

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

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

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

Introduction of, or—

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement?

**Carole Vivier**

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to rise in the House to recognize the illustrious three-decade career of Carole Vivier, Manitoba's film commissioner and the CEO, or chief executive officer, of Manitoba Film & Music.

Since 1985 Carole has been at the forefront of developing Manitoba's film and music industries into international success stories. Manitoba's film industry has grown exponentially in that time, and what started out as only a half-a-million-dollar-a-year industry, it's on track to smash a record-breaking \$250 million in film production this year.

And, Madam Speaker, Carole's passion and accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. She's been honoured with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Order of Manitoba, and recently her achievements were recognized by the Academy Board of Directors' Tribute at the 2019 Canadian Screen Awards. And just this month she was inducted into the Manitoba Business Hall of Fame, a well-deserved honour.

And whether she's sharing very exciting stories about her recent visit with Sean Penn as they scouted a local location for his latest movie, or on the set of a film shoot, Carole's enthusiasm is contagious. A true ambassador, she's never too busy to point out all the

exciting upcoming productions set to film right here in Manitoba.

And, Madam Speaker, after more than 30 years of service Carole is retiring in June, and from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of government, I'd like to express our sincere appreciation to Carole for making Manitoba a leading film destination.

Carole, you've left an indelible mark in Manitoba and I can't wait to see where your next journey leads you.

Lights, camera, action, Madam Speaker. I ask all members in this House to turn their attention to the gallery and join us in congratulating Carole in this very amazing career.

Carole, we wish you many great days at the lake, more special memories with your granddaughters and satisfaction in knowing that you are a Manitoba star.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Today we honour Carole Vivier, who is retiring from her post as CEO and film commissioner for Manitoba Film & Music. Her retirement is well earned, as she has worked tirelessly over the last three decades helping to shape Manitoba's film and music arena into the booming industries that they are today.

Carole is more than a creative visionary; she is also a savvy businesswoman. She has been with the MFM since 1985 and served in a leadership role for the past 26 years. During her career she has always passionately championed the talent that exists within our beautiful province. Because of her work Manitoba Film & Music is in a place to provide a strong foundation for emerging creatives.

Carole's commitment, passion and creativity will leave an indelible mark on our province. We are grateful for the contribution Carole made to her industry and to our province, and acknowledge the path that she has put forward for women coming after her.

We thank Carole for her years of service and wish her nothing but the best in her future endeavours and retirement.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate MFM CEO and film commissioner Carole Vivier on her retirement this June, and thank her for her hard work and dedication to our province after three decades of incredible leadership and passion in Manitoba's film and music industries.

Carole is known around the world as an ambassador for Manitoba filmmakers, musicians, producers, creators and crew, as she's been with the corporation since 1985 and has been its leader for the past 26 years. During her time at MFM, Manitoba's film production volume has grown as—and Manitoba has had more musicians per capita than any other province.

She's made really incredible contributions to the success of Manitoba's film and music industries. She's been a champion of independent artists in their earliest efforts, including Guy Maddin, The Weakerthans, Doc Walker, the Crash Test Dummies, Norma Bailey, Tanya Tagaq and many others.

As the province's film commissioner, six of the six MPAA—Motion Picture Association of America—studios—Warner Bros., Sony, Columbia, 20th Century Fox, Disney, Paramount and NBC Universal—have all filmed in Manitoba, as well as many other renowned studios and producers.

I have personally benefited from her hard work. I was an extra in *The Arrow*, and I was a stand-in for Stephen Fry on a bear called Winnie, when I got to work with a then-unknown actor named Michael Fassbender. I like to say that I taught him everything he knows, but that's not true.

Guy Maddin—sorry—and in closing, I wish her all the best in her future endeavors and thank her for extraordinary work in Manitoba's film and music industries.

Thank you so much.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Team Ursel Curling Champions

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize and congratulate Manitoba senior curling champions Team Ursel. This team pulls together from several communities: Terry Ursel of Arden, Brenda Walker of Plumas, Teresa [phonetic] Igonia of Winnipeg, Wanda Rainka of Neepawa, alternate Pat Paramor and coach John Csversko of Neepawa.

This talented team won the 2019 senior women's provincial championship this past February in Rivers, taking the title with a 6-4 victory over Maureen Bonar. This win secured Ursel's spot on the national championship in Chilliwack, BC, this past March.

In preparation for the national event, these ladies spent many hours working hard on and off the ice, balancing home as well as their work lives. The team received overwhelming support from local communities, friends, families, as well as the local curling clubs. Ursel's home rink, the Arden Curling Club, hosted a fantastic send-off celebration for the team before they headed west.

Having been at the national level two years ago, these ladies had experience to build from and certainly demonstrated their skill and talent once again this year.

Team Manitoba made it to the championship round with a record of five and one, but came up short in the bronze medal game and were defeated by Alberta. I'd like to applaud the team's efforts and commitment to the sport and representing Manitoba at the national level.

On behalf of all members of our Assembly, I extend a heartfelt congratulations to Team Ursel on all their successes this season and all the very best for the 2019-2020 curling season.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition. [interjection]

**Émilie McKinney**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** You'll be in opposition soon—

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Kinew:** I rise today to praise a talented young— [interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —Anishinaabekwe.

I first met Émilie McKinney about a year ago at an event where she won the prestigious Startup Canada Young Entrepreneur Award. She was honoured for her work building the Anishinaabe Bimishimo Corporation, which is a leading North American supplier of pow-wow regalia.

Her business, ABC, which she runs with her mother Natalie Foidart, is a manufacturing operation that turns out the metal cones indigenous women wear when they dance the jingle-dress style. Now, this dance was received from a dream generations ago by a young woman who was taught to use it as a healing dance.

Today the jingle dress is part of the competition pow-wow scene, yet it also retains important spiritual significance for many Anishinaabe people.

\* (13:40)

Now, in traditional times, these cones were made by hand out of tin or copper, but more recently that had been replaced by steel fabricated overseas. That is, of course, until Émilie decided to bring production back to our territory. She now mass-produces the cones in Somerset and in nearby Swan Lake First Nation. The jingle dress makers I know choose her product because of its high quality, because it's affordable and because it's made by an indigenous woman.

She's been honoured by the Portage La Prairie chamber of commerce and featured in media outlets like CBC, the Free Press and La Liberté. She's achieved all this at only 18 years of age. Pretty impressive.

Now, recently, Émilie's business has been caught up in the dispute over Donald Trump's steel tariffs. We're lobbying to try and get Émilie and Natalie an exemption, but based on what we've seen from this young woman so far, Trump doesn't stand a chance.

Let's all rise to show this young, successful businessperson and jingle dress dancer our support.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

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

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

*Aja Cameron, Natalie Foidart, Émilie McKinney, Declan Sheldrick.*

### St. James Jr. Canucks

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize the St. James Jr. Canucks, a local hockey team that is mixing their talents on the ice and passion for active citizenship and volunteerism. The Canucks are a community-run

team that has been in existence for close to 41 years, and they last won the championship in 1997-98 season.

The pres. in the team from 1978 until 2015, of course, was Tom Miller, who's known in St. James circles as Mr. Hockey, and was named to the Canadian Hockey Hall of Fame. Over the past four seasons, the team has been led by President Justin Steeves, a teacher in the St. James school division.

The Canucks finished the year with a record of 29-13-3 for 61 points, Madam Speaker, tied for second most points in franchise history and, of course, are in the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League finals as we speak.

Off the ice, the St. James Jr. Canucks give back to the community through volunteering and have accumulated over 440 hours—440 hours, Madam Speaker—of community volunteerism hours. The community events, including Sturgeon Heights carnival, Assiniboine West community pancake breakfast and the Canucks' fall development skills for ages six through 10 and the St. James hockey days.

In March 2017, Canucks player Shane Bigourdon was diagnosed with cancer, and he's been battling the illness for two years and is still going through some aggressive treatments to be declared cancer-free. This past fall, the team took part in CancerCare's Inside Ride where the team raised money and cycled to support Shane and raised over \$2,825 and came in first place in the race.

I want to recognize the St. James Canucks for their winning spirits and active citizenship, both on and off the ice, Madam Speaker, and I'd ask for leave to have the team's names—members' names included in Hansard.

Please join me in wishing the St. James Canucks luck as they compete in the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League championship series even tonight, Madam Speaker.

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

*St. James Jr. Canucks 2018-2019: Shane Bigourdon, Dylan Burton, Cole Chicoine, Nathan Cvar, Cam Danylchuk, Tristan Ezako, Brandon Hughes, Jeremy Idzikowski, Wyatt Kembal, Justin Mackinnon, John McCammon, Tyler Meixner, Jarret Neudorf, Ryan Ostermann, Preston Phillips, Dylan Reinheimer, Chris Sass, Kole Stockham, Adam Thurlbeck,*

*Kieran Ursel, Eric Wankling, Craig Weiss, Tyler Weiss, Mack Whitely, players; Justin Steeves, president; Gavin Mclachlan, general manager; Dustin Hughes, assistant general manager; Blair Mooney, head coach; Matt Levins, Sean Martin, assistant coaches; Scott Forcand, goalie coach; Mark Wankling, equipment manager; Ashley Lund, athletic therapist.*

### **Keewatin-Inkster Neighbourhood Resource Centre**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, the Keewatin-Inkster neighbourhood resource centre, which I will refer to as KIN-RC, recently celebrated its 25th anniversary at the NorWest Co-op food centre, and I am honoured to use this opportunity to share a little bit about what they do.

KIN-RC is a non-profit charitable organization that helps our seniors maintain independent living. They do this by providing a variety of valuable programs and supporting our seniors by connecting them with services, some of which include transportation, legal clinics, assistance with income tax returns, educational presentations, health-wellness programs and activities, emergency response information kits and so much more.

Madam Speaker, these are services made available with the specific goal of ensuring everyone has access to them despite a person's physical, social or financial barriers.

Now, all of this is exceptional work, but what makes KIN-RC really unique is their welcoming nature and their ability to have fun.

Madam Speaker, today we are joined by Jan Burdon, Anne Love, Faith Kopisky, Ruth Neskari and Harvey Sumka. This group really, really enjoys life, and this is evident through all their hard work and volunteerism with KIN-RC.

Whether it's old-school photo booths, decadent pastries and deserts or breaking out in song, Madam Speaker, KIN-RC has fun and they get the job done. I know that I aspire to have the spirit that they have when I get a little older.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I want to table the names and thank all the board members and staff members of KIN-RC and ask my colleagues to help me in congratulating them for their 25 years of ongoing service to the North End of Winnipeg.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Burrows.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I also ask for leave to share with the House that 50 years old is a very important age that we like to celebrate, and so I want to acknowledge that it is the Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party, the member from St. Boniface, 50th birthday today.

Happy birthday.

### **Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week**

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Happy birthday, sir.

It is my pleasure to stand in the Legislature today to celebrate National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week, also known as NOTDAW.

Just outside the Legislature this morning, I was pleased to be joined by the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Friesen) to announce that the paper donor registration cards will no longer be included in the Manitoba Health card mail outs. We're sending two different messages here. Potential donors will now be directed to the online registry at [signupforlife.ca](http://signupforlife.ca).

