said, the dinner costed 28 bucks, the candies two bucks, and the Bear Paws nine bucks. That's how he played with the kid. He was a kid. He was convinced.

But the Manitobans, they're not kids. They're grown-ups. They know what these negotiations and amendments mean to them. It's not that we develop policies which are against Manitobans and when they're against—they raise their voice against these policies, and then we go to them—go back to them again saying, okay, we'll make these little bit changes. This is how the things are working under this government.

It feels like it's authoritarian. It feels like they are telling the public servants how much they should earn. It's like telling them that we are the government and we can make decisions that suit us. Well, they have trusted us. They have sent us to this Legislature; not

for the purpose that we can make any decisions that suit us. We should take into consideration what is good for them who sent us here. We need to empathize.

There are people in this province who I call—they are still living in their Honda Civic stage. They are living paycheque to paycheque. It's unlike the other people who can afford to be in Costa Rica or Florida for their vacation and when there are economical hardships, what they can do is, they can cut on their flying expenses, on their hotel expenses.

But I'm talking about Manitobans who are being impacted by such policies and they have to cut on their food expenses. We need to understand this. It's not that simple. Downsizing a car and being able to afford three meals a day is okay, but it's not okay to cut a meal a day to make both ends meet.

We are opposed to this bill, which is an amendment to the bill that is already being challenged in the court. And we are still waiting for the decision. And this is not the right time when we are making amendments.

What's the purpose? Just to distract the people who are concerned? Just to distract or please, temporarily, the people who are being impacted?

In my experience working in this environment, in the recent past, I have seen this government following the same path in many decisions, many policies. I've been speaking for the beef producers here in this Chamber. When we talk about changes to Crown land leasing regulations, this government made changes and there was a huge opposition to those changes.

The producers got together in hundreds and they raised their voice against the decisions. And as—the government says that they consulted. If they consulted, why was there so much opposition to that decision? If they consulted, why not even a single person in a hall full of more than 250 people said that yes; I was consulted.

I'm still not sure who this government consulted in that case. Everyone—100 per cent of the people in that hall in Ste. Rose, they were against these changes. Well, where was the consultation done? Why are people not happy? Why the small farmers are not happy about those decisions? Because this is authoritarian. The decisions are being taken on the basis of what the members on the other side like to do, not based upon what the Manitobans deserve. What are their needs?

For example, changing the eligibility criteria, which was like this in the earlier regulations, that you have to be actively farming and engaged in most of the labour at the farm. You got to get scores for that—for that experience. But now, the eligibility criteria has you could be permanent resident or a citizen and you can bid for the land.

Well, what does that mean? It's open to anyone, and those small producers who are living hand-to-mouth for years and they love that land and they're building communities, raising their cattle on that piece of land. They're not happy about it.

And what the government did? Seeing that people are opposing the decisions, then they would try to amend the policies themselves in a few weeks, and the policies that this government thought was okay four weeks back.

\*(16:50)

What happened to the policy? What did change? Opposition: people were reacting to it. Why people were reacting to it? Because the policy was not in their favour; was not in the favour of the majority, was not in the favour of Manitobans. Same way, Bill 28 is being challenged in court and now the government is trying to put forward amendment 1, amendment 2, Bill 2, Bill 9 to please people.

I want to remind this government that public servants and Manitobans who are being impacted by these decisions, they are not kids. They are grown-ups. They know the difference between a full dinner, candies and the Bear Paw. Let's not confuse the people who trusted you. Let's think about those who cannot afford a house in Costa Rica. Let's think about people who cannot buy a cottage in Florida. Let's talk and think about people who are looking forward to their kids to be someone.

And to support your kids, you have to have money. And they are cutting costs on their own priorities. They want to wear well, they want to visit, they want to travel, they want to eat. They are cutting their own expenses and spending on their kids because they want them to be someone. How would they be someone? They need to go to schools, they need to go to colleges, they need to go to universities. And we need money to pay their dues, to pay their fee.

