

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

Vol. LXX No. 10 - 10 a.m., Friday, December 2, 2016

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, December 2, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 7—The New West Partnership
Trade Agreement Implementation Act
(Various Acts Amended)**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Good morning. I move, seconded by the member from Swan River, that Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act, be now read for a first time.

Madam Speaker: It is been moved by the honourable Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, seconded by the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), that Bill 7, The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

Mr. Cullen: The New West Partnership is a trade agreement between British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. This bill amends three acts so that Manitoba can join the agreement as well as participate in other future domestic trade agreements. This bill will allow more opportunities for hard-working Manitobans.

Thank you very much.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to table the regulations registered under The Statutes and Regulations Act after Manitoba regulation 83, 2016; the Annual Report of the Public Guardian and Trustee of Manitoba; and the Annual Report of the Vital Statistics Agency.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: We have three ministerial statements today, and I would like to indicate that the required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings, as is asked for in accordance with rule 26(2), they were all given the 90-minute rule.

So would the first minister for a ministerial statement please proceed.

**National Day of Remembrance and Action on
Violence Against Women**

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I rise today because Tuesday, December 6th will mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada.

This day was established by the Parliament of Canada in 1991 to honour the lives of 14 women murdered at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989.

The Montreal massacre, as it came to be known, was a watershed moment. It was clearly an antifeminist attack, and it sparked a new dialogue within and beyond the women's equality seeking public.

Society as a whole asked how such an atrocity could take place. What actions could we take individually and collectively to ensure that it never happened again? Yet here we are, 27 years later, and we continue in our struggle to end gender-based violence.

As difficult as it is to think about that tragic day, we need to pause and pay tribute to the women who died that day, as well as the many women who continue to lose their lives to gender-based violence.

Last week, Statistics Canada released its homicide data and, in 2015, another 175 women and girls were murdered in Canada.

Additionally, five women's lives tragically ended in homicide in Manitoba in 2016, and we might learn of more that have not yet been reported in the media due to ongoing investigations.

In addition to honouring the lives lost, we must acknowledge the suffering of countless women and girls who continue to face abuse in their daily realities. We must recognize the toll gender-based violence is taking on all of us, women, men, children, neighbourhoods, communities and workplaces. Society as a whole is negatively impacted by gender-based violence.

December 6 also calls for action. Even the smallest actions at the individual level can bring meaningful change. We can speak out when we see acts of violence or harassment of any kind. We can teach our children to be kind and compassionate. We can help our youth understand what healthy relationships look like, and how to reach out for help when they need it. We can support the individuals and organizations working to promote women's equality, and address gender-based violence.

Many organizations will be holding memorial services and vigils throughout the province on December 6th. On Tuesday morning I will be attending the sunrise memorial in the Rotunda of the Legislative Building. We will honour the memory of the 14 young women killed in the Montreal massacre in 1989, and the women in Manitoba who died of acts of violence in 2016.

I invite everyone in this House to attend and to reflect on ways that we can make—we can take concrete actions to address this serious local, national and global human rights issue.

Madam Speaker, I would ask that, following the statements by my colleagues that we observe a moment of silence to mourn the women that we have lost. Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Over the past month, we've all witnessed the various actions taken across Manitoba by community who are dedicated to raising awareness about violence against women and girls.

We all have a sacred responsibility to speak in support of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Every

December 6 we remember the 14 young women who died in the Montreal massacre at l'École Polytechnique 27 years ago. On that tragic day, 14 female students were singled out from their male peers and murdered. These women lost their lives for no other reason than that they were women.

These misogynistic attacks illustrated the clear polarization between how men and women are viewed and treated in this country. December 6, 1989, was a day that demonstrated the ingrained social misogyny that is still perpetrated in our culture along with the toleration of antifeminist values. Twenty-seven years later we are still finding ourselves in a world where violence is a daily reality for women and girls.

We live in a country where there is an epidemic of violence against indigenous women and girls with over 1,200 who are missing or murdered. As I have stressed, and my colleague has stressed across the way, we have a responsibility, as legislators, to protect women and girls against violence. We have seen many events for people to take part in to make a difference during these 16 days of action against gender violence, and we will continue to do so over the next eight days, and really for the rest of the year and every day.

* (10:10)

On Sunday, December 4th, we will join together for a sunrise memorial at the Legislative Building to honour women and girls who have lost their lives to violence.

I encourage all members of the House to attend to show support in the fight against violence and to protect women and girls in Manitoba and across Canada.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak to the ministerial statement?

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

Ms. Klassen: Today is national day of remembrance and action in—on violence against women. Today we remember the 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique in Montreal, whose lives were taken simply because they were women. Today we remember all 'vicstims' of gender violence.

Today is also about action; preventing violence against women is all our shared responsibility. We

have the power in this House to make positive changes. We have to challenge attitudes, behaviours and sexism that lead to violence against women and girls.

Violence is a daily reality for many women here in Manitoba. In thinking about our murdered and missing indigenous women, we know it's an atrocity, and I ask the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) to document her knowledge in this respect so that—and if she could please table it so that we all know how to help our own constituents in this respect.

We all share the responsibility to end the violence by taking a stand and saying, no more; this is not acceptable and we will not stand by and be silent. Today we remember our women.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

We will now rise for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed.

Fight against Opiates—Update

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): In keeping with the commitment made following the opiate summit in Ottawa, I'd like to provide an update to this House regarding the fight against the illegal use of opiates, including fentanyl and carfentanil.

On November 25th, our government launched a public awareness campaign about the dangers of fentanyl and fentanyl-laced drugs. The campaign was launched at a Winnipeg school, Shaftesbury High School, and a rural school, Steinbach Regional Secondary School.

As of Wednesday of this week, 1,500 information boards related to this campaign have been distributed to regional health authorities, schools and other community organizations in Manitoba. The social-media campaign associated with the campaign has currently received more than 60,000 views. In addition, it has committed to—the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba has made several public presentations in recent weeks on the danger posed by opiates. This includes a recent fentanyl training day, where 450 school counsellors and police officers received training about the dangers of fentanyl.

Part of the overall effort involves harmed reduction and the availability of naloxone. Different points of naloxone availability exist, including

through street connections in Winnipeg. As of Wednesday of this week, 191 kits have been distributed at Street Connections, with 22 being used to successfully reverse an overdose.

In addition, 500 more kits of naloxone have been ordered and will be received by mid-December, with an additional 500 to be received in January. More than 20 sites have been identified as naloxone distribution centres throughout Manitoba for these kits. Training is under way currently so that proper information can be provided at these sites. However, Madam Speaker, we again emphasize that naloxone is not a safety net for fentanyl use. It may mitigate, but can never eliminate, the deadly risk of fentanyl use.

In addition, late last week the Government of Canada signed an MOU with China to allow the RCMP to work with China to try to stem the tide of illicit fentanyl coming into Canada. And I was pleased to hear this morning that the RCMP in British Columbia had a record seizure of fentanyl coming in from China, and we look forward to more co-operation and the reduction of opiates and fentanyl coming in from China.

This is one of the actions that Manitoba called for at the opiate summit, and we continue to call for a national ban on pill presses and increased ability for Canada Border Services Agency to detect the importation of fentanyl.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of overdoses, last year, 151 individuals in Manitoba died from a drug overdose. These deaths were caused by several different drugs. I'm advised by the Chief Medical Examiner and the chief medical officer of health that, based on the results of the first five months of 2016, that the number of fatalities due to drug overdoses this year could be expected to be in the range of 165 to 170, or approximately a 9 per cent increase. A greater proportion of those overdose deaths is expected to be from fentanyl this year than in past years.

Both the CME and the CMO of health indicate that these are only estimates based on the most recent data available, but we felt it was important to provide it to the House.

Madam Speaker, while I provided a variety of data and statistics for the benefit of this House and Manitobans, we must always remember that behind each of these numbers is someone's son, daughter,

mother or father. Addiction is not a series of numbers; it is a series of individual lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this House this update, and I'd like to encourage each of us, as we enter the break, the recess, to do our part to spread the word about the dangers of fentanyl and all drugs in the communities that we represent.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): By now, we are all well aware of the dangers of fentanyl, the potent and very lethal drug that has made its way onto Manitoba streets. As the statistics pile up, it bears out the anecdotal evidence that we've been hearing from families, front-line workers and first responders. But knowing the problem isn't enough. More must be done to get this drug off our streets and give supports to users. This is a true public health emergency, and the government should acknowledge it as such.

There are small changes that can lead to big differences when it comes to the fight against fentanyl. I was honoured to introduce a bill in this House that calls on the government to restrict the sale of pill presses now to those not covered under The Pharmaceutical Act. Easy access to pill presses are allowing underground drug labs to easily distribute unknown quantities of fentanyl in pill form as well as mix it into other illicit drugs. This facilitates the distribution of fentanyl and increases overdose risk of drug users who may not know that their drugs are laced.

Regulating the sale of pill presses would make it harder to mix fentanyl with other drugs. This bill remains before the Legislature, and we seek bipartisan support to move this forward as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker, fighting the opioid crisis needs to be an immediate priority for this government. It needs to develop a comprehensive, made-in-Manitoba solution. We can't stand by and watch as we lose more of our neighbours, our friends and our loved ones to fentanyl overdoses. We need the government to act now and take steps to protect our communities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to speak to the minister's statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, we have seen a frightening increase in a very short time of the deaths in which fentanyl has been a factor. I've met with mothers of children who've died from overdoses. It is heartbreaking. There is little in the world like losing a child, and losing a child to an overdose of fentanyl is surely one of the most difficult situations a patient, a person, can ever experience.

We are in a crisis and we need to do more. The government needs to expand the awareness campaign and to move beyond it with quick and emergency measures to ensure those who need help with their addictions can get it easily and quickly.

It is alarming to hear that one son was told his only option was to go back out on the street to obtain drugs in an illegal and dangerous manner while he waited for help. Not good enough.

We saw a cry for help published recently that, and I quote: There needs to be way more done, like, way more done. They need to get people into treatment. People shouldn't have to wait months and months for treatment, because by the time you get in, you'll be dead. It was a cry for help and it needs to be heeded.

I salute the government on its awareness campaign. It's a positive step. But, as I have mentioned, and we mentioned in the Liberal report on brain health, those with addictions need to get help immediately when they need it and not months later.

* (10:20)

We also need to know, as an example, how the government will manage fentanyl when it reaches remote communities. What are the plans for help and treatment in those communities? How many lives will be lost before such a plan is in place?

There are good options for acting now to ensure quick access to help and treatment when needed. This government needs to act quickly and without delay. And all of us as MLAs need to do our part in spreading the word in the understanding and pushing for increased action at this time of crisis.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Ministerial statements, the honourable First Minister.

Jim Eldridge

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, the Order of the Buffalo Hunt was established by

order-in-council in 1957 and it was originally conferred on people who, though not necessarily residing in Manitoba, were known to be kindly disposed towards Manitoba; its first recipient was Queen Elizabeth II.

At the time, the Order of the Buffalo Hunt was the highest honour the Province could bestow on individuals who demonstrated outstanding skills in the areas of leadership, service and community commitment.

In 1999, when the Order of Manitoba was established, the Order of the Buffalo Hunt was reconfigured as a symbol of provincial recognition for demonstrating outstanding skills in the areas of leadership, service and community commitment.