The green light campaign for NOTDAW runs the week of April 22nd to 29th. You have the green light to save a life by agreeing to be an organ and tissue donor.

We were joined by colleagues Kim Dodds, director of Tissue Bank Manitoba; Dr. Faisal Siddiqui, a physician with Transplant Manitoba's Gift of Life Program; and Cathy and Dean Omeniuk, as well as a couple of MLAs. Dean is a heart transplant recipient.

Over the next week, green landmarks and ribbons will be seen across Canada 'organing'—honouring donors and donor families who have given the gift of life, the gift of hope, and to recognize the thousands of patients in need of transplant.

Thank you to my colleagues who worked on the task force on organ and tissue donation. I have been able to meet with ministers and departments to discuss how we can act on those recommendations.

As you know, Madam Speaker, our daughter Jessica fell ill with kidney disease, and that progressed to the point where she was placed on dialysis, needing a kidney transplant.

Not everyone who needs a transplant has a living donor available, as we did. That's why it's important to indicate your wishes by going to [signupforlife.ca](http://signupforlife.ca).

Just over a year ago there were 22,902 Manitobans who had registered as donors, and as of today, thanks to the Logan Boulet Effect, we have over 37,000, in fact 37 more Manitobans who have registered.

Madam Speaker, I know we have a few Star Wars fans in the Legislature, and I saw a clip of Episode IV: new hope over the weekend. When R2-D2 is damaged—

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to allow the member to conclude his statement?  
[Agreed]

The member for Brandon West, to conclude his statement.

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

When R2-D2 is damaged, C-3PO says: You must repair him. If any of my circuits or gears will help, I'll gladly donate them.

The gift of life is the ultimate act of generosity, and I encourage all Manitobans to discuss organ and tissue decisions with your family and then register their intent to donate at Sign Up For Life.

Give somebody the gift of life.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Charlie Genaille and Kayla Farias, who are the guests of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

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

\* (13:50)

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Sri Lanka Bombings Condolences

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I wanted to begin by

acknowledging the tragedy that happened in Sri Lanka over the weekend. I know that there was a moment of silence held this morning, so I want to acknowledge that as well, but just with us returning to question period I thought it appropriate to begin by, first of all, condemning this heinous violence. An act of terrorism carried out against Christians in their house of worship, certainly, is, you know, a complete tragedy, but also, just to reflect on the loss of life and that, you know, the Easter weekend is so meaningful to many people, it just seems so awful that those families and that country and, indeed, many people around the world were affected by this. So I just wanted to put that on the record.

Again, we know here in Manitoba health care is a top-of-mind issue, and I would like to ask the Premier a question about nurses in the province.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I appreciate my colleague's words in respect of the Sri Lanka tragedy. It is totally inexcusable and unacceptable for violence to be chosen as a course of action for anyone and, certainly, in this way in which violence was presented by some to others, it was—it exacerbates the natural anger and frustration we feel when we see others make these choices, but it is a—certainly, a small emotional impact on us versus the impact it would have on the families directly, on the friends and directly on the community where people have desired to place themselves in a life of peace and mutual support and friendship.

So I thank the member for his good comments today, and although we are certainly—most certainly blessed to live in a country and in a province that is relatively free of violence, we always feel the pain and anguish of those who are not as fortunate and blessed.

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

### Health-Care Reform Nurse Staffing Levels

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We know that nurses in the province have really, really been negatively impacted by the cuts that this government has made to health care. We know that nurses at St. Boniface Hospital were—are working tons of mandatory overtime. We know that there are fewer nurses working in the health-care system today. We know that there was that misguided ad about nurses placed recently and

that the WRHA CEO told nurses that they are in a valley of despair.

But now, because of these documents that we've obtained through FIPPA that I'll table for the Premier at this time, we've also learned that the Premier is now forced to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on private nurses to work in public hospitals because of all the chaos that his cuts have caused. We know he's rushed into this plan.

I'd just like to know: Why didn't the Premier's plan to change health care include having enough nurses at Winnipeg hospitals?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I thank all of our staff in the health-care transformation to a system that works for patients for involving themselves in a supportive way in moving to a better system.

The system we were handed by the previous government was one which was broken. We are, yes, increasing by over \$400 million this year alone the investments that we are putting into health care. So the member's preamble is false in that respect.

But more importantly, we are endeavouring to work with our front-line workers, our management as well, to get better service delivery to the patients of this province. Patient-centred care is what nurses want and they want to work in a system that works for those patients. We inherited a system that didn't. We're creating a system that does.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, it seems like a pretty basic tenet of health care that there should be enough nurses available in a hospital to provide care for patients. Now, that's to say nothing of the important relationship that is created between nurses and their patients when there is a consistent presence of the same nursing staff working with somebody over their stay. But that's all out the window.

Again, the Premier has rushed into this plan to close emergency rooms and to cut health-care services in Manitoba, and now we see—according to the documents that he's filed on the floor behind him—that the amount of nurses in hospital is insufficient to care for the patients there, and, as a result, over the past two years we've seen an ever-increasing amount of money spent on private nurses to work at hospitals in Winnipeg.

So I'd repeat my question again for the Premier: Why did his plan to cut and change health care in

Manitoba not include enough nurses to staff our hospitals?

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, \$400 million more isn't a cut. More nurses working in our system than ever before is certainly an indication of our ability to provide better care.

The member fails to recognize something pretty important to Manitobans. We had a system when we were dead last under the NDP. We were 10th and we were getting further behind ninth, and they did nothing about it, Madam Speaker. They had advice that said you should follow this advice and you can catch up, maybe, to some of the ninth-position and eighth-position provinces on delivery of services.

But they didn't have the courage to act on that advice and the member doesn't either. He tells us, instead of going forward to a better system we should go back to a failed system.

Madam Speaker, I don't think Manitobans want us to take that advice. We won't. They broke it and we're going to fix it.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, Madam Speaker, my advice to the Premier on health care is very simple: keep enough nurses in the hospitals so that they can care for patients. It's perhaps a radical proposal for a Premier who wants to close emergency rooms not just in Winnipeg, but also ambulance stations right across the province, but on this side of the House we say that there should be enough nurses in hospitals to care for patients.

Because of the rushes that they've brought in to cut and close services right across the city, we know that more nurses than ever are being forced to work mandatory overtime. We know that that's having a cascade effect which is causing other nurses to call in sick and miss their shifts; and the bottom line is that the hospitals are now scrambling to find enough nurses to staff their shifts, hence, the increased spending on private nurses in hospitals.

So I'd ask the Premier again: Why didn't his plan to change health care not include a plan to have enough nurses in Winnipeg's hospitals?

**Mr. Pallister:** More nurses working than ever before. Overtime is down, over two years ago, 26 per cent. The member is false and false again. And as far as his advice is concerned, his advice is



consistent and very simple, and it's bad advice. His advice is to go back to a time when emergency room waits were the longest in Canada: at Concordia, seven hours people waited in emergency rooms before they saw treatment. More people were leaving—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —emergency rooms than ever before, giving up on even any hope of getting health care.

And the member also handed us a system which—despite good advice to proceed with changes, the previous government did not follow that advice—the highest ambulance fees in the country, Madam Speaker: \$500, \$600 and more, and Manitobans were discouraged from even calling an ambulance and asking for help under the previous government.

Those ambulance fees are cut in half. Wait times are down more here than in any other province, and we're making progress.

Where the member tells us to go back, Madam Speaker, he may wish to go back. Manitoba nurses want us to go forward to a better system that serves the patients of this province.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** The problem the Premier has is that there's not going to be any emergency rooms for those ambulances to go to once he's done with the health-care system in our city. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** In 2007—*[interjection]* Oh, okay, all the heckling? Well, yes, go to the doorstep this spring and see how happy people are about closing the Concordia and Seven Oaks emergency rooms in Winnipeg. I guarantee that all the backbenchers and—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —ministers who cannot raise their voices in the caucus room or the Cabinet room will be in for a rude awakening.

On this side of the House we stand up for health care and, again, the advice is simple: staff-up hospitals in Winnipeg so that there are enough nurses to take care of patients.

Will the Premier please answer the question: Why didn't he plan to have enough nurses to care for patients in Winnipeg hospitals?

**Mr. Pallister:** Brave talk coming from a lad who can't organize his own political party. The fact is he wants to organize health care, but he can't raise money. He can't even get his people to go to the doors, but he talks about the doors. Let's talk about the doors. Let's talk about the doors that were closed to people who wanted health care. Let's talk about the doors people were afraid to walk out of because an ambulance was going to charge them \$600. Let's talk about those doors.

Let's talk about the campaign of fear the NDP always engages in when it comes to health care. Just saying that there's going to be no emergency rooms for Manitoba patients reminds me of what they campaigned on—*[interjection]*

\* (14:00)

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —last time. They said there'd be no cancer drugs for cancer patients. They said that children of teachers should be afraid. They're all about fear, and that's why they didn't have the courage to fix the health-care system that we on this side of the House are fixing.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Here are the facts, Madam Speaker.

In 2017-2018, St. Boniface Hospital spent nothing on private nursing. The year following they spent over \$100,000 to address the chronic shortages this Premier's cuts have created. Concordia and Seven Oaks hospitals, they each spent around \$50,000 a year to address the chaos and confusion this Premier's cuts are causing.

Again, these are hundreds of thousands of dollars that are being spent on hospitals in Winnipeg because those hospitals do not have enough nurses to cover shifts. The reason why is because this Premier is rushing headlong with his plan to close emergency rooms and to cut health care in the province of Manitoba.

So, again, we've laid out the facts. We've shown the evidence. The only thing amiss right now is a Premier willing to stand up and answer a very simple question.

Why has this Premier not planned to have enough nurses in Winnipeg hospitals?

**Mr. Pallister:** There right there, Madam Speaker, is why the NDP was decimated to the little rump

they represent now, because they continue to misrepresent the facts: \$400 million of additional investment this year alone in health care, and the member keeps talking about cuts because all he's got is misinformation and fear. The NDP—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —increased the use—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —of private-duty agency nurses more in the last three years of their administration than at any time in the history of Manitoba as a province.

The fact is they promised they'd end hallway medicine. What they did instead was they created highway medicine where more people than ever before were going to other places to get health care because they couldn't get it under the NDP. They doubled the ambulance fees. They created the longest wait times in the country, and now the member says, let's go back to those halcyon days when health care was miserable and ranked 10th out of 10.

I don't think so, Madam Speaker.

#### **Access to Mifegymiso Universal Coverage**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Well, good news for women and girls' reproductive health here in Manitoba and across Canada: an ultrasound is no longer mandatory before prescribing the abortion pill. This means the last obstacle between women and girls fully exercising their reproductive rights and accessing Mifegymiso is this Premier's (Mr. Pallister) archaic views and his refusal to provide universal coverage.