And the tuition is not affordable anymore. Bursaries are gone. How would a common man, a public servant with their wages being freezed, be able to fund their kids' education? It has huge impacts. We need to understand this. This could be the reason

behind a huge divide between rich and poor. If this bill impacts 120,000 public servants, that means their kids, due to lack of money or opportunities or lack of happiness in the family, won't be able to grab the opportunities to get the higher education that takes them to the level, to the goals, to the vision, to wherever they wanted to be.

When you go to the doors before the election in 2016 and you're promising people that, we will strengthen front-line services in Health and other departments, and then you break those promises, should the people keep trusting you as before? That's the biggest question.

While working in Agriculture Department—called Manitoba Agriculture at that time—I have seen cuts, not to the management positions, but to the front-line positions. This was the state of affairs under this government that at times there were not even a single person at the reception in many of the Ag offices in this province—I think there are 31 Ag offices in this province—not even a single person to listen to the walk-in producers. And you know what the government proposed? Make appointments. Lock the door and put a piece of paper that says: No in-person client service is available today.

These policies, these decisions, they have impact on the people concerned. It could be as simple as bringing a diseased plant and getting it diagnosed right there at the reception. Impact, what's the impact? Where would that client go? They have to turn their cars towards private organizations.

Public service means we provide service to the public free of cost. The government employees go to the fields, scout them, talk to the producers and suggest them solutions. What if we keep on developing policies that starts from downsizing the department and killing them at the end? Imagine what would happen. How would this province look like? You'll have to pay for everything.

Once again, the people who can afford to fly to Costa Rica, the people who can afford to fly to California, they can cut their flying expenses, but how about the producers who are living on a 50-cow, 50-cattle farm, small farms? What would happen to those people if we keep cutting budgets under the name of sustainability?

Well, if I want to sustain my family—it's like a family; this province is like a family, and we have a head here. Well, the head stands up and says, hey, stop eating; you save money. What does that mean? Well,

that's sustainable. We can not eat for three days and still live, but it has impact on our health. It has impact on our families. It has impact on our kids' futures. It hurts.

Think of a kid who is being denied to buy a toy because of this wage freeze, and he is upset. Tell me the number of dollars to make him happy. That's a damage. That's a damage done to that little one because of these policies.

And you know what their fault is? Their fault is because they were born in a family, which is a

common family. Their mom and dad, they're common people. They're middle class, they're poor.

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have four minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 3, 2019

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Manitoba Schools	
		Kinew	334
		Pallister	335
Bill 15—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act		K-to-12 Education Review	
Wharton	329	Altomare	336
		Goertzen	336
Bill 13—The Crown Land Dispositions Act (Various Acts Amended)		Teaching Experience of Principals	
Helwer	329	Naylor	337
		Goertzen	337
Bill 20—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act		Liquor Mart Robbery Prevention	
Schuler	329	B. Smith	338
		Cullen	338
Bill 204—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Teaching Experience of Principals)		Civil Service Act	
Wasyliw	330	Lindsey	339
		Helwer	339
<b>Committee Reports</b>		Federal Health Transfers	
Standing Committee on Human Resources		Lamont	340
First Report		Pallister	340
Morley-Lecomte	330	Lake St. Martin Outlet	
		Lamont	340
		Pallister	340
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>		National Pharmacare Program	
Cullen	330	Lamoureux	341
		Pallister	341
<b>Members' Statements</b>		Keystone Centre	
Woodhaven Community Club		Isleifson	341
Fielding	331	Squires	341
NorWest on Alexander Resource Centre		Lake Manitoba Outlet	
Marcelino	331	Bushie	341
Meaning of Christmas		Schuler	341
Micklefield	332	Pallister	342
List of Rights		<b>Petitions</b>	
Lamont	332	Personal-Care Homes	
Council of School Leaders		Gerrard	342
Altomare	332	Early Learning and Child-Care Programs	
<b>Oral Questions</b>		Adams	343
Education Funding		Crown Land Leases	
Kinew	333	Brar	344
Pallister	333		

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Second Readings**

Bill 9—The Public Services Sustainability  
Amendment Act

Helwer 344

Questions

Lindsey 345

Helwer 345

Gerrard 346

Lamoureux 347

Debate

Asagwara 348

Bushie 353

Lamoureux 360

Sala 361

Brar 366

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

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