And, Madam Speaker, a man of great character and ability, a man who has served our province for almost five decades, will be inducted into the Order of the Buffalo Hunt later today: Mr. Jim Eldridge.

Jim Eldridge joined Manitoba Finance as an economic research analyst in federal-provincial relations in our centennial year, Madam Speaker. And he became director of the division just three years later. He was appointed assistant deputy minister for fiscal and economic policy and federal-provincial relations in 1973. And he joined the Executive Council in 1982. He rose to deputy minister in 1986. He was appointed Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet secretary in 1999, while also retaining the role of deputy minister of intergovernmental relations.

He retired in 2004, Madam Speaker, but it didn't work out well for him, and he continued to serve as an advisor to the government on intergovernmental relations. In 2009, he returned to become the interim deputy minister of federal-provincial and international relations, a position he held until this year.

Mr. Eldridge will formally retire at the end of this month. Jim's expertise and ability in economics and policy formation and, in particular, his talent for intergovernmental affairs—and I must reference, Madam Speaker, being a new Premier and in my first week in the job, going to the western Canadian premiers' meetings and not having Jim there would have been a serious, serious challenge for that rookie Premier.

He has been characterized quite accurately by his peers as visionary. Throughout his career, he has been an important and effective advocate for provincial rights. He was one of the drafters of the

provisions of The Constitution Act of 1982 that codifies the principles of equalization between Canadian provinces.

Jim was also instrumental in establishing the Western Premiers' Conference and in establishing formal ties between the western premiers and the Western Governors' Association. He was also directly involved in bilateral relations with numerous subnational governments in the United States, in South Africa's North West province and elsewhere.

He served on many boards of directors, including the Queen's Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, the Order of Manitoba Advisory Council, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Partners in the Park.

He is a director emeritus of the Canada West Foundation. And, in 2005, Jim was awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Medal for Excellence in Public Administration in Manitoba, as well as an honorary doctorate from the University of Winnipeg.

He's also been honoured by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters for advancing business-government relations in Canada.

As I said earlier, Madam Speaker, the Order of the Buffalo Hunt recognizes those who have demonstrated outstanding skills in the areas of leadership, service and community commitment. Jim Eldridge has demonstrated each of those skills. He has served Manitoba with great distinction. And he has earned the well-deserved gratitude of all Manitobans.

For these reasons, Madam Speaker, I, along with all honourable members of this Assembly, join all Manitobans today in congratulating Jim and thanking him on his induction into the Order of the Buffalo Hunt.

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): I want to thank the Premier for taking the initiative to induct Mr. Eldridge into the Order of the Buffalo Hunt. The Premier has mentioned the many other honours that he has received and the roles that he has played over his almost five decades, over 40 years of service to the public, so I'll just add a few personal reflections to his service to the Province.

I met him in the 1970s. He was a young civil servant. I was working in the inner city. There were issues of how to make transfer payments to make sure that low-income people had access to tax credits, property tax credits and other benefits which

would improve their income. We had a close working relationship through the organization I was working with on credit unions and income tax services with the Department of Finance to make sure that tax discounters did not take advantage of people and bleed the money out of the inner city. So he played an instrumental role there.

Many years later, I had the opportunity to work with him in the Department of Finance where he was an expert on fiscal relations, particularly the role of equalization and transfer payments for health care, education, social services, matters which remain deeply important to all members of any government in Manitoba. And then he also played a very significant role in building relationships between Manitoba not only in the western provinces but the eastern provinces and, in particular, Quebec and Ontario, as well as the Atlantic provinces in how Manitoba could always play a role in bringing the country together around key issues, whether it was constitutional issues such as Meech Lake or the Charlottetown Accord, whether it was bringing the Constitution home from England to make sure that Canada had its own proper governing instruments and its own Charter, whether it was issues of international relations of the relationship of South Africa, for example. For many years, the Department of Finance sponsored interns from the northern province–northwestern province of Africa to ensure that people in the public service, no matter where they served in the world, were properly equipped to do a job of advising the—their elected officials on appropriate policy instruments to achieve the kinds of equity that a country, every country, needs to ensure their citizens are treated fairly not only in the receipt of concrete material benefits but also services as well.

And, recently, he has played a role not only in our government but in the current government on major issues of reconciliation, major issues of climate change, major issues of how we continue to move the federation forward, even during challenging times of recession and recovery.

So Mr. Eldridge has, I think, started even in the latter days of Duff Roblin and served every premier in one way, shape or form or another. I know I personally benefited from his advice, and I think Manitoba has been able to make a major contribution to the federation, in no small part due to the advice that all premiers have received from Mr. Eldridge. So we should honour him today.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask leave to speak to the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) statement.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, it is fitting that Jim Eldridge should be receiving the Order of the Buffalo Hunt today. He's certainly one of the most remarkable civil servants that we've had in this province for the last many years.

I got to know Jim when he was Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet secretary, starting in 1999, and he played an important role in quite a number of areas in which I was involved. He certainly had an extensive knowledge of federal-provincial relationships. He got things done smoothly, calmly, effectively and with a poise and a presence and an ability that made all who were involved feel that they were contributing to what was happening, and he got things done.

* (10:30)

I remember a couple of incidents. I think it was the one-year anniversary of the September 11th situation with the towers being bombed in New York City, and we were going down to the Peace Gardens, and there were several of us, including the premier, Gary Doer at the time, and Jim Eldridge, and the day was a foggy day and we were not able to land where we were supposed to land, and so we had to land further away. We were—it was organized. Jim got things done, that we were met by a van and a driver who drove us very rapidly over the back roads of southwestern Saskatchewan and we got there just a little bit late, but it was Jim getting things done.

I remember another occasion that I think it was Saskatoon. We were—it was an all-party task force. It was the three leaders: it was Gary Doer and myself and I think it was probably Stuart Murray, and we were in—I believe it was Saskatoon. And Jim had an understanding of how effective it can be if you take three party leaders, all with one point of view on the subject that you're talking about, and go to a meeting with people in other provinces, and it is not just the premier talking; it becomes all Manitobans talking. And Gary Doer understood this as well, but Jim was very good at doing this and organizing such meetings and he understood and mentioned this specifically at the close of the meeting, how good it had been and how effective it had been, having people from coming from three different perspectives in one

province, all contributing very strongly to make an important point that we were making at that meeting.

And so I want to thank Jim Eldridge for his tremendous work over so many years and for his contributions to us here in this Chamber, to all Manitobans and, indeed, to keeping our Canadian federation strong.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Miigwech.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Bruce the Mosasaur

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, today I rise to once again recognize Manitoba's most famous fossil, Bruce the Mosasaur, Manitoba's eighth official provincial emblem.

In 1974, Bruce, this outstanding marine fossil specimen was discovered in a farmer's field in north—in Thornhill, just west of Morden. It was known as the T. Rex of the sea, living in the ancient Western Interior Seaway in what was the Cretaceous Period. Exhibited in Morden, at 43 feet long he is, indeed, a sight to see.

Bruce has been recognized by the Guinness World Book, featured on a Canada Post stamp in 2015, imprinted on a Canadian coin in 2013 and, spoiler alert, featured in the most recent Jurassic World movie where, in the final epic scene, he saves the day.

In 2015, I was proud to sponsor my private member's bill, Bill 200, to recognize the mosasaur, *Tylosaurus peminensis*, as Manitoba's official marine reptile fossil emblem. With that new status came the design work that led to the artwork, that gives a skin-on artist rendering of a mosasaur, based on the most current scientific research. And we thank Sports, Culture and Heritage's communication services for their excellent work in rendering this design.

On August 27th of this year, a ceremony in Morden, attended by the Lieutenant Governor and the Minister responsible for Sport, Culture and Heritage unveiled the new provincial emblem and this artwork and I'm pleased to provide to all members of the Assembly, to the Clerk and her staff, of course to you, Madam Speaker, to Chamber staff and the pages, a copy of that lapel pin, from—a gift from us to you, I—and, Madam Speaker, our government has committed to doubling the investment in tourism, and the CFDC is an excellent

example of a unique feature that we will continue to highlight and promote as we grow our economy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Munroe Early Childhood Education Centre

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): The Munroe Early Childhood Education Centre has been a fixture in my constituency of Elmwood for over 40 years. It provides inviting, stimulating and flexible child care for the community. Today, the centre teaches over 250 pre-school and school-age children. Its pre-school program has been located in Elmwood High School for 25 years, having moved from its original location in a local church basement. Many early learning and childhood programs began this way.

The school-age program operates out of four Elmwood-area schools: George V, Kent Road School, Polson School, and Elmwood High School. When parents drop off their kids off at school or daycare, they want to feel secure knowing that they're leaving their children in good hands. Munroe Early Childhood Education Centre has a team of dedicated staff who work to make sure the students are provided with a safe and respectful environment where they're free to express themselves. The centre's board and staff have worked tirelessly to create innovative and stimulating programs and a nurturing environment for the children.

We have Silvana Passante Cantafio, Karen Caumartin [*phonetic*], Melanie Fraser, Mendy Wolchock, Rita Bell, Elena Landau, Carol Gossel, Gilles Gareau [*phonetic*], and Amanda Saunders, who are all staff and board members of the centre with us here in the galleries today.

Please join me in recognizing Munroe Early Childhood Education Centre for their important contribution to our community, and in thanking the staff for their invaluable work.

Treatment of Children in the Justice System

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Colleagues, respect is owed to all who work with us in this Chamber. I appreciate the work they do, and I will do my best to abide by their request not to knock on my desk.

Children have come forward and trusted in the Children's Advocate. They have shared their disturbing story of being pepper-sprayed, restrained and kept in isolation. We cannot afford to breach that

trust. I cannot stress that enough. We must do everything we can to support those children.

In our homes, when our own children act up, whether they're in their terrible twos or facing those tender teenage and young adult years, we realize their actions stem from something. They know, in the end, we are going to comfort them, not pepper-spray them. These kids in the justice system are caught in a system that does not support them, does not love them. They have been dealt a bad hand since their beginning. Believe me, I would be angry too. I would act out too. I wonder how people who could pepper-spray a child are able to sleep at night.

Members across the way, as the new government, know that these children matter. As the former opposition and critics, how this situation continues is incomprehensible. This new government needs to send in support teams and crisis stabilization workers to help support these children, to listen to them without fear of judgment. We do not have bad children; we have bad systems that need to be urgently addressed and corrected. Before we go off and celebrate Christmas, as government, we must ensure everyone, especially our youth, have a safe, pepper spray-free Christmas.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Annual Toy Tea

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the Legislature today to invite all members of the House to the Jubilee Mennonite Church annual toy tea, taking place this Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4.

Jubilee church is located at 365 Edelweiss Crescent in the constituency of River East. While Jubilee is small in scale, hosting a congregation of only 100 members, the benefit it provides to our North Kildonan community is enormous.

I sincerely hope you will all join me and my two young granddaughters at this year's tenth annual toy tea, which offers guests of all ages an enchanting afternoon of assorted teas, dainties, music and friendship, all in exchange for a donation of a new, unwrapped toy. This event has become an annual tradition for our family, and you, too, can brighten a child's Christmas by donating a toy to Jubilee's toy tea.

* (10:40)

For many years, under the direction of Community Minister Anna Marie Geddert, Jubilee

church has been providing important outreach programs to its many neighbouring families. Knowing the importance of healthy families, Anna Marie's compassion is evident in her actions each and every day. She has worked relentlessly and tirelessly to ensure children and youth get off to the best start in life, offering programs such as the J Club, a drop-in centre that provides children a safe, fun and caring environment that meets the needs of the whole child.