Will the Premier, and his ministers who do his bidding, put their archaic views aside and commit to universal coverage of the abortion pill today?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Our government is aware that last week Health Canada updated their product monograph for Mifegymiso, and we're reviewing all options to ensure that we get the best outcomes for women and girls in the province of Manitoba. That is what our government has been committed to since the day we took office. That is what our government continues to do. We're making increased investments. That's why we announced additional funding

for the West Central Women's Resource Centre, something the NDP never did.

We are making investments to enhance the lives of women and girls in the province of Manitoba and we'll continue to do that.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** So, again, about abortion. This change by Health Canada will reduce wait times and ease access for women and girls in rural areas, especially small remote communities that do not have access to ultrasound services. Women and girls in northern and rural communities will no longer have to travel to have an ultrasound, Madam Speaker, but they may be forced to still travel long distances in Manitoba to access the abortion pill for free.

Health Canada's changes are another step towards greater respect and practice of women and girls' reproductive health.

Will the Premier change his archaic views and commit to providing universal coverage today?

**Ms. Squires:** Madam Speaker, \$414 million more is what this government is investing in health care every year over the NDP. That is because we want to ensure that women and girls and all Manitobans get the health-care services that they need, whether they're living in Winnipeg or in rural or remote Manitoba.

We're working to get better outcomes for women, not to mention the fact that we are taking action on the PST. When the NDP went and jacked up taxes that disproportionately hurt women in the province of Manitoba, particularly single mothers, we are standing up for all women in the province to get better outcomes and improve the lives of women and girls.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Unfortunately, the minister can't even say the word abortion or focus on the question, which is abortion. Health Canada said, and I quote: The change responds to concerns that some patients may have been facing unnecessary barriers or delays in accessing this product. End quote.

Manitoba is one of the last two provinces that do not provide universal coverage for Mifegymiso. This is regressive, it is backwards, and it is disrespectful

to Manitoba women and girls in exercising their full reproductive rights.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and, clearly, his ministers put aside their archaic views and commit today to universal coverage of the abortion pill? It's quite simple.

**Ms. Squires:** Speaking of regressive actions that a government can take, we'll take no lessons from members opposite. For years they failed women and girls in the province of Manitoba. When the West Central Women's Resource Centre knocked on their door in 2008 and asked for an increase in funding to help women fleeing domestic violence and sexual violence, what did they get from the NDP? The answer was no. When the West Central Women's Resource Centre knocked on the door of the NDP office in 2009, the answer was no.

The answer was no until this government formed, and we're taking action to help women, improve the lives of women and girls throughout the entire province. We're getting better outcomes. Whether they're needing health services or supports to help them fleeing domestic violence, this is the—

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

#### **Lifelight Air Ambulance Privatization Concerns**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** When time is of the essence, Manitobans want to know that they can get act—can get the care to—they can access the care they need as quickly as possible. But recently, a person who needed this very care faced a five-hour ambulance ride from Dauphin instead of a quick plane ride because of Lifelight staffing issues.

Sadly, this government's lack of care and consideration over Lifelight has created ongoing staffing issues that have put patients at risk. The medical director of Lifelight has even said that he has never had a vacancy in over a decade until now because of this government.

Will the minister put patients first? Will he back off on privatizing Lifelight?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I thank the member for the question.

Manitobans, including those who live in the Parkland region, can have a strong degree of confidence that Lifelight will continue to provide

a good, a robust service of care delivering Manitoba patients to the care that they need.

That member knows that this government moved quickly to hire pilots. That member knows this government moved quickly to undertake scheduled maintenance on planes and hire nurses as well, and we're doing other contingency planning to make sure that that provision of care remains in place while we continue to act on an RFP process and do what nine other provinces are already doing.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** The most recent case of this government's mismanagement of Lifelight has led to physicians in Dauphin speaking up against the looming privatization. All doctors who deliver critical emergency care in Manitoba's rural, remote communities have been consistently clear with this government who is not listening: privatization will not put patients first. And they aren't wrong, Madam Speaker.

But they're not listening. A five-hour ambulance ride, nobody should have to go through, when there's Lifelight available.

Will the minister listen to these doctors and to Manitobans and back off from privatizing Lifelight?

\*(14:10)

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, I want to assure the member that that provision of service for air ambulance remains in place. It's robust and continuing to serve Manitobans, like it did yesterday when it responded and picked up a patient from Dauphin just on the weekend.

Madam Speaker, we have a system in which every day Lifelight doctors are working in conjunction with other system experts. MTCC is fielding the calls and decisions are being undertaken to decide what provision of service would be best to carefully and safely get patients the care they need. That work goes on every day. Those are medical determinations, not political ones.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Those very doctors that this minister talks about are the doctors who are telling him not to privatize Lifelight.

While this Premier is busy handing out millions of dollars in contracts to his friends over at Exchange Income Corporation, he is starving this essential public service to Manitobans. This is money that could have been invested into improving public service, but instead it's—he's being—it's being used to help his friends.

Will the Premier listen to Manitobans and those very doctors that that minister keeps getting up and talking about and back off his plan to privatize Lifelight?

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I can understand why that member does not embrace the concept of shopping smarter on behalf of all Manitobans, because the evidence was not in that the previous government ever did it.

But, Madam Speaker, even in Alberta, until last week there was an NDP government who had built a Lifelight-type system in exactly the same way as we are now seeking responses back. I am unaware of any correspondence from that member to the previous premier of the NDP government in Alberta that advised her that her system was unsafe. Why, because it wasn't unsafe. We're getting better value for all Manitobans' dollars in building a better, more sustainable Lifelight service not just today, but long into the future.

### **Health-Care Funding Federal Transfers**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I know the Premier can be hard to reach, but he should know that his numbers and talking points on health-care funding are several years out of date.

I'll retable this chart from the other day which is based on the government's own budget and annual reports. On March 6th, the Premier stated on the record that Manitobans would see an additional \$300 million over what the NDP spelled—spent on health care. That number changed this past Monday to \$414 million and today to 400, none of which are accurate.

Since the NDP left government in 2016 Manitoba has only seen a one-year increase of \$289 million. Of that, \$184 million, or 64 per cent, came from federal increases to the Canada Health transfers, meaning this government has only increased health spending by \$105 million—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —three years ago.

Does the Premier know the difference between budgeted and actuals, or does he—and do he and his staff need to brush up on their basic math?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Happy birthday to the member, Madam Speaker, and I hope he'll consider the rebate for election expenses that we have offered him as an early birthday present and show gratitude to the taxpayers of Manitoba for that support that his party will receive.

I would remind him that he is on record as supporting larger subsidies, higher business taxes and higher personal taxes, and I would encourage him to go to the doors and make sure everyone else knows that that's what he wants as well.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** We do need to be clear on health-care funding. In 2008, as an MP, the Premier voted to change Canada's health-care funding formula away from one based on need. Alberta received a billion dollars more a year, but every other province, including Manitoba, got less.

In 2011 the Harper Conservatives refused to negotiate and unilaterally changed the funding formula for health care from 6 per cent to 3 per cent a year.

As I've told this Minister of Health and the Premier on multiple occasions, I disagree with it, but the Premier is doing what he always does. He plays the victim when he's the one doing the cutting.

This government's own budget figures show the federal share of health-care funding in Manitoba has been going up every year, and it is now 22.76 per cent, not below 18 per cent as he has mistakenly claimed.

The Premier has said we do not need a government that will make up numbers and then pretend it's involved in health care while its participation declines. I couldn't agree more, Madam Speaker.

Will the Premier admit what everyone knows is true, that his government is cutting health care even as federal transfers go up?

**Mr. Pallister:** While the member chooses to stand with his federal cousins who won't support the rule

of law in our country, Madam Speaker, he also chooses to stand with his federal cousins who won't support sustainable health-care funding, and that is unfortunate. While he puts partisanship and his federal cousins as his top priority, Madam Speaker—apart from more office space—he is actually mistaken in his priorities. We are not.

We will stand with Manitobans for a sustainable health-care partnership between federal and provincial government, and we will continue to do that because we believe that a sustainable health-care system is the top priority for Manitobans and for Canadians.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago the Minister of Health tabled a very illegible chart, which I'll quote with his description. Quote: A helpful graph that shows health-care spending has been up every year under this PC government. Every year, up, up, up. End quote.

Actual—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —spending has been cuts, cuts, cuts, since costs are rising, Madam Speaker. Our chart, which we supplied, has the actual numbers according to this government's own—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —reports. In the first budget year of this government, 2016-17—put together by the former NDP government—they spent \$6,436,000,000 on health, \$40 million over budget. According to our current fiscal year's quarterly report, health spending for 2018-19 will be 6 billion, 533 million: \$13 million less than this government spent in their first year of working with an NDP budget.

This year's budget numbers aren't credible, since for the past two years this government has underspent what they promised by \$438 million—

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

**Mr. Pallister:** The federal Liberals, when Paul Martin was Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, can—committed to partnering with the provinces and said they would maintain the funding for health care at 25 per cent of budgeted amount. In Manitoba it's now below 19 per cent and sinking. It will be a net loss to Manitoba, because of the Trudeau government's decisions over the next 10 years, of

over \$2 billion, and the member sides with the Trudeau government; and, Madam Speaker, we side with Manitobans for sustainable—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

#### **Brush Clearing on Lake St. Martin Route Construction Company Responsible**

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

The Interlake Reserves Tribal Council recently wrote ministers in the Pallister government to express concern that the clearing of the brushwork on the 24-kilometre Lake St. Martin channel route has been completed without the required environmental approvals and without informing its partners of the affected First Nations.

Can the Premier tell us the name of the construction company that did this work, and was this part of the untendered access road contract to Sigfusson Northern and Glen Hartman Construction? [interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Well, Madam Speaker, I understand why the member for Elmwood would be bitter, because for the 60 years that he was here the Lake Manitoba channels have been talked about and they were never started. This is a project that has been talked about year after year after year, and nothing was ever accomplished. In fact, in 2011 we had a catastrophic storm that cost this Province and taxpayers over \$1 billion.

Where the NDP and the member for Elmwood failed, our government's going to succeed.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** The minister certainly is not answering the question.

The Interlake Reserves Tribal Council writes that the Pallister government has not yet filed an environmental assessment for the construction of the channel. In it the IRTC asserts that work to clear the right-of-way along a 24-kilometre route has already happened and that they were not informed, let alone consulted about the work.

Can the Premier tell us the name of the construction company that did this work, and was this

work part of the untendered access road contract to Sigfusson Northern and/or Glen Hartman Construction?

\* (14:20)

**Mr. Schuler:** I understand why the member for Elmwood is so bitter, because in all his years when he was serving under the Doer and the Selinger governments nothing was ever done on that channel. In fact, in 2011 Manitoba faced a storm that cost taxpayers in this province and in Canada over a billion dollars.

Madam Speaker, where the NDP could not seem to get any projects done, we're getting this project done. While we were negotiating with the federal government, the member for Elmwood and all the NDP members were standing and—or sitting on their hands, rather, and doing nothing. We got a deal signed with the federal government to help us on this project, a project that's necessary for the entire Lake Manitoba basin. Where they failed, we're getting the project done. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

The honourable member for Elmwood, on a final supplementary.