I have personally witnessed Anna Marie's enthusiasm when she talks about the successful programs now offered at Jubilee such as the Community Kitchen, Come Grow With Us community garden, the care group, the bicycle repair shop or the annual block party, to name just a few.

Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the members of Jubilee Mennonite Church, especially Pastor Bryce Miller, Community Pastor Anna Marie Geddert as well as the many, many volunteers for their dedication and commitment to our North Kildonan community. Caring, generous and welcoming, they have made a significant difference in the lives of so many families.

Night Before Christmas at the Legislature

Mr. Blair Yakimoski (Transcona): My apologies to Clement Clarke Moore.

'Twas the night before Christmas at the Leg.
open house, / Which I'm thrilled to attend, with Amy,
my spouse.

Members were nestled all snug in their chairs /
All bringing forward constituents' cares / And the
Premier our leader, so tall lean and fit, / Answering
the questions with his rapier wit.

Sometimes in this House it's a chaotic forum. /
The Speaker may say may we have some decorum?

The debate on Bill 7, it caused so much grief /
To members opposite, Tom Lindsey and Chief.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

At least he's not singing it.

I hate to spoil the rhyming of the poem, but I would just remind the member that we are not to reference members by their names.

Mr. Yakimoski: Madam Speaker, I'm sorry; I forgot in this game, / Here in this Chamber, we don't call out by name.

It's Dauphin or Thompson, Seine River, Kildonan, Minto, Point Douglas, Selkirk, Winkler, Morden.

Seventeen years of debt, decay and decline. / We'll fix the finances. We'll get it right this time.

For the member from Elmwood, on this Christmas night, / A bridge named Louise for his signs to be right.

And the member from Steinbach, Kewatinook, / Your role will be noted in history books.

Some laughs in this Chamber, yes there are those days / As when the member from Southdale had four girls to raise.

But we are all here for the people and province, / Which we never forget as we believe in our promise. / All members are glad that the House will now rise / Then off to our ridings to create bonding ties.

To the Speaker and clerks in their robes of black silk, / Thank you, and the pages, Earl Grey with milk.

December's arrived and we've all settled in. / Let Christmas at the Leg. open house now begin. / To the top of this House to the top of the dome. / The session has risen; its time to go home.

So to all of my colleagues after all has been said, / Merry Christmas to all, there's blue skies ahead.

Madam Speaker: Poetry wins over singing, I think.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: We have seated in the public gallery people that I would like to introduce to you before oral questions: from Kildonan-East Collegiate, 21 grade 9 students under the direction of Elliot Unger, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Unemployment Rate Economic Policies

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition): The Premier is recklessly set on austerity, and there is no one he has spared. Workers, the civil service, new Manitobans, infrastructure, communities and so many others are a target for his cuts. It's reckless and it's not working.

Nearly 14,000 Manitobans have lost full-time jobs since May, including another 2,000 full-time jobs lost just last month. Relative to its population size, this is the second worst decline of full-time jobs in the entire country.

Madam Speaker, we're just seeing the beginning, as the Premier's fulsome austerity budget will be tabled in the spring. It's wrong-headed and it's coming at the exact wrong time.

Madam Speaker, will the Premier change course and stop his reckless agenda of cuts and austerity?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): My thoughts are with Amy. The husband she's got, for with all his great assets, a poet he is not.

And a merry Christmas to my colleague opposite, and I thank her for her customary comments here at the beginning of question period. We've learned a great deal about each other in this session and we've certainly seen reinforced, day after day after day, the NDP's answer to every problem, every challenge, every threat to our province's future, is to throw money at the problem.

Madam Speaker, we know the consequences of that irresponsible mismanagement: a decade of debt, we are committed to fixing the finances; decade of decay, we are committed to repairing the services; a decade of decline, we are committed to partnering with Manitobans to rebuild our economy here in Manitoba.

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

Ms. Marcelino: If there was a decade of decline and decay, why was Manitoba flourishing in its economy and the unemployment is second lowest?

I'll say it again: Manitoba has lost 14,000 full-time jobs since May. Relative to its population size, it is the second worst loss of full-time jobs out of the entire country. The unemployment rate has not been this high since 1997.

The Premier's reckless pursuit of austerity is coming at the exact wrong time, slamming the brakes on investments that help grow the economy. The Premier has no vision and no jobs plan. He is instead focused relentlessly on austerity and cuts, no matter the damage. It's wrong-headed, Madam Speaker, and it won't work.

I ask and beg the Premier: Will he stop his relentless attacks on investments that grow the economy?

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker, government members don't share the black-cloud state of mind that the member and her colleagues demonstrate. I ask them to think positively and optimistically and work as part of a team for a better future for the province.

They've had the opportunity to join together. The member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), quite rightly, spoke earlier about the importance of consolidating positions among parties on things like supporting trade in our country, certainly a position that we share with that member and his colleagues, one that the NDP continues to oppose; or reinforcing the strength of the CPP for Canadians, a position we share, which the NDP—well no, actually, they changed their position this week and they now support it.

*(10:50)

There's an example of a positive decision that the members have made: to accept change, to accept the challenges of change and to understand that these past tired positions that they've taken and continue to advocate for are right in line with Bruce the dinosaur and need to change, too.

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

Ms. Marcelino: Attacks on workers, cuts to Community Places, a 20 per cent reduction in infrastructure spending—as my colleagues have said, the Premier has called for all hands on deck, but it looks like he wants to push everyone overboard.

Manitoba has lost enough full-time jobs for the entirety of his home city of Portage la Prairie. The unemployment rate has not been this high since 1997. Through this session, the Premier has presented no plan for growing the economy, no plan for jobs. To fill the void, day after day he has filled the air with partisan attacks and relentless attacks on workers, newcomers and promoted manufactured crisis.

Manitobans are prepared to work together to grow the economy, but this Premier has no jobs plan and no vision on how to work together.

Will the Premier reject the cruel attack and focus on growing the economy?

Mr. Pallister: I ask the members opposite to adopt the intellectual rigour of some of the forbears of their own party, like Mr. Cherniack who visited us yesterday, to remember that thoughtfulness and the preparation of their positions is helpful, to remember that research is a beneficial thing to undertake despite the efforts they may have to put in to do it.

Everyone can have an opinion, Madam Speaker, but forming one is the important thing. And we have formed a strategy for the future of this province that stands in stark contrast to the absence of one.

You know, Madam Speaker, the members opposite just have to look back two years ago to their Christmas parties. Just two years ago, on the heels of a historic rebellion, they celebrated in different ways, in different rooms around this Legislature, because they were so divided and so distracted by the dysfunction of their own organization that they couldn't focus on the challenge facing Manitobans. We are. We will. We will succeed.

Despite the fragility of our opposition and their lack of vision, we will succeed, because we are listening to Manitobans, and they are first and foremost in our minds now and always.

Unemployment Rate Government Jobs Plan

Mr. Kevin Chief (Point Douglas): Research is important, Madam Speaker.

In fact, let's look at what the research tells us. It tells us that in the first six months this government has lost 12,000 full-time jobs, and the trend continues, Madam Speaker. According to Stats Canada, this past month they have lost another 2,000 full-time jobs. That's one of the worst declines of full-time jobs in the entire nation, based on population.

But that wasn't enough for the minister. In the very department that's supposed to be creating jobs for Manitobans, he's made a decision to actually get rid of even more jobs.

When will the government admit their jobs plan isn't working or they simply don't have one?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I certainly appreciate the comments from the member opposite.

I, quite frankly, though, don't share his doom-and-gloom attitude about Manitoba and Manitobans' ability to create jobs.

And we're excited, as a new government, to introduce legislation to join the New West Partnership today. This is a very important part of our 10-point economic development plan here in Manitoba. We're going to move forward with the New West Partnership, join our cousins to the west and provide opportunities for many Manitobans.

This is the right thing to do. Manitobans have asked us to do it. We're doing it.

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

Mr. Chief: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm not highlighting doom and gloom, but for the families, 14,000 full-time jobs, that's pretty tough on families this time of year.

Madam Speaker, we have one of the youngest and fastest 'drowing'—one of the youngest and fastest growing demographics in the entire country in our young indigenous community, our new Canadian immigrant refugee community. And young women need to know in Manitoba there's no job they can't get. In order for Manitoba to do well, these young people need to do well.

This government has the worst unemployment rate since 1997: How does failing to address the training of young people help stop the trend of this government losing jobs instead of creating?

Mr. Cullen: Again, I appreciate the member's comments.

Certainly, we've been working in partnership with the business community, with labour and all people that want to create opportunities in Manitoba.

And I'll reflect back on the situation in The Pas with Tolko. I mean, there's a classic example where a government came and worked in partnership with the workers there, the business community and the community at large. And we were successful in bringing a new business to Manitoba.

Those are the kind of things that can work and work in partnership when a government is prepared to do the right things for the right reasons for the long term.

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

Mr. Chief: These are the facts, Madam Speaker: 14,000 full-time job losses and counting, one of the worse declines of full-time job losses in the entire country, the worst unemployment rate since 1997,

and the only thing we know about their jobs plan is that they want to hand out pink slips for Christmas.

I ask the minister: What kind of jobs plan is that?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, any first-year economics student understands that economies are based on policies over time, and the impact over the last 17 years is indisputable in this province. Our taxes are non-competitive. A regulatory structure created by the previous NDP is a labyrinth of time-wasting exercise for small business. We attracted zero dollars under the previous administration ranked 10th in attracting investment capital. This is the record of the previous 17 years, and we are fighting to change it and will change it.

The record of the previous administration was clear: ninth out of all Canadian provinces, closer to 10th than to eighth. These—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: —are the records of the previous administration. We will embrace the challenge of a new—new—economy in our province that will serve all the people of this province. And the fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, that where the NDP failed, we will succeed.

Infrastructure Spending Effect on Economy

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

Madam Speaker, the government is throttling down on infrastructure spending at exactly the wrong time. The Premier is recklessly set on an austerity, cutting the highways budget alone by \$126 million. It's having a devastating effect on the Manitoba economy. Combined with the Premier's approach of cuts and austerity, Manitoba's lost 14,000 full-time jobs since May. Relative to its population, this is the second worse decline in full-time jobs in the entire country. The unemployment rate has not been this bad since 1997.

Does the Premier recognize this approach is—his approach is failing and failing badly?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): I thank the member for that question, because, again, it allows us to announce there—our two-and-a-half-billion-dollar infrastructure plan over the next five years. It not only helps build

smart infrastructure throughout the province, throughout all of the province, it helps the heavy construction industry plan for the future in terms of labour and machinery. Going forward, it provides that stability to the industry so we get return on investment and value for our investment dollars.

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

Mr. Maloway: My follow-up question to the Premier is: The government's cutting the highways budget by \$126 million. We know that these investments create jobs and help grow the economy. This is a vicious circle, Madam Speaker. By cutting the investments that grow the economy, less revenue will come in in the future.

We've seen the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) approach to austerity before, and it does not work; 14,000 full-time jobs have been lost since May.

Will the Premier make a plan that grows the economy and keeps Manitoba working?

*(11:00)

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, the member talks about vicious circle. I think he was referring to East Side Road Authority and the vicious circle that they created out there and mistrust and waste of money; \$500 million to build 50 miles of road, no return on investment in that waste of money.

After a decade of debt, decay and decline, Madam Speaker, Manitobans elected a new Progressive Conservative government to fix our finances, repair our services and rebuild our economy. And that's what we're going to do.

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

Mr. Maloway: I have a final supplementary to the Premier.

It's very clear that this government simply has no vision, has no plan for how to grow the Manitoba economy and keep people working.

Will the Premier take action and stop the slide?

Mr. Pedersen: Manitobans elected a new Progressive Conservative government to stop the slide created by this past NDP government.

In reference to our 2-and-a-half-billion-dollar infrastructure investment, the Manitoba heavy construction industry was very pleased with that because it gives a surety to the industry in terms of

their labour requirements, their machinery requirements; and it gives Manitobans a return on investment, unlike the previous government did in their infrastructure.

Indigenous Issues Government Response

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Yesterday it became clear indigenous peoples in Canada are not a priority for the Premier when we learned that the Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet, or AICC, was dissolved.

When the Premier actually gets around to governing, he'll realize indigenous issues in Manitoba involve every single department from the government, and, contrary to how the government chose to construct AICC as a bunch of NDPers just sitting around gabbing at nothing, it was our government's co-ordinated and collective response to the myriad of indigenous issues that we face here in Manitoba.

How is the Premier going to develop a co-ordinated, strategic and consultative approach when none of his departments have the opportunity to actually work together and discuss these issues?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I'm please to address the question from the member opposite.

First of all, I'd like to extend to our families of murdered and missing women and girls, as well as men and boys, our sincerest thoughts as they go into a season where we're all celebrating and enjoying good times with families, and they just have more days, months and weeks of distress and sadness, missing the people that aren't going to be there for Christmas. And we want them to know that this government sincerely cares that they are not finding solutions, they're not finding their family members. And that's a big concern to us.

Our member opposite is quoted as saying she finds that our process is offensive, and we feel that we're considerate.

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

Indigenous Women's Issues Appointment of Special Adviser

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The other thing that we learned yesterday is that the Premier has no plans on appointing a special adviser on indigenous

women's issues. And on this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, it is beyond comprehension that this Premier doesn't think that Manitoba MMIWG families deserve a special adviser to work directly with them, considering we are at the very beginning of the national inquiry process.

It is incumbent on this government to get on the right side of history and appoint a special adviser to help MMIWG families navigate in what will be a very difficult process.

Will the Premier get on the side of MMIWG families and appoint a special adviser on indigenous women's issues?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I'd like to express and put on record that as a government we find it offensive that one in particular is given a position to represent what they consider all issues of murdered and missing women.

We find it offensive that it requires trips out of province and to New York, with no reports submitted, absolutely no information what's taken place. I found it offensive, when I visited many First Nations and talked with their families, that they were not included in any of the programming, any of the events that were planned, that only a select group was invited to be attend.

This government will represent all families of murdered and missing women, boys, girls, of all families.

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

Ms. Fontaine: That is, quite honestly, the most ridiculous answer I've ever heard from that member.

I don't know why I'm so shocked by this direction from the Premier. It is the same lack of commitment and concern that we heard from the Premier's best friend, Stephen Harper, who said many times that a national inquiry was not on his radar. It's the same direction that comes from a man that, when he was the leader of opposition, even went so far as to fire his own staff who spoke out in support of a national inquiry. And yet this Premier and his 'ministers' and his staff are attempting to take credit for the national inquiry. The national inquiry's the direct result of MMIWG families from the across the country for the last 30 years.

Will the Premier just stop this absolute nonsense and appoint a special adviser and get on the side of MMIWG families?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, certainly the issues around indigenous women, indigenous people, are uppermost in my mind and in the minds of our colleagues, I hope, throughout the House.

The member chooses to adopt an assertive and accusatory tone; that is her choice. But I do remind her that in our discussions—and I do respect that the member shared with me, as I've shared with her, our experiences as people, and I want, genuinely, to work with members opposite who care as much as we do about indigenous women and indigenous people.

But I invited the member, now over half—almost half a year ago, to share with us any evidence of any work she did on behalf of indigenous people with us so that we could benefit from her experience and her knowledge—almost half a year ago—and I have not seen a shred of evidence of any of that work. And I would appreciate her help. I would appreciate her inclusion in any discussions. Rather than simply accusing others, I would like her to work with us to achieve solutions together.

Community Places Future of Program

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): The Premier knows full well that during the Estimates process, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) shared with him that information and asked to be included in the government's plans. There was no follow-up on his behalf.

The Minister of Indigenous and 'municipal'—Municipal Relations was singing the praises of Community Places in June without a hint of uncertainty. She said, these projects have enriched the lives of countless Manitobans, and our new government is honoured to be a part of this milestone year.

But now the program is paused by the Premier because he's not sure there's a measurable return on investment.

Can the minister commit to us today that she will persuade the Premier to lift the pause on Community Places by arguing as passionately for the program as she did this summer?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, the member opposite, in a display of rhetoric, puts false information on the record in his preamble.

The Estimates discussion is on record for anyone to review. I asked for information from someone who has asserted repeatedly in this House and outside of this House that she has the best interests of First Nations people and women in mind. I asked her to submit any evidence of a half a decade of being on the payroll of the people of Manitoba, any evidence of any research or any work. None has been submitted.

I am asking her again today, and I do not wish to see the member from Fort Rouge leave on the record false information in this place.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Premier knows full well that anyone can go look at the Hansard records from the Estimates process, and there they will see the member from St. Johns sharing details about her work as a special adviser.

*(11:10)

The Community Places grants make our province better. They do things like make the Thompson Boys & Girls Club wheelchair accessible. They fix the lights at the Ashern Arena, and they make the drop-in centre at the Brandon Friendship Centre more energy efficient. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Kinew: I wonder if the MLAs from Thompson, the Interlake and Brandon East will stand up for their constituencies.

And, Madam Speaker, will the Premier listen to them and reverse the pause he's placed on the Community Places Program?

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I would like to thank the member opposite for bringing this up again.

Our department had very interesting and very constructive consultation meetings across Manitoba with all municipalities—70 per cent attendance, actually, from our municipalities—discussing not only Community Places but various funding programs and looking for new ways of delivering these programs. The response from municipalities was extremely positive.

And I'd just further like to say that, pause—I looked up the definition—which causes interruption, breathing space, et cetera; review is an evaluation, study, analysis.

So, clearly, this government is taking a breathing space to evaluate.

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

Mr. Kinew: I'm familiar with the definition of the word pause.

However, the words on the government website which cause concern were those that said there is a question as to whether or not there is measurable return on investment in these Community Places programs. That seems to contradict directly what the minister herself said earlier when she said that they have enriched the lives of countless Manitobans and she was honoured to be a part of their announcement.

So I would ask again whether she will commit to arguing for these programs with the Premier and ensuring that the pause is lifted?

Ms. Clarke: I do recognize my comments are very positive to all the grants and programs that were available. I had the opportunity to use them.

However, as things change, even in my own government of the time, we change decisions. We work with what we have to work with at that particular time.

And our government's committed to improving the way that we provide funding to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Clarke:—support municipalities by reducing red tape, making application processes simpler, ensuring that there is value for money and—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Clarke:—strong returns on investments for our taxpayers.

Home-Care Service Auditor General's Recommendations

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): My questions are premised on reports and recommendations that have been published by the Auditor General.

In 2015, the Auditor General released a report that included two dozen recommendations that would improve Manitoba's home-care system. This

current government did not take a single recommendation from the report.

Madam Speaker, in hopes that the government will not be so quick to dismiss the recommendations put forward by the Auditor General, I would like to table an article, titled Elder culture shock, and ask the minister why this government felt implementing the recommendations on home care were not worthwhile?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I appreciate the comment from my friend and my colleague, and certainly we take all the recommendations that come from our independent officers in this House seriously.

We know that home care delivers an important service to many Manitobans across our province. We know that there is a review that's being currently undertaken and that there'll be a report back soon from Reg Toews as a result of his review of home care. We look forward to the recommendations that are contained in that and look at how they can dovetail with the recommendations from the Auditor General, Madam Speaker.

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

Provincial Nominee Program Auditor General's Recommendations

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, in 2013, the Auditor General released recommendations that would improve the operations of the business portion of the Provincial Nominee Program.

This past May, a follow-up was done by the Auditor General's office, and I would like to ask the minister responsible if he has taken the time to read these recommendations since forming government, and, if so, would he please ease my mind by just sharing with the House one of the 13 recommendations?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, and as we've said previously, each independent member of this House plays an important role in providing oversight and review from the various aspects of government.

We know that there were many, many reports that came forward regarding the former government and the actions. I could refer to Tiger Dams; I could

refer to a number of different reports and the poor tendering that happened under that government.

We respect the reports and the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen:—different recommendations that come forward, and we continue to work with independent offices and the recommendations that they provide this House, Madam Speaker.

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

Provincial Nominee Program Request for Provincial Audit

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): This is alarming. Manitobans should be alarmed that this government and the minister who is responsible for immigration was not even aware of the Auditor General's report on the business portion of the Provincial Nominee Program. Otherwise he would have stood here in this House and responded to it.

This is my last question before the House rises for the break, which is why I want to ask one final time: Will this government get on board and support my efforts in requesting the Auditor General to review and make recommendations to the Provincial Nominee Program?

Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training): I appreciate the member's question. I know she has, in her heart, a desire to make the Provincial Nominee Program work as well as possible.

We have consulted with a number of people in the industry and those that are impacted in terms of newcomer settlement, and we have made changes to the program to make it work better. We have made changes to the program where people come and invest in our future and provide them with opportunities to move forward and be better a part of our Manitoba economy.

We value the Provincial Nominee Program. We know it is an important part of our future. We want them to be happy and successful Manitobans.

New West Partnership Manitoba Participation

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Trade isolation and a refusal to work with our closest trading partners has been one of the key features of the NDP decade

of decline. In fact, in the recent election, the NDP claimed that the New West Partnership doesn't exist.

Can the Minister for Growth, Enterprise and Trade provide this House, and in particular the NDP members opposite, proof that the New West Partnership not only exists but is also a key part of our government's plan to rebuild our economy so that we can protect and sustain the services Manitobans rely upon?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I do thank the member for that question.

Yes, in fact, the New West Partnership does exist. After years of being shut out, Manitoba has finally joined the New West Partnership. It's a great day for Manitoba. We introduced the enabling legislation in the Legislature this morning.

Joining the New West Partnership gives Manitoba businesses more opportunities and will also streamline regulations. This will lead to more jobs for hard-working Manitobans.

After an NDP decade of decay, debt and decline we are working hard, Madam Speaker, to fix the finances, repair the services and rebuild the economy. This is another great day for Manitoba.

Health-Care Services Privatization Concerns

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, every day we are learning just how much this minister is willing to let his reckless commitment to ideology win out over the facts.

Rather than actually try and fundamentally improve our public health-care system, he's hell-bent on pushing through a short-sighted, two-tier, American-style private health-care system where the size of your wallet determines your care.

Is this minister actually willing to rip up the Canada Health Act at the expense of Manitobans' health?

Madam Speaker: I would just caution the member that there are some words that are inappropriate to use in this House, and I believe he probably just used one of them. So I would just caution members to be careful with their language.

* (11:20)

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Yes, and Merry Christmas to the member as well, Madam Speaker.