#### **Environmental Assessment Authorization**

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and, clearly, I can't get an answer from the minister.

My question is to the Premier. The Interlake Reserves Tribal Council says that the Province is yet to file an environmental assessment for the construction of the channel, yet a 24-kilometre route has already been cleared.

Did the Premier authorize the clearance without the environmental assessments? Is this the Premier's mess or is this another mess created by his Infrastructure minister? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

I've been calling for order a number of times today, and there are members that are sitting there as I am calling for order that are still continuing to make noise. So I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please. We've got lots of guests in the gallery and I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please, that when questions are being asked and answered, that we respectfully listen to them.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** What was the name of the government that was in charge for

17 years, Madam Speaker, that didn't get the floodway channel built, that didn't get people back to their home communities in the Lake Manitoba basin, that didn't build Freedom Road and that didn't, in its last three years, do a single acre of treaty land entitlement? We all know the answer to that question.

And which government is doing all these things, Madam Speaker? This government is.

#### **Manitoba 150 Celebrations Infrastructure Projects**

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden):** Madam Speaker, the year 2020 will mark a significant milestone for our province, as we celebrate Manitoba's 150th birthday. We are all proud Manitobans, and on this side of the House we believe the importance of recognizing this milestone.

Earlier today our government announced a series of infrastructure projects to mark Manitoba 150.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure tell us—please tell us in this House the exciting announcement that he had done today?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** I'd like to thank the member for Arthur-Virden for that great question.

Earlier today I was pleased to join the Premier of Manitoba and many of my colleagues to announce the first phase of a \$45 million infrastructure investment to mark Manitoba's 150th birthday.

In addition to the rehabilitation of Memorial Park here in Winnipeg, there will be projects undertaken in the Interlake, Selkirk, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Churchill, the Parkland, the Whiteshell, Turtle Mountain park, and the list goes on and on. Seventeen projects in all across Manitoba.

We're proud to be making these investments to celebrate this great province. Manitoba, you look great for being 150 years old. Let's celebrate.

#### **Manitoba 150 Celebrations Infrastructure Projects**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to ask some questions about those very projects. I know that during Manitoba's centennial there were some really remarkable projects: the Centennial Centre, which includes the concert hall and the Manitoba Museum, for example, and I would have thought the

Manitoba 150 project might have focused on something really outstanding that would only occur during a year of celebration.

The lasting investments in infrastructure—and after all, it's a year so special the Premier thinks it would be wrong to call an election and ruin everyone's fun. So are we celebrating the achievements of major Manitobans? No, Madam Speaker. The projects include intersection improvements in Binscarth, paved shoulders and gravel road improvements.

Now, I like Binscarth, Madam Speaker. It deserves this project and I'm—while I'm all for basic investments in infrastructure, are these supposed to be—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —celebrated by Manitobans because we can only expect the Premier to make them about once every 150 years?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, he just kissed Riding Mountain goodbye.

The fact of the matter is that today's announcement's just the appetizer, Madam Speaker. We have a number of other projects that are being worked on, that are planned, and announcements will follow.

The important thing to understand is that we deserve to celebrate this 150th birthday as people unified together in celebration of what is Canada's most wonderful province, and we are blessed to live in one of the world's most wonderful countries as well, and I would hope the member'd get in the spirit of things, especially on his birthday. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, order.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** I know the Premier has said we can't have an election next year because it could disrupt the economy and the people want to have a party.

We all have different ways of having fun at parties. I guess some people think gravel roads and paved—are the way to go—then it's a real cause for celebration—and that the press release says Manitoba 150 will set aside \$45 million to 'sprate'—support trade and commerce and increase and support Manitoba tourism, improve safety level and service, improve drainage and improve ride-quality of roads.

And, now, nothing brings people together like an intersection, Madam Speaker, and who doesn't love drainage? I know it's a passion of many Manitobans, but this is 86.8 kilometres of roadwork. It should be routine, not a reason to break out the champagne. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** Why is this committee doing basic roadwork?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, we—the member's right, we do have different ways of celebrating, but we can celebrate together as well. One thing we can't celebrate is the federal Liberal government flaunting the rule of law and causing the rejection of its own members who stood up for it.

We certainly shouldn't celebrate \$20 million-plus going to buy new fridges at Loblaws. I don't know how we should celebrate several hundred million dollars of little postcards going out to remind Canadians of what a hero Justin Trudeau is for raising the carbon tax. And I'm not sure, entirely, if the member wants to get it out there either that he supports higher taxes on Manitobans while he supports bigger subsidies for himself and his political party.

But, Madam Speaker, these are not things that we would want to celebrate. We'll celebrate, instead, putting more money on the kitchen tables of Manitoba families and helping Manitoba grow even better in the future.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** Manitoba's 150th is a reason to celebrate and to reflect, and we have amazing historic, cultural and artistic institutions and natural attractions across this province. But the—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —infrastructure for those cultural attractions have been left unmaintained, sometimes for decades. At the concert hall the musicians of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra cannot hear each other because infrastructure needs replacing. The Manitoba Museum is on a major fundraising campaign.

I know that roads are so bad in much of our province, as well as Winnipeg, we might want to throw a party if we can make it to the nearest stop

sign without bending a rim on a pothole or throwing our wheels out of alignment, but let's not pretend that anyone is going to travel to Manitoba for the 150th because of new gravel roads.

The Premier has left \$1.1 billion on the table in funding for infrastructure projects.

Are these projects going to be used to tap into federal funding?

**Mr. Pallister:** I'm sorry, Madam Speaker, I didn't quite catch that last bit, but I did catch the bit about criticizing us for actually helping people throughout rural Manitoba and the North get around on roads, and I'm not sure I share the concern the member has raised at all.

But we are supporting numerous other projects for the betterment of our society: Diversity Gardens, the aviation museum, Inuit art gallery, Manitoba Heritage Trust, new Conservation Trust, the envy of all other Canadian provinces, Madam Speaker. And we will continue to celebrate those who we owe so much to in this province: our indigenous culture, our Metis culture, our veterans who've worked so hard to give us the rights we enjoy and should never take for granted, and, frankly, the solid sense of community and volunteerism that exists in this province that is, above all else, indicative of the quality of people who live in this beautiful province.

#### **Provincial Nominee Program Fee Newcomer Support Services**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** Quote: Every dollar that we collect stays in the immigration file. It is not a cash grab by the government. End of quote.

\* (14:30)

That's what the former minister of Education said and committed to when he brought in a new fee for newcomers in Manitoba. Yet now, over \$5 million has been taken from newcomers, and the Pallister government's recent commitment is far less than that. It's a broken promise.

Why has the minister broken trust with newcomers to Manitoba?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training):** Well, Madam Speaker, we are investing all of the money back into immigration services. That includes reducing the wait time that grew under the NDP for those who were applying under the PNP program. It almost took many of them 150 years to get their application considered under the NDP.

We're welcoming Manitoba—or new Manitobans, new Canadians under the PNP program. We have a record number who were processed this year. We have a record number we expect to be processed next year in Manitoba and we're a welcoming province. We're a welcoming government, and we continue to make Manitoba the home of hope, Madam Speaker.

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

\* \* \*

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, on House business.

**Madam Speaker:** On House business.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Earlier this afternoon I tabled a list of names. I would like to see if there's leave to include them in Hansard.

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

*KIN-RC Board Members: Jan Burdon, Shannon Cecotka, Lila Knox, Faith Kopisky, Anne Love, Ruth Neskar, Elsie Picklyk, Dawn Ziemanski. Staff members: Tracy Antonation, Harvey Sumka.*

### **PETITIONS**

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

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

### Daylight Saving Time

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to amend the 'offential' time act to abolish daylight saving time in Manitoba effective November 4, 2019, resulting in

Manitoba remaining on Central Standard Time throughout the year and in perpetuity.

This petition is signed by Vincent Stepaniuk, Bev Winnicky, Caroline Frey and many, many more fine Manitobans.

### Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Cathy Dear, Jennifer Fulcher, Cheri Besignano and many other Manitobans.

\* (14:40)

### **Lake Winnipeg Fisheries Consultation**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) On March 11th, 2019, the Manitoba government announced steps to address the sustainability of the Lake Winnipeg fishery. As part of this initiative, the Manitoba government offered the option of voluntary individual quota entitlement buybacks to fishers working on Lake Winnipeg. Fishers were given until March 21st, 2019 (11 days, eight business days) to decide whether to voluntarily surrender their individual quota

entitlement. The deadline for completed documentation is March 31st, 2019, (21 days or 15 business days). The quota entitlement surrender is permanent.

(2) The Manitoba Department of Sustainable Development states that it is committed to, quote, develop comprehensive shared management strategies in consultation with First Nations, Metis and licensed hunters and anglers to give local communities a greater voice and ensure long-term sustainability of our fish and wildlife populations, end quote.

(3) The Manitoba government did not consult with fishers prior to the March 11th announcement. A 30-day consultative period was announced at the same time as the voluntary quota entitlement buyback initiative.

(4) Fishers did not receive copies of the documentation and data regarding the state fish stocks in Lake Winnipeg that were the basis of the Manitoba government's decision to proceed with the quota entitlement buyback initiative.

(5) The quota entitlement buyback will have a significant impact on the economy and well-being of the Fisher River Cree Nation and other First Nations communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) In support of the Fisher River Cree Nation, we request that the government of Manitoba begin a process of consultation with indigenous peoples about the future of commercial fisheries on Lake Winnipeg.

And this was signed by Brenda Tate, Maria Harper, Jim Russ and many other fine Manitobans.

### **Flin Flon General Hospital Obstetric Services**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(8) There has been no commitment from this provincial government that mothers and their escorts who have to travel to The Pas will be covered by the northern patient transport program.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reinstate obstetric delivery services at Flin Flon General Hospital and work with the government of Saskatchewan and the federal government to ensure obstetric services—[interjection]—continue to be available—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —on a regional basis.

This petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Pauline Lamarre, Mary Danis and Olivia Kays, as well as many other Manitobans.

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

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to the petition is as follows:

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

\* (14:50)

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition was signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

(3) High-quality licensed child care has a lasting, positive impact on children's development, is a

fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this is signed by Allison Holmes, Hazel Danielle Lewis, Kirby Leigh White and many, many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Mike Johannson, Trent Wall, Erika Blatz and many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

The reasons for this—sorry—the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) The workforce shortage of trained early childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled—*[interjection]*

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Sorry, I lost my place, Madam Speaker. I'll start at No. 5 again.

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

\* (15:00)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by Jennifer Williams, Rosalyn Asito and Eloiga Ticzon and many other Manitobans.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by M. Wiebs [*phonetic*], Lori Franz and Melanie Piffler [*phonetic*] and many more Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** On House business, Madam Speaker.

Pursuant to rule 33(7), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one previously put forward by the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma), the title of which is Reducing the PST.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that, pursuant to rule 33(7), the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one previously put forward by the honourable member for Radisson. The title of the resolution is Reducing the PST.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, would you please resolve into Committee of Supply.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider Estimates this afternoon.

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Concurrent Sections)

#### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\*(15:10)

**Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook):** Please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of Executive Council.