And I would say, Madam Speaker, that it was during this session—it might seem like a long time ago, but it really wasn't that long ago—where the member came to the House and demanded—demanded—that I look to Quebec—look to Quebec—for ideas on health care: Quebec, which has private doctors; Quebec, which has private MRIs; Quebec, which has private CTs.

Now the member stands up and demands—demands—that I not look for any other sort of innovation.

I think the member should look internally and try to find some consistency in his questions, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, the minister will know that Quebec, in fact, when trying to privatize their system, was penalized by the federal government and was penalized in the transfer payments that they received. Is that the direction that this minister really believes that we should go down?

He has admitted that he's now busy laying the legal groundwork for introduction of private health care in Manitoba. He knows that it'll violate Manitoba law. He's been warned that it will violate Canadian law. And he know that it will cost Manitobans millions of dollars in penalties. He knows, according to the best evidence that we have, it doesn't reduce wait times in the long term.

Will this minister provide here in the House—will he table his legal opinion that he received on private MRIs so Manitobans can know his real plan?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, the member now says that it's terrible to look at Quebec when he just a few weeks ago told me that I should look exactly at Quebec.

Now, it's the same member, of course, that, during the election, tried to scare cancer patients and say that they wouldn't have their drugs if a new government was elected. It's the same member who, after the election, said that Zika virus was spreading throughout Manitoba.

I think what we've learned in this session and throughout the context of our government is you shouldn't be able to take anything as fact when it's

coming from that member or any member of the NDP, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, this minister has been tasked by the people of Manitoba to find real solutions and improve our public health-care system. And what does he do? What does he do at the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —first hint of difficulty? This minister falls back to the old, failed ideological—ideologically driven policies of the past.

Will this minister just finally come clean with Manitobans and admit that this is the first step in their plan to create a two-tier health-care system where the size of your wallet determines the care that you receive?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, this is a government who launched an innovation and sustainability review, because innovation and sustainability are important in the health-care system. We've had hundreds—thousands of Manitobans who have responded to our request to look for different ways to do things in the health-care system.

This member, the NDP, don't want to listen to Manitobans. They don't want to look at other provinces. They don't want to look anywhere else, Madam Speaker, for different ideas and positive ways to do things. We know that they're insular; we know that they're divided within their own party. We're looking for positive ways; we're looking for a bright future.

Why doesn't he stop being so negative and join us in a positive future for Manitoba, Mr. Speaker?

Freshwater Fish Marketing Board Consultation Process Concerns

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): We have, today, a very rare bright light shone on the very dark practices of this government.

A quote in today's newspaper reads as follows: When I got hired, I asked one of the people who hired me, quote, what if I come back to you and say this is the worst idea in the world? And he said, that is not a viable option because the Province has already made the decision.

This is in the context of the so-called consultations going on around the dismantling of the single desk of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board.

Does the government have any possible explanation for how this could be anything other than a complete sham?

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question.

I don't know if the member is aware or not, but, originally, there were five provinces that were involved in having their fish—the commercial fishers provide marketing by Freshwater Fish. At the current time, there is only two, Manitoba and Northwest Territories.

We believe that Manitobans deserve—commercial fishermen deserve the opportunity to market their fish in a manner that's best for them, a manner that's going to give them the most money in their pockets; not like the NDP, who take money off their table.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: Madam Speaker, as usual, the minister misses the point completely. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: How on earth can she and other members of this government claim that they are consulting with Manitobans?

The Premier, today, said they are listening to Manitobans, when the exact opposite is quite clearly the truth. The Premier cannot stand to hear anyone's voice other than his own. He always wants to have the last dance of the day, so here's his big chance.

Is he the person behind this quote giving the orders that this was the sham consultation going on about the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The members opposite were so disinterested in hearing from over 20,000 Manitobans who participated in the prebudget consultation that the NDP members refused to even attend the meetings, Madam Speaker.

We're listening. We're listening; they're not.

Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: Madam Speaker—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pallister: —I was amiss earlier, I was—I made an erroneous reference to—which was hurtful and I want to retract it. I referenced the NDP dinosaur attitudes towards things and compared it to Bruce the mosasaur, and I didn't want to hurt Bruce's feelings in this compare, because Bruce was a large and significant dinosaur, and the NDP are a much smaller dinosaur today, more like the compsognathus, the smallest dinosaur—just a dinosaur that tried to be intimidating but wasn't; the smallest dinosaur, just slightly larger than the chicken, no longer in existence—no longer in existence, Madam Speaker.

Merry Christmas to all our staff, our people here in the building and all MLAs, all the best to you and your families. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas. Don't be a dinosaur.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would just remind all honourable members that the use of BlackBerrys or iPhones is not allowed during question period.

And, as the House will be adjourning today for the Christmas break, which includes Youth Parliament in the Chamber—*[interjection]*

Oh, oral questions has expired.

So, as the House will be adjourning today for the Christmas break, which includes Youth Parliament in the Chamber, I encourage all honourable members to remove the contents of their desks. I also encourage members to recycle as much of the material as possible. I would like to advise that the blue bins here in the Chamber are designated for recycling of Hansard only, and any other material you would like to recycle may be placed in the larger recycling containers in the message rooms located just outside the Chamber.

Thank you.

PETITIONS

Seniors' School Tax Rebate

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

Here are the—these are the reasons for the petition:

On April 13, 2016, the current Premier told all Manitobans on CJOB that he would keep the

provincial government's existing Seniors' School Tax Rebate.

On April 15, 2016, one of the current Premier's campaign staff assured a constituent that the provincial Progressive Conservatives would continue to rebate seniors as they have been under the current government.

Then, in Budget 2016, the Premier surprised and dismayed seniors by clawing back \$44 million from the tax credit, reducing or eliminating it altogether for tens of thousands of seniors.

* (11:30)

The provincial government's new income test for the credit is far too low, which unfairly characterizes households with a combined income of between \$40,000 and \$65,000 as too wealthy to deserve this tax break.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Premier of Manitoba to apologize to seniors for breaking his promise and cutting the Seniors' School Tax Rebate.

This petition is signed by many fine Manitobans.

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

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) On April 13, 2016, the current Premier told all Manitobans on CJOB that he would keep the provincial government's existing Seniors' School Tax Rebate.

(2) On April 15, 2016, one of the current Premier's campaign staff assured a constituent that the provincial Progressive Conservatives would continue to rebate seniors as they have been under the current government.

(3) Then, in Budget 2016, the Premier surprised and dismayed seniors by clawing back \$44 million from the tax credit, reducing or eliminating it altogether for tens of thousands of seniors.

(4) The provincial government's new income test for the credit is far too low, which unfairly characterizes households with a combined income of

between \$40,000 and \$65,000 as too wealthy to deserve a tax break.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Premier of Manitoba to apologize to Manitoba seniors for breaking his promise and cutting the Seniors' School Tax Rebate.

This petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many fine Manitobans.

Pediatric Insulin Pump Program

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, there are 94,000 Manitobans living with diabetes, which will increase to 139,000 by 2020.

(2) Although Manitoba's pediatric insulin pump program makes pumps available for free to Manitobans aged 17 and under, pumps cost approximately \$10,000 for adults, while British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and all three territories offer coverage for all ages.

(3) These pumps make it easier for people to manage their diabetes by eliminating individual insulin injections and replacing them by delivering short-acting insulin 24 hours a day through a catheter.

(4) According to a report by the Canadian Diabetes Association entitled The Economic Benefit of Public Funding of Insulin Pumps in Manitoba, the pediatric insulin pump program is projected to save Manitoba \$7.6 million by the year 2032.

(5) Giving more type 1 and type 2 diabetics access to insulin pumps would reduce the annual cost of treatment for serious complications from diabetes and would indirectly produce savings from decreased diabetes mortality and disability.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to extend the pediatric insulin pump program to type 1 and type 2 diabetics over the age of 17.

And this petition is signed by many fine Manitobans.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I rise on a grievance, Madam Speaker.

The government's inaction and inattention is threatening the long-term viability of the community of Churchill.

We presented a private members' resolution for debate, but the government procedural roadblocks and stalling prevented us from discussing this matter of urgent and public importance. The be-it-resolved text of our PMR was as follows:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to take action to make revitalizing the Port of Churchill and Hudson Bay rail line the No. 1 priority of Northern Economic Development Strategy Task Force and set up meetings with the federal government, the current owners of both the port and the Hudson Bay rail line, the Town of Churchill, the First Nations communities, to ensure an orderly ownership transfer at the earliest opportunity.

Madam Speaker, this government has done nothing to help the Port of Churchill. They've done nothing to help the community of Churchill. They've done nothing to help the communities along the rail line that runs to Churchill. They stand up and take a lot of credit for doing something in The Pas when, in fact, they did next to nothing. The workers there saved their own jobs. This government did not, and it's shameful that they try and take credit when credit is not earned.

Madam Speaker, they have done nothing to try and help the people of Churchill. They gathered up some of their friends and went for a little junket, a little tour to Churchill to offer less money than they spent on their little junket.

That's shameful behaviour from a government that claims to want to make this the most improved province. Clearly, they have no plan for the North. Clearly, they have no plan for working people, other than to cut and slash and try and do everything they can to hurt working people in this province, Madam Speaker.

The people of Churchill deserve better. The people of Manitoba deserve better. This government needs to actually have a plan for the North, not just continually talk about a plan for the North. Every week the plan for the North has a new name and still

has no plan. Madam Speaker, that behaviour is shameful. The people of Churchill deserve so much better.

Madam Speaker, when the NDP was in government they had a plan for the North. I was not part of the government, but I could sense the plan in my community when I saw things being built, when I saw roads being paved, when I saw teachers having jobs, when I saw hospitals being built. That was some of the benefits that this former government, the NDP government, had was a plan for the North.

What do I see in the North now, Madam Speaker? Well, I don't see any building going on other than the building that we'd already committed the funds for. I don't see any building going on in Churchill. I don't see any building going on along the rail line running to Churchill. I don't see any building going on in the town of The Pas. I don't see any building going on anywhere in the North, and that's shameful with so much resource in the North, that this government is choosing to ignore the North.

Madam Speaker, so many indigenous communities depend on that rail line, not just in Manitoba, but also in Nunavut, and yet this government is choosing to ignore them. We've seen this government's commitment to consultation on other issues where they've made up their mind before they ever talk to anybody. At least in this case they didn't waste anybody's time. They didn't bother talking to anybody, and that's too bad because they would have heard a lot.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Madam Speaker, took the unprecedented step of passing a near-unanimous resolution demanding that this government and the federal government take action to protect and grow the Port of Churchill, and yet—so far—this government has still done nothing.

* (11:40)

The federal government did commit some funds for the Port of Churchill. This government—nothing. That shameful behaviour, Madam Speaker, is disastrous, not just for the Town of Churchill, not just for the Port of Churchill, but it's disastrous for all northern Manitobans. It's disastrous for farmers in this province. It's disastrous for farmers in Saskatchewan, farmers that I've heard from that say, please keep up the fight, we need that port open, we need to ship grain from the Port of Churchill.

Madam Speaker, if anybody in the government today had any kind of idea about growth and trade,

they would realize that having a deep sea water port in action and growing is the right way to grow trade. Instead, they ignore that deep water port. They ignore the rail line that could potentially lead to trade. And instead they sign on to bogus deals called the New West Partnership that will trade our jobs away without bringing in jobs for people in this province because, as we see in the Port of Churchill, they don't care about jobs in this province.