Does the honourable First Minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Yes, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Pallister:** We've inherited a mess, of course, from the previous administration. We're focused on

fixing the finances of our province, repairing the services and rebuilding our economy in partnership with private sector and with the use of public sector partnerships, as well; and we are making, I think, pretty solid headway after just three years as of last week. But much more work remains to be done. We're excited to do that work, and I'm proud to have the opportunity to be part of a team that is so focused on building a stronger Manitoba.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the honourable First Minister for those comments.

Does the Leader of the Official Opposition have any opening comments?

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Yes, I do.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The leader—[*interjection*] I have to repeat that.

Does the Leader of the Official Opposition have any opening comments?

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank you and also, through you, the Premier for the time to go through this exercise, which, I do think, is an important component of our democracy, diving into some of the decisions and budgetary issues and other policy priorities of the government is certainly important. I know a lot of people in Winnipeg and across the rest of Manitoba are very concerned about a few issues that are top of mind this spring and summer.

Definitely, Manitoba's 150th birthday being interfered with, an early election call is top of mind to almost nobody that I speak to. However, health care is, and, certainly, you know, the government's decision on health care, planning to close emergency rooms this year, certainly, something that a lot of people don't understand, a lot of people don't agree with.

And in particular, I take seriously the words of nurses, you know, who talk to me regularly about some of the issues they face, and one refrain in particular is—you know, for nurses who worked in the system for 30 years, they say the health-care system is worse than it's ever been. So I take that very seriously and take seriously the responsibility to play a constructive role in trying to improve health care.

I know also that people stop me when I'm outside and talk to me about the state of roads in the city of Winnipeg, and I think everybody can relate. There's an announcement today about Memorial.

Well, it's a pretty bumpy road right now. A lot of other streets around Winnipeg are suffering, and the mayor, city council, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), his ministers have had a lot of back and forth on that topic. It doesn't appear to have translated into improving services or getting the job done when it comes to fixing streets in the city of Winnipeg. So that's certainly something that's very important for all of us.

So I very much look forward to being able to dive a little bit deeper into some of these issues and being able to raise some of these questions that we have so that we can try and gain a greater understanding for some of the decisions that are being made here and also, of course, to contrast how I think decisions might be taken in a better, more productive manner to have a constructive working relationship with the City of Winnipeg, with others levels of government, and, of course, with those who work in health care.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) for those comments.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered for a department in Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of line item 2.1.(a) and proceed with consideration of the remaining items referred in resolution 2.1.

At this time we invite the First Minister's staff to join us at the table, and they may settle in and I'll ask the First Minister to introduce the staff in attendance.

**Mr. Pallister:** I am joined by, Mr. Chair, the Clerk of the Executive Council, Cabinet Secretary Fred Meier; Provincial Comptroller Aurel Tess—thank you, Aurel, and by Glen Lewis, senior advisor to the Clerk of Executive Council, as well my assistant, Ryan Werbicki.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the First Minister for those introductions.

Given that the Estimates of Executive Council consist of only one resolution, the discussion will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, last week, prior to the long weekend, the Premier announced his intention to conduct a review of the City of Winnipeg and talked about their finances and doing a fiscal review, and overall it seemed a bit unclear. I think there was a lot

of details that weren't really sketched out in terms of how such a review would work.

One of the points that I guess that I'm interested, just to begin with, is, you know, the Premier offered to conduct this fiscal review of the City of Winnipeg. However, at the provincial level, he's not really done that work in-house. Typically that's been farmed out to consultancies and accounting firms, KPMG, Deloitte, organizations like that.

So I'm curious to know, since the Premier has spent quite a bit of money on some of these accounting firms during his time in office, spent millions of dollars on these third-party consultancies, accounting fees. I'm curious to know whether that's what he has planned here, like, is he going to force the City of Winnipeg into this review and then turn around and hire an external consultant to conduct this review?

If not, what alternative model—like, are we going to have government employees sort of leading this review of the City of Winnipeg finances? If so, which department are they going to be coming from? There's sort of like a whole lot of different unanswered and unspecified details about how this review might work.

But I'm wondering if the Premier, to begin, could talk to us about this review of the City of Winnipeg that he's planning and how many consultants and outside third-party firms does he plan to have involved in this process.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, it's three things: First there's serious problems identified with the permitting process. That's been highlighted in recent media coverage but isn't a—it isn't a new problem. In some respects, it's a problem of long-standing: extensive delays in obtaining permits, highlighted by recent coverage of unacceptable work habits.

The need for an arm's-length review is very clear. There's no point in letting the opportunity to improve services for people in the city of Winnipeg go by, but at the same time, we already have reviews under way of various aspects of provincial permitting and inspections, so it's a logical expansion of the service that—service improvement we're already in pursuit of to extend this.

If the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) and I were partnering in an expansion of our small business or a restaurant and we applied for permits,

we might apply for Hydro permits at the same time as we would apply for City of Winnipeg permits. And if one was delayed, it would block our ability to expand our business either way. So it just makes good sense to expand the review to include various permitting that might be relevant.

Also, the Office of the Fire Commissioner is something that has been a subject of much discussion and has—is being reviewed currently as well, so just expanding the review to include the City of Winnipeg's permitting as well.

On the second issue the member raised, which was the—I think it was the service analysis that we did with KPMG. I think he alluded—if I'm right on that, he was wondering why we were hiring experts through tendering processes to assist us in improving situation.

(a) We inherited a mess, and so we needed to improve the service delivery. We couldn't go on with billion-dollar deficits year after year. Obviously, that's not sustainable.

(b) These are national and internationally respected experts, and so their advice is valuable. That's why we made the offer to the City to make all reports available to them for their use and perusal, because there may be transferrable knowledge that they could benefit from.

And, thirdly, we also offered to work with the City to do that type of review in a more specific way to assist the City in its operations, because clearly there are some challenges there.

This is about working co-operatively with the City. The first challenge we all face is to improve the level of services, and we aren't in silos anymore. That old way of thinking doesn't apply, shouldn't apply. We need to work co-operatively together. That's exactly what the offer entails.

**Mr. Kinew:** The Premier (Mr. Pallister) appears to confirm, obliquely, a little bit, I guess, the idea that a firm like KPMG or some other third party might be involved in this review, but I'm wondering if he can just clarify that that is what his offer entails.

Does the Premier plan to hire a third party to conduct this review of the City?

**Mr. Pallister:** Just for clarification for the member, there's two—what's confusing here is, I think, there's two different parts to this.

There's the first. There's the operational review of inspections and permitting that's already under way, and that's being done internally. So we're just talking about expanding the City's permitting and inspection process as part of that review. So we'd be doing, as I referenced earlier, improvements, as we have been, as part of the red-tape reduction exercise in permitting processes.

Some of those gains have already been achieved, but other reviews are under way, like the Office of the Fire Commissioner, Manitoba Hydro; others are being reviewed. So this is an expansion of that review.

The KPMG part that he's talking about—I was alluding to the actual contract, which they won through a tender, to do—what'd we call it? A performance audit? Is that—*[interjection]* Fiscal performance review for the Province. And that report has been made available to the City so they can review it in full and see if there's any transferrable knowledge there that might help them in improving efficiencies in their operations, improving the performance of their various departments.

And, if they'd like to go further, we also put an offer on the table that that type of review—not specifically with KPMG, but that type of review is something we could pursue together. And we've offered support to assist them if that's something the City government desires to do.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, in the first part of that—and we'll just kind of split the questioning up here, just to deal with each part separately.

So the first part of that: this existing review that's being conducted internally, it's now going to extend to the City permitting process.

Can the Premier describe for us who is conducting that review internally, which department are these folks coming from? Like, is it Office of the Fire Commissioner folks, or is it, you know, the provincial departments individually? Is it from Finance?

I'm just curious to know, like, as this review process extends over to the City of Winnipeg, who on the part of the provincial government would be conducting this review? Would these be civil servants? Are these independent investigators obtained within the department? Very curious to know how this will be structured.



**Mr. Pallister:** So I'll ask the member's indulgence. If I'm not giving him everything he asks for there, but I'll try to address the core of what I understood he wanted addressed, which was the issue of who's doing the work now. The work's being done through Growth, Enterprise and Trade in partnership with the municipal department and is co-ordinated through a group of deputy ministers. So that's the structure of the work that's being done.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, as this review gets extended to city operations, is it correct to assume that it's the same departments, GET and municipal, that are going to be conducting the review of the city operations, as well?

**Mr. Pallister:** Yes. This is how we envision the work continuing. The work that's begun has begun with these two principal departments: Office of Fire Commissioner reporting to Growth, Enterprise and Trade; and then municipal department, obviously, as well, having responsibility. So both are involved.

But I should say, as well, we're not closing the door. We haven't solicited asks from other municipalities, but if other municipalities are interested in partnering in this exercise they're open to—we're open to receiving input from them.

We have, for some time, and this is a problem of long standing, received complaints. Various MLAs have—I expect, members of the opposition have, as well—about delays in getting permits, delays in getting inspections. So I am anticipating part of the work will be analysis done—comparative analysis to see how we're stacking up versus other jurisdictions around the country on our time frames for issuing permits and getting inspections done. And, you know, if we're leading the country, then maybe the problems are related to work habits, as been recently highlighted. But it may be that there are other problems, as well.

Certainly, we know that delays like that—and the example I used was if we were in partnership in a restaurant or something, want to put a patio on in anticipation of some additional summer business. And right now we know that would, according to the anecdotal evidence we have, would take months to get—you know, for us to get approval for our little project. And we're concerned because we are hearing those concerns expressed by not just contractors, but by small-business people, as well, that it takes forever to get permits.

So that analysis needs to be done to see where there's areas of improvement that are possible. It hasn't been an issue that has been brand new as of two weeks ago. It's an issue of long standing; it's just been highlighted by recent investigative journalism.

**Mr. Kinew:** I'm curious to know what the timeline is for this. Is this something that's proceeding with a fixed end date in mind that's already been established, or is this something that is beginning anew and kind of to be concluded at some point still to be determined? So I'm just curious what the timeline is specifically as it relates to this review of the City processes.

What's the timeline, is the question.

\*(15:30)

**Mr. Pallister:** This—some of this work originated with the actual release of the red tape task force that the member's familiar with. And we can revisit that in more detail, if he likes, but—so that started over two years ago. Some of the investigative work with the Fire Commissioner and their offices have gone on over the last couple of years.

It's multi-faceted, so I don't think it just goes to just inspections. I think that would be oversimplifying it. There are other aspects of operation there, but the key thing is to get to the bottom of how we can do a better job, and I think that's certainly what we need to do with respect to all aspects of permitting and inspections, not solely the City of Winnipeg, but they overlap.

And so, for an example I gave earlier would be the Office of the Fire Commissioner has a permitting process. Hydro has a permitting process. The City has a permitting process. If people want to put capital at risk in our province, we don't want to have blockages to them doing so, because it gets in the way of creating jobs and opportunity for people in our province, or people who choose to come to our province to set up their businesses and employ people.

So it is an important aspect of what we're trying to do to get the economy going. We've had some success in attracting private-sector capital to Manitoba in the last couple of years, and we want to continue to do that because that does help, obviously, provide good employment opportunities for people. And, clearly, this is part of that, because delays, unnecessary delays or extended delays can get in the way of people's dreams and their ability to achieve those dreams through their business activities.

There are also ramifications for public projects, as well, in terms of permitting, and so it shouldn't be mischaracterized as solely a private sector concern, because we have concerns as well. For example, when we attract new investment here, such as—I'll give the example of the potato-processing facility, Simplot, in Portage la Prairie, doubling their capacity. That's great news, but they also have to get permitting for Manitoba Hydro and the Office of the Fire Commissioner, and many others, municipally as well.

So that's making sure that we're co-ordinating all those processes so they work well together so that one or another is not blocking investment opportunities in our province, and that's—I think the best way to pursue this is holistically—synergistically, if that's a word—to make sure that we're facilitating the opportunities for people to invest in Manitoba, as best as we can.

**Mr. Kinew:** I'm just curious if there's a timeline, like, when this process is going to be delivered.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well I would say that the first stage of this is to get to the bottom of what the problem is. Defining the problem will allow us to move towards defining solutions, but we first have to get the investigative work done to see where we're at in terms of, not just recent examples, but overall comparative numbers to see how we're doing, in terms—how the staff is able to—management of the City are able to deal with these issues and whether, comparatively speaking, as I referenced before, where perhaps City permitting is not a problem. Perhaps it's proceeding expeditiously, but that's not the anecdotal evidence we have.

So we'll have to get to the bottom of that information first, before I could prescribe a timeline for the member. But, obviously, we have proceeded expeditiously in many other files to attract capital to this province. This government has been particularly fortunate in being able to establish relationships of trust in the business sector. In respect of encouraging investment, we just saw a recent Probe poll, which was a sampling of views of some Manitoba small businesses, in respect to their agreement or relative agreement or support for various levels of government, in terms of whether they felt that the government was performing to support their goals, and that was released last week. And it showed that versus the federal government, provincial government actions in respect of small business are

viewed favourably, very good or good, four times as likely as the federal government.

So we are proceeding to work in partnership with the private sector to assist them in an—as partners in creating job opportunities, and one—this is one aspect of that. Others, not limited to things like tax policy and regulatory policy are very important as well, but, certainly, the issues or practical issues around inspections and approval thereof are very—and permits—are very important to facilitating jobs being created by Manitoba people who are willing to put capital at risk.

**Mr. Kinew:** So there's no timeline as of yet; it's more information gathering at this stage? *[interjection]* Yes, so pretty early on.

I guess if there was a—this was first communicated to the City through the letter from the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton), I'm assuming. I don't know if there was any prior conversation with the City, or was the subject broached beforehand?

One of the other questions, I guess, that I'm interested in is the letter that the minister sent to the City talked about this being an independent process. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) is saying today that it's going to be connected by the Province under two different departments of the provincial government. So I'm curious to know what the independent—what does that term mean, like, an independent review? What is the—what is the Premier's intention by using that terminology to describe the process that's going on here? Is it independent because when it's looking at the City, it's the Province looking at it; and when it's Fire Commissioner, it's somebody external to the Fire Commissioner that's looking at it? Is it independent just because that's sort of like a bureaucratic phrase; it's term of art?

I'm curious to know if the Premier can tell us what is meant by an independent review and how well that matches up just with the average person's understanding of an independent review being something that would be free from, I guess, immediate concerns of, you know, sort of like influence from people who are directly involved in the issue, yes?

**Mr. Pallister:** I would say I'll go back to my dad's comment. When we were on the farm doing work and he would sometimes involve my uncle in decision making, and he'd say, sometimes you really benefit from another pair of eyes on a job. And I

think that's a fair analogy here. If the City was going to be the most effective way, internally, to address this issue, it could be argued that it might've been addressed by now. It's a problem. It's been a problem of long standing, and having a review done with another set of eyes on it—and we have expertise internally, provincially, that could be very helpful here—shouldn't be taken as a—anything but a positive thing to have a provincial government working to assist a municipal government in addressing a problem of long standing. I think it makes good sense.

It makes common sense that another pair of eyes on the job will help to—and we're offering this review and the materials that we have compiled that have assisted us to reduce our provincial deficit by close to 80 per cent of what it was projected it would be in fiscal 2019-20.

We've reduced that projected deficit which was projected by Treasury Board officials just three years ago to be \$1.7 billion this year, to almost 80 per cent lower than that as projected this year. That's a significant accomplishment done with a lot of hard work without—yes, with a lot of expertise applied. But we think that that is indicative of our desire to see better outcomes for Manitobans, better services for Manitobans, and we'd like to see those same things applied in the context of this issue for the City, for other RMs, for our internal departments.

\* (15:40)

So, since we had the work under way, in any case, it makes sense, I think, to have those who have made some good progress—we are acknowledged as the leading jurisdiction by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business in North America in terms of our regulatory red tape reduction. And they've said that we are leading North America.

I'm proud of the work that our civil servants have done in that respect. I'm proud of the input that Manitoba's small-business community and our key sectors of the economy, whether it's agriculture, aerospace, value-added, the innovative sectors, if you want to call it that, that have brought forward ideas on how we can do a better job of saving them time and money while at the same time balancing the needs to protect our environment, protect worker safety.

We've done those things very effectively, according to independent observers outside that have reviewed the progress made, or lack thereof, in other

jurisdictions. So we're making progress and, with this exercise, we'll help the city make progress, as well.

We can't hope to succeed with a province of this size, concentrated population in the capital region more significant than in any other jurisdiction in Canada. We can't hope to succeed in maintaining our position as the most improved province if we don't have the City of Winnipeg given every opportunity to improve its service delivery and we want to assist and will assist the City in making sure that such happens.

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, I mean, like, if the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was serious about the most improved province thing, he wouldn't be closing emergency rooms and cutting health care. So, I mean, his whole argument's pretty much undermined on that front alone, not to mention sort of this war-on-all-fronts mentality when it comes to relationships with the City, with other levels of government, with all these other—even board members that he's appointed himself. So, I mean, there's certainly probably a lot of lessons on relationship building that, you know, the Premier could learn from. You know, we could maybe find a consultancy that specializes in that, even. And then that might be money well spent.

But this particular issue seems to have, like, emerged as the combination of a sequence of events where the Premier and the mayor, or the provincial government and city council were engaged in sort of a back and forth. And the dispute has kind of morphed over the past number of years to touch on different issues such as the provision of ambulance services in the city of Winnipeg. It's evolved on to a dispute over road funding. And, I guess, that also included the cut to the 50/50 transit funding agreement.

Anyway, long story short, over the past couple of years, there's sort of been this ongoing, evolving conflict between the Province and the City of Winnipeg. I'm curious, you know, is this simply just a retaliatory measure? This review that's being handed over to the City? Is this simply a retaliatory measure on the part of the Premier because he's unhappy with the state of his relationship with the mayor of Winnipeg? Is this simply a retaliatory measure because the Premier is not happy with the fact that his government does not get along with the city government—who's, you know, a very important part of the province?

So I'm just curious what the Premier would say to those who say, well, this is just the Premier escalating his ongoing feud with the City of Winnipeg to a new level.

**Mr. Pallister:** I've had the great privilege of being part of building winning teams in sports and in business and in politics for a long time, so I don't accept the premise of the member, and I don't need any advice from him on relationship building, either.

We'll work with the City of Winnipeg to effectively improve their services. That's the focused purpose of this outreach effort on our part, and we'll continue to do the job of getting better results for Manitobans.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, again, like, the review—it comes at the end of a sequence of events—or, well, perhaps there's more to come—more developments to come, so shouldn't present this at the—as the end of the road, if you will. But there's certainly been an escalating pattern of a back and forth between the Province and the City. The mayor went so far as to send all the MLAs, including a number of the people at the table here, a letter. I'm sure the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma), you know, rushed to open that in his email inbox. Certainly, it took a look. Sure the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), also at the table, very keen to open that attachment.

It seems, you know, pretty unprecedented that the mayor of Winnipeg would go to such an extent to essentially, you know, pick a fight with the Premier (Mr. Pallister) after the Premier had already been engaging in a feud with the City.

Some—again, if we look back over the sequence of events from, you know, transit funding to the ambulance provision issue, to road budgets being cut for the City of Winnipeg, to the federal government stepping in to backfill, and then the Premier trying to claim that as, you know, something that he did, and then all sorts of these different permutations of the conflict with the City of Winnipeg, it seems as though this—well, it's being presented as, you know, some kind of, you know, new initiative. It seems that it is actually the result of this feud.

And, you know, just looking at it from the outside, seems as though it's just being launched to either escalate or perhaps to try and, you know, take the back and forth that's been going on between the Province and the City to a new level, perhaps one where there's a playing field that the Premier is able

to determine for himself rather than to just take the argument out in public as it has been up to this point.

So, again, the question, you know, for the Premier, is this merely just, like, a retaliatory tactic towards the City because the Premier is unhappy with the state of the relationship that currently exists between Manitoba and Winnipeg?

**Mr. Pallister:** If the member has a suggestion on how better to get at the problem of delays in getting permits approved and inspections done, then he should make that suggestion.

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, I think my suggestion would be, you know, to, you know, begin by setting up a meeting with the mayor of Winnipeg. I've, you know, found him to be a reasonable person and, you know, perhaps, work collaboratively with these ideas for review and performance improvement. I find typically people are reasonable and willing to respond to that sort of engagement.

On the other hand, when you, kind of go out in public and, you know, announce something without prior warning at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast, such as happened in this instance, typically tends to get people's backs up and kind of defeats the bon esprit of camaraderie and, I guess, mutual benefit that the Premier espouses in our committee here today.

So, again, you know, just simple things like giving people a heads-up; engaging in meetings; face-to-face conversations; booking time out of your schedule to attend such meetings, including with important stakeholders and important leaders of other levels of government.

These are all free pieces of advice. The Premier doesn't have to pay for these. This is just, you know, pro bono; off the top of my head, things that I've learned and found to be effective. Being a little facetious, but the bottom line is that, you know, the Premier has had a difficult relationship. He has not been willing to meet with the mayor. He's not been willing to make time to engage in these issues, and then now, sort of, like, springs this review process on the City without much collaboration or kind of a prior warning. So that's, sort of, why I wonder about the Premier's motivations here. It does seem to be more of a political exercise rather than anything.

Anyway, again, take that for what it's worth. Free advice always—you know, you get what you pay for sometimes, eh? So we don't know—[interjection] Yes, but—[interjection] Yes. No, I hear my colleague

from Radisson just, you know, talking up the value of all that free advice I just shared with the Premier. So I hope the member for Radisson will remind the Premier in, you know, a few months, you know, you should go back to what was shared that day in committee there.

But anyway, just to get back to the issue of, I guess, the second point. Prior in this committee the Premier had, sort of, divided this undertaking into two different steps. The first one was this internal review that's being conducted of other departments, and it's now undertaking the City planning department. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) is saying that there's a second offer on the table to the City of Winnipeg which includes sharing the KPMG fiscal performance review of provincial operations and then extending an offer to the City that if they would like the Province to hire an external accountant to review their operations, then, perhaps, that would be, you know, something that the Province would be willing to undertake with them.