They are not protecting jobs; they are not protecting Manitobans. They are not speaking up for all Manitobans. They are certainly not speaking up for northern Manitobans, Madam Speaker. They are not truly representing everybody in this province.

The Port of Churchill, the Province of Manitoba needs so much more, Madam Speaker. They need so much more attention to make sure that that port is shipping grain next year. It's shameful that it was ignored and not shipping grain this year. Farmers needed it; farmers wanted it. People in the North need the port to be operational; they need the port to be growing. With global warming, the port can be open longer and longer, shipping more and more materials, not just grain. But they should be looking at actually growing what the port can do.

The Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Cullen) is not looking at growth in this province, Madam Speaker, certainly, not in the North. Jobs have disappeared at an alarming rate. No plan, no action. The Port of Churchill, 100 workers lost their jobs, 10 per cent of the population, and this government does nothing. This government does nothing. They have no plan.

The only plan they seem to have is to put everything on pause or to cut and slash, to lay workers off, to make life harder for hard-working Manitobans, Madam Speaker. Hard-working Manitobans throughout the province are in trouble with this government, but more so in the North. We have a care home in Nelson House that's on strike because this government doesn't care. Funding for so many vital programs, some of which are in my own community of Flin Flon, are on hold.

The Port of Churchill is on hold, waiting for this government to do something to show that it actually cares about the people of the North, but we continue to wait. They continue to wait. And nothing—nothing—is happening. No action, no plan. And that's too bad because the port can be such a vital part of the future of Manitoba and the future of Canada, and yet we see nothing. *[interjection]*

I hear one of the members talk about consulting, and certainly the comments we've seen in the newspaper today that were quoted earlier really show what a sham this government's vision of consulting is when they've made up their mind before they've ever talked to anybody and don't care what anybody has to say because they've got their mind made up. They didn't consult with the people of the North; they didn't consult with the people in Churchill. They just continued to ignore them, Madam Speaker. And that's not right. We need to get that port up and running. We need to get grain being shipped out of there next year. We need to have the plan in place now, not continue to wait.

Let's get the Port of Churchill open and on the go.

Madam Speaker: The honourable—grievances.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on a grievance. I rise because I'm concerned about the direction of the present Conservative government.

The Conservative government is reviewing all files, cutting expenditures drastically, calling pauses instead of making decisions, and considering changing existing labour agreements. From what we've seen so far, the plan is failing. Focusing solely on cuts and freezes may shrink our economy and we may end up with a higher debt-to-GDP ratio, not a lower one. Every single dollar the Premier (Mr. Pallister) cuts from a teacher's salary or doesn't spend on infrastructure is a dollar less for someone to spend in Manitoba's economy. It is likely to have a negative multiplier effect, because that dollar would normally be passed along. A one-dollar cut can result in more than one dollar in losses.

All the people with frozen wages have plenty of debt and fixed costs. If inflation goes up, they're basically putting less money into the economy. Since 2008, every jurisdiction that has tried austerity only has ended up worse, with slower growth and higher debt-to-GDP ratio.

Having said this, there's an important role for an intelligent approach in which expenditures are reduced in some areas and then refocused in other areas where there are greater returns on investment. Those of us who attended the Manitoba Lung Association's reception on Tuesday this week saw an example. Smart expenditures to keep individuals with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease healthy have a very substantial return on investment and can

reduce hospital and emergency room expenditures substantially.

Similarly, in our brain health report, we showed that there a number of significant areas of brain health where focused efforts and focused spending will have very significant and substantial savings in the costs of looking after those with mental and brain health issues and in increasing individual productivity and in increasing GDP. Similarly, high returns on investment can be achieved in other areas, too.

It was thus with great concern that I heard earlier this week of the government's decision to cut 100 per cent of the funding to the Manitoba Metis Federation for the work they're doing to promote the health of the Metis people in Manitoba and to prevent diabetes. Diabetes has been in an epidemic state since 1996, when the province declared it an epidemic.

Sadly, the plan that was generated involving more than 1,000 people was never properly implemented and the number of people with diabetes has risen dramatically from about 50,000 in 1996 to an estimate of about 120,000 today.

Manitoba Liberals produced an extensive report in 2013 to focus attention on the epidemic and to provide recommendations to better address it. Sadly, the government of the day did little. Our report showed that even modestly effective action would have saved hundreds of millions of dollars in health-care expenditures. Indeed, a plan to address diabetes, which focuses only on building more dialysis units and doing more heart and kidney transplants, will not succeed if we do not act to prevent diabetes in the first place.

Indeed, without focusing on prevention of sickness, our health-care system is not sustainable. Indeed, if this government fails to focus on prevention, its efforts to balance the budget will likely fail.

It is in this context that the decision to cut the funding for the Manitoba Métis Federation program for wellness and preventing diabetes and other conditions must be seen. Cuts in this area are very short-sighted. If the government feels the money is not being well spent, it should explain and give evidence. If the government feels there can be better efforts of prevention, the government should present a plan.

There has been a lack of leadership by the provincial government with respect to diabetes for many years. It would appear the current government is going to continue that vacuum and make it worse by cutting the few critical programs we have, like the Manitoba Métis Federation's program.

The pause in funding for the Community Places Program and for Neighbourhoods Alive! has not been explained or justified. All we're told is that this government wants a pause because it can't make up its mind as what it wants to do. This is a government which has had 17 years in opposition. Clearly, insufficient time was spent in opposition in paying attention to planning for when the Conservatives were elected to govern.

Already the Conservative Party has been in government for almost eight months, and yet items as simple as setting up a wait time task force and setting up a committee to review mental health and brain health care have not yet been done. If it takes so long just to set up a committee or a task force, how long will it take to reduce emergency room wait times and to decide their approach to brain and mental health care, we ask.

*(11:50)

We are, today, in the middle of a crisis as a result of the number of people who have died from fentanyl overdoses. The government has been disorganized, so we do not yet have a fully accurate record of the number of fentanyl overdoses in Manitoba in the last two years, although we got some partial numbers earlier. Other important conditions are tracked closely on a week-by-week or month-by-month basis. We need that here.

The government has started an awareness campaign. This is a good step. But Liberal and Liberal MLAs will indeed help with the process. For example, the MLA for Keewatinook is going to take material from this campaign to northern communities to make sure that they have the information.

As we recommended in our Liberal brain health report, it is essential that we move quickly to ensure that those with addictions are able to get help when they need it, not months later.

As mentioned in a report this last Saturday, a person with experience of the system was quoted as saying: there needs to be way more done—like, way more done. They need to get people into treatment. People shouldn't have to wait months and months for

treatment, because by the time you get in, you'll be dead.

The approach this government has taken so far is not good enough. There needs to be much more done to get individuals the quick access to effective help that is really needed. Concerns about what this government is doing or not doing may extend to other areas.

In northern Manitoba, as my colleague, the MLA for Keewatinook, has pointed out, there's no plan for the future of the Port of Churchill. It's not clear that the government will include the northern values approach, which is so important for getting everyone working together. It is not clear whether or not the government will enable or facilitate the northern community land-use planning that is needed for economic development.

In the Provincial Nominee Program, there is a need to correct many issues within the program, as my colleague, the MLA for Burrows, has pointed out.

We still have not been given details of planning for climate change or for seniors in Manitoba. We should have those.

And when it comes to children, the Children's Advocate has just released a report with unbelievable details of the shocking treatment of children and, particularly, children who are in the care of Child and Family Services. The Children's Advocate writes, instead of creating environments that support them—that's children in care—and encourage their development, provincial systems remain in a chronic state of emergency, focused on keeping youth safe only for today with little attention to long-term success.

She describes a system, where—and I quote, our office has seen countless examples of children and youth experiencing literally dozens of moves between various placements throughout their young lives. This approach is a disaster for children.

There is more. She writes, at the office of the Children's Advocate, we've seen a significant number of youth in care held in remand—that's in jail—not because of violent crimes but because a foster placement is not immediately available to them.

It is totally unacceptable that a jail is a default foster home because the government doesn't have an appropriate one. What is happening in Manitoba?

This cannot be happening here. It should not be happening, and yet, under this government, it is.

And yet there is even worse: our children in our jails are being pepper sprayed. These are children who need help. These are children who need care and compassion and they are being pepper sprayed. This is horrible. I cannot believe that this is happening in our province. Yes, it is a relatively new government, but it has been in place for almost eight months. In the life of a child, eight months is a long time.

The government has been here a long time and the Premier (Mr. Pallister), when I raised my concern about putting children in jail and pepper spraying children yesterday, instead of answering, attacked me, attacked the messenger.

I don't mind being attacked, Madam Speaker, for that is the way of politics. But I am very, very, concerned about our children and their future.

Thank you, miigwech, merci. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and have a good holiday.

Madam Speaker: Any further grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'd like to call for debate and second reading of Bill 3, The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that this House will now consider Bill 3, The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 3—The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Families, that Bill 3, The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act; Loi du Manitoba sur les régimes de pension agréés collectifs, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding), that Bill 3, The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) 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.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to speak to Bill 3, The Pooled Registered Pension Plans (Manitoba) Act, which will enable Canada's and Manitoba's investment sector to make PRPPs, as they are known, available to Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, we are not the first jurisdiction. There are other jurisdictions who have already covered this ground. In Quebec, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Nova Scotia, those provinces have recently signed a multi-lateral agreement with the federal government. It is expected that Ontario will sign soon. So, certainly, as a context, I would indicate that Manitoba is in good company. We are not going it alone; there are other provinces, other jurisdictions, certainly the federal government, that are recognizing the value that are in these savings vehicles—savings vehicles that do not seek to answer all questions when it comes to Manitobans saving adequately for their own retirement needs, but another vehicle. Another arrow in the quiver, if you will. Another way in which Manitobans can cover that ground and, in their working lives, make decisions that will serve them well on the retirement side when they get there.

Now, this is part of a larger conversation that we are having this week. And I welcome this conversation to the Legislature; I thank the members on the opposite for their comments the other day when we talked about CPP enhancement. And we had a good conversation with the government resolution brought on Wednesday afternoon. It's a good transition into a discussion about other—making other avenues available to Manitobans to adequately prepare for their retirement.

So what PRPPs do is they seek to offer a different type of registered and regulated pension plan to workers, to self-employed individuals and to small businesses, groups that may not have—and often do not have—access to larger registered plans. In fact, Madam Speaker, I would remind all members that over two thirds of individuals in the private sector are not within a registered plan.

Now, traditionally, an employer could offer a plan to their employees, but it was expensive and that employer would have to do all the work to find what they believe would be the best—what would represent the best value to them and their workers. They would have to independently assess what their contribution as an employer would be. They would have to invite employees into that conversation, and they would have to analyze and administrate and work very closely with what—which—with whichever pension provider they chose to make sure that the plan was responsive, that the plan was continuing to respond, that it was affordable, that it did not see ballooning costs. It's a lot of work.

*(12:00)

We talk about cutting red tape in this province, and we all know that it's necessary to cut red tape. I believe that the CFIB recently gave Manitoba an F when it comes to red tape regulation. We know there's a lot of ground to cover. But, certainly, this is a good example where we can point to the role of government in providing a context when the work could be made easier for employers and employees, and that's exactly what a PRPP does. It allows those employers of smaller scale businesses opportunities they would not otherwise have to participate with others in a kind of co-operative model whereby funds are pooled but all the benefits of that larger scale of investment can be realized.