\* (15:50)

So I'm just curious, like, given that that's the offer that's been extended by the Premier to the City of Winnipeg, what has been the response either from CAO of the city to the DM who cc'd on this letter or from council to the minister or from the mayor to the Premier? What has been the response so far?

Obviously, we read a lot of the media coverage and what was said in public by the Premier and the mayor, but I'm curious to know what the Winnipeg administration or council has responded to, you know, concretely, either a letter or perhaps meetings that the Premier may have had up to now. So I'm just wondering what Winnipeg has said in response.

**Mr. Pallister:** We've had a tremendously favourable response from the city. We've had—our senior officials have already, in addition to the outreach from the municipal minister, we've had our senior staff reaching out to the CAO of the city with great response. They've appreciated and expressed thanks for receiving the reports which we forwarded.

We're excited to work with them going forward, but I do appreciate the zero-value advice the member's given me. And I think it particularly ironic he speaks to me about camaraderie, collaborative work and difficult relationships, because the fact of the matter is we have a very unified caucus.

We inherited a mess, and I'm not blaming the member for it, but the fact remains that the NDP

demonstrated they couldn't get along with one another. And the previous government was an absolute abject mess, and what happened was, of course, fiscal mismanagement was rampant and operational opportunities for improvement were also there, but we needed to pursue those.

Some of those in the health-care area had already been recommended to the previous government. They didn't have the courage to act on them. And that was sad, because we were tenth out of 10 in terms of many areas of health care, important areas of health care that people in our province were suffering as a consequence of. And yet the member continues to speak, I think, tongue-in-cheek, about his record and his government's—his opposition's record of collaboration when they couldn't collaborate with themselves, let alone with anyone else, about camaraderie when no camaraderie was evident or in existence.

In fact, during, prior to and after their rebellion—their internal rebellion, it's comical when I read about the federal government. Globe and Mail reports that the federal government's disarray and resignations in the federal Liberal party from Cabinet and confusion in caucus and Cabinet is unprecedented. I laugh when I read that. The Ontario media sometimes doesn't understand what goes on on the west side of Sault Ste. Marie, unfortunately.

But the precedent is well established here in Manitoba by the previous government, so we had a mess to clean up. We've got a unified team of people who are working both internally in the civil service and as elected officials, very collaboratively, and we're offering to extend that collaboration to the City of Winnipeg to assist with the problem, not of just recent standing, but of long-standing that needs to get addressed, that has been a source of much frustration to many—so much, in fact, that individuals have had to go together and pool their own resources and investigate an issue which wasn't being addressed up until that time.

Now, we had already begun to do our own internal reviews of permitting and inspections in our purview, and we're simply expanding that review to assist the city in terms of addressing this issue of long-standing. I think that's the right collaborative way to do it.

Our officials are working co-operatively with theirs, and I would suggest to the member that that is the right approach and, failing any other suggestion that he might make, because I haven't heard one, I

would say that's the approach that will get better results for the people of Manitoba, both in the city of Winnipeg and elsewhere.

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, the piece that stands out, though, is the timing. You know, the Premier couldn't meet with the mayor. It's been, like, a long-running complaint of the mayor that the Premier's not able to sit down. It's a complaint that was echoed by Sandy Riley prior to his leading the board to walk out.

It's—well, of course, we could get down a rabbit hole of, like, temporal causality in terms of which echo caused which reverberation, but I guess the, kind of, you know, colloquial sentence construction I've used would be to refer to the latter echoing the former in the word order that I chose there for the edification of the Premier (Mr. Pallister).

So, yes, we wouldn't want to mischaracterize anything, so we've got to get the sequence right as well as the verbiage right as well.

Anyway, we're having a good time. We're laughing about the fact that the Premier does not meet with the mayor of Winnipeg, does not meet with the board of Hydro, apparently, has issues with some of the other Crown corporations that, like, depending on the day, either he, like, completely manages or does not manage at all. So there's been all sorts of different issues on that front.

But, again, you know, the advice that I did share with the Premier, just to remind him, is, you know, you should sit down with the—or, he should, rather, Mr. Chair, he should sit down with the mayor and just, you know, have a productive, and, if necessary, frank, conversation about some of these issues. The Premier has said, you know, there's been, you know, the response from the City of Winnipeg so far, but I'm curious to know, like, does the mayor—does the Premier plan to sit down with the mayor of Winnipeg to discuss these issues, and in particular, does he plan to sit down with the mayor prior to July 2nd?

**Mr. Pallister:** I don't do my schedule in the media, and I won't do my schedule dictated to by the leader of the opposition. I have ministers who are—have responsibilities, and I respect them doing those responsibilities. I've met with the mayor and had enjoyable discussions; however, they frequently centre solely on the issue of increasing taxation on Manitobans and Winnipeggers. That is unfortunate, but I do expect that we'll continue to have good dialogue as we have in the past.

I would also reference to the member in terms of relationships that our relationships with the close to 200 agencies, boards and commissions in this province have been stellar. In fact, we have thousands of decisions that they have made; we have only disagreed on two thus far: one, we disagreed with the decision to offer \$70 million to David Chartrand of the Manitoba Metis Federation for 50 years of getting out of the way on Hydro projects.

Now, the member may disagree with that and want to be a friend to David Chartrand and take 50 or 70 million from Manitobans and hand it to him, but we don't agree, and we didn't agree when it was proposed, and we don't agree now. So the member speaks about relationships. We have friends. We earn our friends; we don't buy our friends.

On the second issue we disagreed on that was with respect to Liquor & Lotteries wanting to expand Regent casino to the tune of close to \$58 million, if I recall correctly, while we were doing a gaming review. This is not on. We don't do a gaming review while expanding gaming.

So, on these two issues, we fundamentally had disagreements with our boards. On the other 99.99 per cent of decisions, we haven't had to take any exceptional views that diversify or divert from their positions. On those two, we have disagreed.

I invite the member, if he wishes to see casino gambling expanded in the province while we're doing a gaming review, he may as well put that on the record too, but we don't.

**Mr. Kinew:** I just think it's a big deal that the Premier doesn't get along with his Hydro board and Liquor & Lotteries board and you know, and I guess it's reassuring that he gets along well with the centennial corporation board, but, again, Hydro is kind of a big deal, and, you know, not having a good working relationship with that board seems to be a pretty big issue, and certainly was pretty stark condemnation of the Premier the day that his former board chair led a walkout of the Premier—a walkout on the Premier, rather.

But again, you know, getting back to the issue of this review and the relationship with the City of Winnipeg, you know, the mayor, for quite some time, had been talking about the need to meet with the Premier, had been requesting meetings with the Premier and, again, this appears to be a refrain echoed by many other people.

You know, Minister Carr, the senior federal minister, we've noticed meets with the Deputy Premier, but perhaps not the Premier himself. Other envoys from other levels of government will meet with various 'apparati' of the provincial government, but not with the Premier himself.

Seems like, you know, if a spirit of collaboration and improving things for the best interests of Manitobans was really at the heart of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) motivations here, that the Premier would make time to sit down with these folks.

So, as we return to the issue of this review of the City of Winnipeg, again, it seems like if the Premier is excited about this idea, if he thinks it's a good idea, if he wants to embark on this process, that he should just make some time, sit down with the mayor, perhaps invite his minister, and, you know, there could be a few councillors there, a few members of city council.

\* (16:00)

So, just curious whether the Premier would take that advice, whether the Premier would sit down with the mayor, or at least try to schedule a meeting with the mayor. He doesn't have to confirm whether or not they've booked it for, you know, this Friday at 4 p.m. or whatever the time may be. But would he simply endeavour to talk to the mayor about this review, face-to-face, or one-to-one?

**Mr. Pallister:** In part, I think that whatever success I've found in my life has been due to my ability to stay focused on getting better results. And also on my time-management ability. I have the ability to—I've grown that ability over the years to actually work with people effectively to get better outcomes. The member may very much value having meetings for show. I value getting results for people.

So I'll stay focused on getting results for people, like the \$5 billion less debt that Manitobans have now, than they would've had if the NDP stayed in while they were buying friends and doing favours and having all kinds of meetings. Having meetings and getting results aren't always the same thing.

The member talks about meetings with Hydro. Seventy million of additional dollars going from Manitobans to David Chartrand would be his way to buy peace in our land, I suppose, but it's not my way. We don't believe that paying people to go away and stay away from processes that are important to them now or in the future is the right thing to do, and so we departed from that practice. The member is

saying he would've paid the \$70 million to David Chartrand, so he could say he had a meeting and act like he had a friend. But we don't buy our friends. We don't agree with that.

The member pretends that he has a good working relationship with Ottawa. He had a bromance going with Ottawa for the last three years. It's suddenly changed when the disarray hit Ottawa, recently, but he definitely, definitely didn't have a good working relationship with them before, either, because the problem he had—see, he confuses acquiescence with a relationship. He 'includes'—he includes nodding agreement on positions Ottawa takes on things like carbon tax—which will rise to more than double its present level over the next three years—he thinks that if he agrees with Ottawa on that, it makes him somehow better positioned to be a leader, but it doesn't. It does the opposite. It demonstrates he doesn't have the courage of any kinds of principles or convictions when it comes to standing up for Manitobans.

Same time, when Ottawa said they were going to reduce transfer support over time, in respect of health care and drop their percentage of support from 25 to what is now around eighteen-and-a-bit, and it will drop further over the course of an ageing population in the next decade, the member says he gets on well with Ottawa and watches that happen like a car crash. I don't think that's evidence of anybody's ability to stand up for Manitoba's best interests.

So I think—I'm reminded again—my grandfather used to say to my brother and I, because we're two years apart, a little less than two years apart, we like to argue all the time, more so in the old days than now—Grandpa would tell us, it's okay to argue. We'd say, why? He'd say, because if two fellas are always in agreement, one of them ain't thinking.

I don't dislike Justin Trudeau. I just don't agree with his approach on the carbon tax. I don't agree with his approach on trying to threaten us by taking our low-carbon economy money away. I don't agree with these things, so I'll say so. And my relationship with the Prime Minister is better than it's ever been because I tell him the truth and he tells me back what he believes. Sometimes we disagree. But it isn't a relationship of disrespect. It's a relationship of frank—frank—disagreement on issues. And that's fine.

The member confuses acquiescence and nodding agreement with a relationship. That isn't how you build a relationship with anybody. Not a relationship of trust. Not a relationship that's worth anything,

anyway. You build a relationship by being frank and honest about your assertions to the face of the person, and that's exactly what I've done with our partners, whether directly or indirectly through ministers, is make sure that they know where we stand and we make sure we understand where they stand.

Now, in the case of the City of Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg has some problems with its inspections processes that we're going to help them resolve. And that's done in the spirit of co-operation. And I would think anyone who wanted to see better economic development in the province and in the city of Winnipeg would welcome that opportunity. It's an opportunity to do things better, to get better outcomes for people. And the small-business community I believe, will very much welcome the opportunity to see better outcomes for them in terms of inspections and reports and permits.