Products are then provided by registered companies who apply for the right to provide these products, and then employers can choose or select from that list those who had provided the products to their employees. But all that scale can be achieved here where it would not otherwise have been possible.

It's essentially a good message to Manitobans, as I've said. It does not seek to answer all the questions, but it is one more way in which Manitobans can save for their own retirement.

Madam Speaker, we have said before that good governments make good decisions. Good governments make the tough decisions. Certainly, we believe in making this decision. It has merit for all Manitobans. I know that growing up in a household where my father ran a business—for 40 years he owned an automobile dealership with his other partner, so growing up in that context I saw a lot of that business operation on a day-to-day business, as my father would come home and talk about what it takes to run a business.

We saw the highs; we saw the lows. My father had a lot of borrowings in an environment in the early '80s when interest rates went to 18 and 19 per cent, and I remember the stress in the household, understanding that an automobile dealer does not own outright all the product on that car lot, but, instead, it's financed and it requires turning over so that you can meet your obligations to lenders.

There were some very, very hard years there, and I know from talking with my father at that part—at that time, he was very proud of the pension system that they were offering to employees. He felt it made them competitive as a business. He felt it gave employees one more reason to stay with their operation. He was proud of the contributions that he and his business partner were making on behalf of their employees, and so the result of that work, that many of his employees did stay with the employment of that business for many years.

But he was proud of that accomplishment, and this provides that context also for employers to ask the question whether they can provide these products. But understand that, even if an employer chooses not to contribute within a PRPP, still the employee has that ability to choose this product, and I welcome questions that might ensue this morning from the opposition in the question and the answer period to describe even further how that process will work.

Madam Speaker, we know that this plan is primarily for those within the workplace who do not currently have access to a pension. I would say the best comparison would be that this compares with a defined contribution kind of plan where you get that level of scale achieved, where you have flexibility built in so that earners, through their working life, make those contributions at whatever level they choose, but then on retirement they sit down with that investment adviser who represents the company and they can select the retirement plan that best works for them.

It also has the same features as the defined contribution plan whereby at any time if a worker's situation changed, and we know that happens. Pressures come; pressures go. Maybe a spouse or a partner loses a position, and this plan provides, then, opportunity as well, for individuals to increase or decrease the levels of their contribution within the plan. So that's one more reason to highlight these plans.

We understand how we achieve lower administration costs through a plan like this, and we understand, as other provinces do, that that is a benefit for a business, especially because, as a new government, we want to create conditions in which businesses can succeed, in which job creators can hire, in which more Manitobans can be at work. This is the path that we are on. It is the path that we will follow as a new government. In making a business pay more through an 8 per cent PST and other ways is not the path forward that our government would suggest.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned before, over two thirds of private sector workers in our province right now are not covered by a registered pension plan. This helps us to address that. As I mentioned already, there are provinces who have already signed, but I want to underscore, as I have in this House also, that in all of these conversations about CPP enhancement, about pooled retirement pension plans and other discussions that I know will go on, I want to underscore the importance of financial literacy on the part of Canadians.

It certainly is not solely my concern. I've spoken with the federal minister, Bill Morneau, about this. I know that even Jim Flaherty and Joe Oliver as federal Finance ministers used to talk about the need for Canadians to educate themselves so they could make good decisions about their own retirement needs.

I was concerned when I saw, shortly after the CPP discussions in June in British Columbia, a man-on-the-street interview—they always call that, right, the man-on-the-street interview. I guess it could just as easily be a woman-on-the-street interview. But in that interview, an individual had talked about the enhancement under way within CPP, and they remarked that they were pleased with that development because now they understood that all of their retirement needs would be taken care of.

And I was a bit horrified staring at the TV screen to think that an income earner thought that an enhancement of CPP would negate the necessity for them to think about their own retirement needs. Now that income earner is, as all income earners are, busy. They are earning a living; they are paying a mortgage; they are raising a family; they are involved in their communities.

But, at the end of the day, when they tip into retirement, it will be a tremendous surprise for that individual in that interview that I heard if that

individual does not somewhere along this continuum take another look and understand there is much more to do, that CPP would be a part of an individual's retirement, as Old Age Security would be a part of an individual's retirement, as a Guaranteed Income Supplement would be a part of an individual's retirement were they eligible to receive it in the same way as a defined contribution or another registered plan like a defined benefit program.

All of these working together, by an individual hopefully in conversation with others, with experts—hopefully they are educating themselves as to their obligations, as to the opportunities, as to the choices they must make. So we know that it is important for Manitobans to educate themselves, and I hope that through this discussion, Manitobans will take the time to ask the question and say: What is a pooled retirement pension plan, and how is this different than other plans that they already know about?

This is an important conversation for people to have, because we understand as a Province if Manitobans do not save adequately for their own retirement, then they will rely on the provincial government and the federal government for assistance in their retirement years. We would much rather those individuals have made the choices to make them autonomous and to make them not rely on government, and that is indeed the wish of all of us.

So that is first and foremost. As a former teacher, I stress that financial literacy is so important. I've had these conversations with our Minister of Education, and just this last week, spoke to industry officials in the insurance industry and heard from their perspective how they favour a view of developing a system within Canada that would reinforce better the need for financial literacy in our schools, perhaps at an early age. I'm not thinking about your typical grade 11 accounting course. I'm thinking here instead about a total system reinforcement of the need to think about finance in a positive way.

* (12:10)

Madam Speaker, I'll share a short anecdote. My mother, Esther, who's now passed for seven or eight years—I will always remember when my mom came to me when I was about in grade 7, and she—and I was talking about finances, and I think at the time, maybe my father might have given me a dollar, you know, every couple of weeks as an allowance. At that time, it was a big deal. I think when I started

working at the age of 17 or 16, I think the minimum wage at that time was \$4.15. So I realize I'm dating myself. You know, young members of this Legislature, like the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield), wouldn't remember any kind of context like that, you know, being considerably younger than some of us in this Chamber. We were talking about mosasaurs and dinosaurs earlier before, but I know that that disclosure today does date me to a certain extent. But I remember my mother coming to me at that time when I was in grade 7 and said—I talked about finances or something, and she said, well, you need to understand how your finances work.

And she went to the store and brought back one of those old-fashioned bound books with the hard cover, where you had the red lines up and down and the blue lines across, and it created a credit-debit balance ledger. And she said, now, keep track of your finances. And you'd enter at the top your starting position and you would work—and perhaps, in a way, in a very strange way, that was my introduction to the role that I now find myself in. But I remember becoming very zealous about my finances, keeping every receipt, working tirelessly to balance my chequebook. And I didn't have many transactions through my chequebook in my high school years, but I learned how that worked. And I thank my mother for that now.

I think about the steps she took; she was a former bank teller. In her day, as a young woman growing up in Steinbach and moving to the big city of Winnipeg, that was quite a deal. She was exercising quite a great deal of independence and autonomy as a young woman. As a matter of fact, my mother always said she had no plans of becoming—of getting married and raising children. She was going to be a career woman and she was going to run a business. And, as sometimes life gets in the way, she was a wonderful mother and gave back to her community in a myriad of ways. But that was her first plan. And often it is plan B that gets us to where we are today but plan B can be good, as well. So, in any case, I stress the fact that financial literacy is very important.

Madam Speaker, I want to give others the opportunity to speak. I know we'll have a question period directly following this. I want to stress just a few things.

The PRPP is a co-ordinated approach. There will be a licensing and supervision of the PRPPs when

they are in place. And we know that administrators and regulators will both work together to help keep the costs of PRPPs low, because they must be affordable, we know, in the end, to be valuable.

I spoke about those jurisdictions who are out ahead of Manitoba already in terms of this. There is the assumption here that if passed in this Legislature, Manitoba would sign on to the same type of multilateral agreement that will allow PRPP administrators to operate here in the province—only, of course, if they are federally licensed, as I spoke of before. There is a division of authorities here 'wheretheby' the federal government will have authority where it comes to registration and regulatory requirements.

But, of course, as we've discussed already, and I know as we did discuss in the bill briefing with members of the opposition, there are areas pertaining to Manitoba law that the PRPPs would then reflect: in areas of pension unlocking, of spousal amounts, entitlements, in terms of a joint life annuity, in terms of in survivor entitlements, garnishment and in the case of a maintenance enforcement or the dissolution of a relationship. All of those things, of course, would be reviewed by the office of the superintendent for pensions here in Manitoba.

Ninety per cent of Canadian workers would have access to a PRPP if Manitoba gets on board, the vast majority of Canadians. And, as we have said before, we've consulted extensively with industry, with Manitobans, to get to this point. And I can tell you, even since the time where we brought this legislation last week and put it here on the table in the Legislature, we have had groups get on the phone, come to us in person and say this is the right step, it's the right path for Manitobans.

As I began, I will end, and that is to say that saving adequately for retirement is important. It is work in which government can have a role. It is work in which individuals must see their own role. And it is work that the PRPPs help to address. And we look for the co-operation of all members in the Legislature to see to the discussion, the debate, the consideration at committee and hopefully the passing of this legislation in the not-too-distant future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

House Business

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on House business, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on December 7th, 2016, at 10 a.m., to consider the following reports: Auditor General's Report, Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015; Auditor General's Report, Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016; Auditor General's Report, Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated May 2014. There are a number of subcategories there: section 2, Mandatory legislative reviews; section 5, Compliance with oil and gas legislation; section 9, Public sector compensation disclosure reporting; section 11, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority administration of the value-added policy; section 13, Appointment process to agencies, boards and commissions; and, lastly, section 22, Taxation Division audit branch.

It's going to be a fantastic committee meeting, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on December 7th, 2016, at 10 a.m., to consider the following reports: Auditor General's Report, Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2015; Auditor General's Report, Operations of the Office for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016; Auditor General's Report, Follow-Up of Previously Issued Recommendations dated May 2014: section 2, Mandatory Legislative Reviews; section 5, Compliance with oil and gas legislation; section 9, Public sector compensation disclosure reporting; section 11, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority administration of the value-added policy; section 13, Appointment process to agencies, boards and commissions; and section 22, Taxation Division audit branch.

Questions

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to the question period on Bill 3. 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 and remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Madam Speaker, of course, I want to wish you a happy holidays, as well as our table officers and our pages, if I don't get the opportunity to do so again.

Could the Finance Minister please tell us what consultations were undertaken prior to the introduction of this bill?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): We had extensive consultations, Madam Speaker, in the development—in the lead-up to this legislation. I would indicate to the member, actually, our work on this file started years ago, when we were in opposition hearing from industry then, talking about the need for these products, understanding where the conversation had been throughout Canada on this.

Of course, more recently, we've heard from the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association—CLHII; the Financial Advisors Association of Manitoba, Advocis; the Canadian Bankers Association; Canadian Federation of Independent Business. But I would also mention that through our even prebudget consultation, even comments there from ordinary Manitobans who are working have talked about the need for adequate pension provisions, and talked specifically about these kind of programs.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Now, the bill is clearly similar to federal legislation, the Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act that came into effect in 2012, which would impact millions of employees under federal jurisdiction.

Could the Minister of Finance tell the House today how many plans have actually been registered under the federal law since it came into effect in 2012?

Mr. Friesen: So this legislation has now been—there's been multi-lateral agreements that have been signed in provinces including Quebec, Saskatchewan, B.C., Nova Scotia. Ontario is expected to sign soon; I believe that B.C. is expected to sign soon.

If Manitoba joins, then those multi-lateral agreements—if we signed on, it would account for almost 90 per cent of Canadian workers.

* (12:20)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): The Registered Retirement Savings Plans and CPP are protected from being garnished or garnisheed and I'd like the minister to talk about this particular plan, whether it

would similarly be so protected, and if it is not, what his approach would be.

Mr. Friesen: So I spoke in my remarks just earlier about the ways in which the authority is federal in some respects with respect to PRPPs, and how it is under the Province's authority in other respects.

In the respects that it is under Manitoba's authority, include those areas such as the member just described in terms of provisions around garnishment, other areas including pension unlocking, spousal entitlement to a joint life annuity, including things like maintenance enforcement, pension division on marital break-up or relationship break-up, and in these cases, then all of these matters become reviewable by the Manitoba superintendent responsible for pensions.

Mr. Allum: When asked about consultations, the minister rhymed off a bunch of, sort of, generic consultations that he undertook, but specifically, with reference to this bill and this particular item, can he tell us who recommended to him that he should proceed with a bill like this?

Mr. Friesen: Well, the member for Fort-Garry Riverview (Mr. Allum) is incorrect. These were not generic endorsements of the government. I will actually provide for the record, and I know the time is short, but CLHII has said it continues to urge all provinces to follow the lead demonstrated by the provinces and introduce PRPP in a later legislation.

Financial Advisors Association of Canada said the federal government's introduction of PRPPs is a good first step and we should do it as well. I could go on and provide him other examples of specific endorsements; the member somehow says that this was not asked for. He is incorrect.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): In bringing economic development to my communities, financial literacy is pretty much non-existent.

Would the minister explain what CPP is and how it would benefit people in my area? Thank you.

Mr. Friesen: I would rather take the opportunity within the context of this bill debate to talk specifically about PRPP, and we had considerable conversation around CPP yesterday, but I completely stand with the member when she talks about the need for financial literacy.

Oftentimes it is in rural and northern areas as well that that becomes a real need, too. I think our education system can help with this, and I'm

engaging with the Minister of Education to talk about opportunities in our province to strengthen that commitment to financial literacy in whichever way we can. There are also good service clubs and non-profits doing good work on this as well.

Mr. Swan: I asked the minister a fairly directed question, which I think he misunderstood.

The question I had was, the federal legislation, The Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act, has been in effect since 2012. It deals with every single employee under federal jurisdiction Canada.

My question for the minister is: How many plans have actually been registered under that federal act that's now been in place for four years? Could the minister please answer that question?

Mr. Friesen: I'd be happy to provide the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) with a full and comprehensive list of how many plans have actually been registered. I can tell you that there are four plan providers that are federally already registered and ready to provide these products.

The member will understand as well, though, that many companies have been holding back to see what amount of Canadian provinces will enact legislation, and we have it on good advice that there are many companies ready to proceed, ready to register, and really willing to provide these products to Canadians, so I think I would say to him this is a work in progress, but good efforts have already been made.

Mr. Allum: We don't really understand why contributions from employers are not mandatory under this plan as it is in Quebec.

Could the minister please explain why employers ought not to be participating in this particular program?

Mr. Friesen: Well, the member could just as easily ask why it is that the other provinces that have enacted legislation, why it is in those provinces that the employer has not mandatorily been made to contribute. But perhaps the better question he could ask is about the flexibility to both employers and employees. It is not a compulsion that we bring; it is an opportunity.

But I would point to the fact that the Manitoba legislation does mandatorily enrol, and I think that the member will take a comfort in that, this idea that we will put people inside a plan. It forces the education component and they can make good

decisions as they educate themselves. I think it's a good procedure and it lines up with what the majority of other jurisdictions are doing.

Mr. Swan: I appreciate the minister in his undertaking to provide information on how many plans have actually been registered under the federal legislation since 2012. Again, that federal law allows any employee or self-employed person that's working under federal jurisdiction to enter in a plan of this type.

I wonder if the minister could also find out and commit to letting me know how many employees or self-employed individuals are actually covered under this federal act.

Mr. Friesen: So the member is asking how many employees are actually covered under the federal act. I'm looking for a clarification from him.

Is he seeking to understand how many employees in Manitoba exactly are not inside a registered plan at this point? Or is he asking for a ratio in Manitoba of the amount of employees working in the private sector as opposed to those working in the public sector? Or is he asking for an expression of the amount of employees within a defined benefit plan as opposed to a defined contribution plan?

I'm just asking for clarification of his question.

Mr. Swan: I thank the minister. I think this is helpful in the question and answer period if there can be a bit of back and forth.

The question I have is intended to help us understand what the take-up has been under the federal legislation, which has now been in place across Canada in 2012.

My question for the minister is: How many individuals across all of Canada, whose employment is covered under federal legislation, have actually taken advantage of this federal legislation, and how many employees are now covered by a pooled registered pension plan as has been possible in Canada for the past four years?

Mr. Friesen: My department would be happy to provide that information to the member.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, oftentimes people have protection for their pensions. We have to consider people who have low-wage jobs.

Can the money in this pension be garnished and taken away in debt? I believe that this should be clarified before we vote.

Mr. Friesen: So the member may not have heard the answer that I provided to her colleague just earlier. Certainly there are protections in terms of these plans. The same protections even right now if I use the example about unlocking provisions are consistent in a proposed PRPP as they would be with other pension plans. This is an area of provincial responsibility, and so those same issues would fall under the scope of responsibility of the Manitoba Superintendent of Pensions. So there is no exposure here to issues of safety and the safe adjudication of pensions that isn't addressed through the Manitoba provisions and the Manitoba authority.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: Honourable member for River Heights, on a point of order?

Mr. Gerrard: On a point of order.

Apparently, I do need leave to make the substitution on the Public Accounts Committee, so I ask for leave for the December 7th meeting to substitute the MLA for Burrows for the MLA for Keewatinook.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House for a substitution for the December 7th PAC meeting of the member for Burrows for the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen)? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Allum: We appreciate the minister providing the information requested by my friend from Minto. But he should know that in the briefing that we had, we asked these very questions. We asked him to provide us the metrics that were necessary and he's come to the House unprepared today. It's more than a little disappointing.

Could he tell us how his plan compared to the—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

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

* (12:30)

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Micklefield: Yes, Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I'd just like to ask for leave to not see the clock 'til the House leaders have made a few closing remarks to wish everyone a happy holiday.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to not see the clock until the House leaders have had a opportunity to make some comments? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Micklefield: Well, I promise to make this brief. We did not attach a time limit. There is no time limit on this leave, but I will—in the spirit of generosity of the season, I certainly would like to take the opportunity to thank all honourable members of this House for a session that has been memorable, momentous. And I would like to acknowledge the clerks, the pages, the Sergeant-at-Arms, yourself, Madam Speaker, and sincerely on behalf of our government wish all members on all sides of the House a wonderful, peaceful and safe Christmas holiday.

I know that we do—all kinds of things happen in this room, but in the next weeks in particular, I would like to wish you all a very happy and healthy break. So, see you all in March.

Thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Today marks the end of our sessional agreement in this House. This year we've sat for 84 days, which is not exactly a record but is up there. It's been a busy and productive year. I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge all the work done by the many hard-working people in the Chamber and in the Legislature.

I want to thank you, Madam Speaker, for your patience, your good judgment and for your excellent and fair decisions.

I want to thank the Clerk of the House for her support and sage advice, as well as the other clerks and table officers who support our efforts in the House.

I want to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms and the other officers and officials of the House who support our work here each day.

I want to thank the pages for the dedicated efforts.

Like to thank my colleagues on the government side and the independent members for their co-operation and goodwill.

And finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of the staff in this building who work so very hard to support the exercise of our duties of this House.

And lastly, I'd like to take the opportunity to wish everyone merry Christmas, happy holidays and a good new year. And then, of course, we will resume the important business of the House in the coming year.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I want to—

Madam Speaker: Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: I ask for leave to respond to the House leaders' comments.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Okay. I want to, you know, acknowledge the participation of all the MLAs. I want to thank the other House leaders for working co-operatively. I'd like to thank the Speaker, the Clerk and all the Clerk's staff, and indeed all those who are working in the Legislative Chamber, including people in Hansard, who often have difficulty understanding what we're saying, but manage to come through remarkably well.

I wish everybody a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, a wonderful new year and we'll see you all when the Legislature comes back.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: And for me, I just would also like to thank all of you for your patience with my learning curve over the past while, too. There really are a lot of rules that we all have to learn in this place, and I've said before I was never really a rules person, but now I have to become one.

I do want to thank everybody for being part of our democratic process and working very hard here in this House to try to do things better for Manitoba.

And as everybody said, too, we do really want to recognize the Assembly staff. I've certainly come to realize that behind what all of us do here, the Manitoba Legislative Assembly has some very talented, very dedicated people, and you don't often see them. In fact, they're mostly in the background. But, behind all of us, there's hundred people that actually make this Legislative Assembly work.

So to all of you and your families, a very merry Christmas, season's greetings, and I do wish everybody the best. I hope everybody has a really good break and a good rest and we come back refreshed for March to—*[interjection]*—oh, well, I guess a reminder that we do have the open house tomorrow, which is always fun. So we'll see many of you tomorrow here. And we will be singing; the MLA choir will be singing. And we really need a lot

of good voices to carry that off. So we will see everybody tomorrow.

So, to all of you and your families, all the best, and all the best in 2017.

And the hour being past 12:30 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until March 1st, 2017, or to the call of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, December 2, 2016

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Infrastructure Spending	
Bill 7–The New West Partnership Trade Agreement Implementation Act (Various Acts Amended)		Maloway	305
Cullen	295	Pedersen	305
Tabling of Reports		Indigenous Issues	
Stefanson	295	Fontaine	306
		Clarke	306
Ministerial Statements		Indigenous Women's Issues	
National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women		Fontaine	306
Squires	295	Clarke	307
Fontaine	296	Pallister	307
Klassen	296	Community Places	
Fight against Opiates–Update		Kinew	307
Goertzen	297	Pallister	308
Wiebe	298	Clarke	308
Gerrard	298	Home-Care Service	
Jim Eldridge		Lamoureux	308
Pallister	298	Goertzen	309
Selinger	299	Provincial Nominee Program	
Gerrard	300	Lamoureux	309
		Goertzen	309
Members' Statements		Provincial Nominee Program	
Bruce the Mosasaur		Lamoureux	309
Friesen	301	Wishart	309
Munroe Early Childhood Education Centre		New West Partnership	
Maloway	301	Teitsma	309
Treatment of Children in the Justice System		Cullen	310
Klassen	301	Health-Care Services	
Annual Toy Tea		Wiebe	310
Cox	302	Goertzen	310
Night Before Christmas at the Legislature		Freshwater Fish Marketing Board	
Yakimoski	302	Altemeyer	311
		Cox	311
Oral Questions		Pallister	311
Unemployment Rate		Petitions	
F. Marcelino	303	Seniors' School Tax Rebate	
Pallister	303	Maloway	312
Unemployment Rate		Swan	312
Chief	304	Pediatric Insulin Pump Program	
Cullen	304	Wiebe	313
Pallister	305	Grievances	
		Lindsey	313
		Gerrard	315

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Second Readings

Bill 3—The Pooled Registered Pension Plans
(Manitoba) Act

Friesen 317

Questions

Allum 321

Friesen 321

Swan 321

Gerrard 321

Klassen 322

Lamoureux 323

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

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