So it's an offer that's extended with the sincere desire to assist, and you know, the reaction is what the reaction is. But I'm not—I don't own the reaction; I own the offer. And the offer's done with the best intentions of the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba at heart. And that's how we'll continue to work with the City of Winnipeg and every other municipality, all of whom we get along well with.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, like, a few years ago, my son shared a meme, like, with our family. We're sitting around, and the meme was a picture of the comedian Kevin Hart kind of looking like his eyes were jumping out of his head, like he was trying to burn a hole in somebody's face across from the table with them. And, like, the caption on the meme was: when you want the meeting to be over but your co-worker keeps asking unnecessary questions.

Which is—as memes go—like, you're in the working world, hey, that's a relatable meme. I like that one. That's a good one. But the fact—my son was, I think, maybe 10 or 11 at the time and he's sharing this workplace meme. We thought that that was hilarious. Like, you've really been in a lot of long-running meetings, Dom, that your coworkers have been forcing to drag on and on and on?

And, like, he was just like: yes, no, it's funny. I don't care. Like—so we had a good laugh. But, again, like, I share that, because, you know, I've worked in a few different settings, like, university, media; like, you know, worked with different corporations here, in Alberta, Ontario, and stuff like that. And, certainly, there are times where you can have

meetings that get in the way of getting actual work done.

Sometimes you're in meetings that, perhaps, are unnecessary, but I've found that that's typically when you've been meeting with people regularly and on a consistent basis. I don't think meeting with somebody once a year, twice a year, is the enemy of progress or the enemy of getting the job done, if you will.

So it does seem like the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) inability to meet with the mayor, inability to meet with these other partners—potential partners, anyway, were there to be actual work getting done here—seems like those meetings wouldn't be an undue burden, and would probably actually contribute to an improved working relationship, both between levels of government and between other, I guess, organizations and sectors, like, business or post-secondary, things like that.

So, all that to say, yes, perhaps when you're meeting weekly with people, you can scale down on the meetings. If you're not meeting with anybody at all, maybe you could scale up on the meetings from time to time. I think that's the gist of what I'm trying to convey there.

So the media reports that the Premier referred to about planning, I guess, inspectors and some of the problems there—or at least, alleged problems, I guess, would be the correct term at this point. I think the response from the City was to announce that they're creating an investigation themselves.

So they're going to be investigating this issue at the civic level—which makes sense, right. This is a department that was found to have an issue. It's a City department, so the City's going to invest it.

Now the, you know, Premier's moving forward with this, you know, I don't want to say inquiry because there's certain connotations to that term, but, like, you know, this review. I guess maybe that was the term we were using earlier.

How does the Premier view these two processes working together? If the concern here is about undue delay, duplication and issues with City processes, how does having these two reviews going on at the same time, kind of, alleviate that?

Aren't we setting up some duplication or aren't we setting ourselves up for some kind of delay whereby there may be one whole investigation that's



going on over here with the City—a very similar investigation or review going on the provincial side?

How does the Premier envision those two processes working together? And, if he could explain it with specific attention towards avoiding having this thing draw out or having delay or duplication, that would certainly be the angle that I'm most interested in.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, first, I really appreciated that meme anecdote. I thought that was hilarious. A 10-year-old that's got that sense of humour is worth keeping around. On the—as far as the meetings, my meeting schedule is quite reasonable.

For the clarification of the member, the City's prior commitment to—or indication that it was looking at the issue was, as I understood it, in respect of the HR aspects: the work habits of the individuals involved, et cetera, et cetera.

\* (16:10)

What we're interested in and what we'll be doing is looking at the processes, the operational aspects, the outcomes and how we can improve those. So I expect we'll use the information, and we've indicated such to Doug over at the City. We'll use whatever information he chooses to gather and share with us, but our basis for looking at this further is to assure better outcomes in terms of process operations that can be achieved to assist us in building a better and stronger economy here in Manitoba.

So I don't see them as separate processes; I see them as dovetailing. But, again, the indications—early indications from the City where they were confining their looking at this to looking internally at the specific allegations, I believe, in several media reports—or, reported in several media outlets that came up as a consequence of this private commission investigative work that was done earlier this year, which demonstrated some deplorable behaviours that didn't indicate a clear focus on achieving outcomes for clients, to put it mildly.

**Mr. Kinew:** The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) mentioned that this review's also going to look at Hydro.

I'm curious if the Premier can talk about—you know, who did he talk to at Hydro about this? Who, you know—was anyone at Hydro involved in the creation and design of this review?

**Mr. Pallister:** As the member knows, we just have a brand new CEO at Manitoba Hydro. And this has been communicated to her as a project we want to

undertake. But it's in its early days at Hydro. It's been under way in—with respect to the—we call Red River Valley authority—planning—[interjection]—I'm sorry—Red River Planning District. And also, the Fire Commissioner's office already. But we thought that adding Hydro to it made sense. So that's in its early days.

**Mr. Kinew:** So can the Premier describe, like, what's been communicated to Hydro? Like, what is this review supposed to entail? What's it going to look at? You know, the—I understand there's these other organizations that are involved with it, but just specifically about Hydro for now, if he will. Just what aspects of Hydro is going to be reviewed. You know, what concerns has either he or the minister for Crowns communicated to Hydro, the board even—you know, were they informed about this, and if he can describe sort of what the parameters of this—this is going to look at.

**Mr. Pallister:** So we started the red tape review process—I don't have the specific date for the member, but soon after coming to government. And we structured that to consult with the relevant—depending on the specific area. We divided into different subsectors of the economy.

So the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) can probably—could share, actually, with more elaboration than I can right now the number of different sectors. But I know some were aerospace, transportation, agriculture. One of the relatively consistent observations—and it was a concern that came through that consultative process—was in respect of the—we'll call from electrical—the electrical permitting side as it related to Manitoba Hydro. So this has led us to want to pursue that.

Of course, we've gone through the processes in the last few months with the notification of the previous CEO that he was finishing out his term, and then the interview processes and so on. So we have just now had in recent weeks the new head of Hydro there. But this is something that was indicated from people throughout that process that they wanted us to look at ways of improving the permitting processes as it related to the Hydro piece.

And I wouldn't want to—I'm not here being critical of Hydro employees or the process because this is just—was highlighted as a concern. I wouldn't say that there was—I don't want it to come across as a criticism of the people who work there.

I think there's an opportunity, though, to make the processes work a little bit better. And that's what we're trying to do. Continuous improvement should be the goal, so that's what we're after with this one.

**Mr. Kinew:** So Hydro's a massive organization. Obviously, it's got all these different kind of business units and different operations all over the place, but if—I'd just like the Premier (Mr. Pallister) to let me know if I'm kind of understanding what he's saying here correctly.

The review is not going to look at all these other parts of Hydro like generation or transmission. It's more to do specifically with, like, commercial and residential customers getting kind of their installations completed.

Am I right to understand that? Like, I give the example here: Friend opening a new gym, new business in the city here. I don't know what the actual timeline was, but in his words he's, like, I'm waiting on Hydro for months before I can open my doors, kind of thing, and the—you know, I guess what I'm seeking clarity on is am I describing the sort of situation that will be reviewed correctly there?

This is not about permitting to do something on the generation, transmission, other business units like that. This is strictly for customers, whether a business or, you know, maybe 'non-for-profit' customers who are looking to get a new building up and running. Maybe they're looking to retrofit and they need to get, you know, some kind of review there.

Am I right in understanding that that's what's going to be reviewed? It's not to do with these other parts of Hydro's operation?

**Mr. Pallister:** I'll just read the one relevant section from the task force report that came out last May, and it refers to—and I think the member is generally right in his observations, so I'll just share:

Manitoba—this was a—conclusion or a recommendation? What would we call it? Feedback—I guess it was feedback-based. You know, the report was—the idea was to go out and interview people in the various sectors of the economy, get their perspectives. This was one of the common observations.

Manitoba Hydro and other utilities move extremely slowly in servicing new developments. This results in, as the member just gave an example,

this results in developments being delayed for months or even years.

Possible solutions: The establishment of a service—better service standard for servicing new developments, so I think that was the gist.

When it says new developments, though, I think it could mean things like expanding, as well, right, because when we do, we get into additional facilities like the Simplot case in west of Portage-la-Prairie. It's not—it's a new development but it's in addition to an existing development.

I think what they're talking about is just that that permitting process, whether it's brand new or it's a modification, like somebody—I used the example before, somebody may have a restaurant, want to add an outside patio. That kind of construction and the wiring associated with it, if it's delayed, it delays that capital risk being taken by the owner or the individual that's investing, and that deprives us of job opportunities for people.

So I think the member's assertion is, as I understand it, is correct. It's really about those projects that we're thinking of in the private sector principally, but I do think, and it doesn't say it in the report because the report was centered on interviewing and getting feedback from people in the private sector, but there are ramifications I am familiar with where delays—Hydro delays can also impact on the construction schedule on things—publicly funded projects as well, so it's not exclusive to the private sector.

But that was the gist of the work of the task force, was to reach out to people in the private sector, so that's the nature of it—naturally, the nature of the recommendations comes from that perspective.

**Mr. Kinew:** Right, and, like, it could be not-for-profits impacted by this, too, like Macdonald Youth Services pretty much just on the other side of the river there, a new building. They need Hydro installed; they need, you know, the hoops that they have to jump through there. That's sort of what the Premier's referring to.

I think that the gist of what I'm hearing from the Premier makes sense, right? Like, if there's a small business owner like my buddy who I'm describing there, he wants to open his new business, if we can make that move more smoothly, help him open the doors. You know, he's putting people to work, getting people healthy. It's a—seems like a win-win.

\* (16:20)

I guess, you know, we always do have some concern like with, you know, what the PCs are up to with Hydro. We're always—always—a little skeptical of the motivations there, given those billboards they took out in 2011 about, you know, privatizing Hydro or not privatizing Hydro. I can't remember which one that they said they were going to do, but it seemed like they were going to do something with that.

Anyways, I'm being a little bit of a—you know, a little facetious there again. But, yes, I think I understand what the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) saying and, yes, part of that makes sense.

We had heard earlier last year about an RFP. I believe it was an RFP, might have been an RFQ, about Hydro potentially looking at some of the business unit that related to customer relations being, you know, kind of hived off and contracted out—privatized, if you will. Just curious if that has anything to do with this process. Is that review that the Premier's describing here going to feed into that, or are we talking about two totally separate processes here that aren't going to interact with one another? Like, there was this one process announced last year; now we're talking about this other review that includes a whole bunch of different things but also includes this aspect of Hydro's operation.

Do these two interact in any way, or are we talking about separate undertakings here?

**Mr. Pallister:** No, I just—I want to take the member's—I don't want to crash the member's black helicopter here, but the tinfoil hat he's wearing right now doesn't go well with his outfit.

I think the reality is that we're about improving the inspection process and the permitting process for Hydro as part of this review. And it's important because even—the member alluded to not-for-profits, and it's also true for things like the schools we're building. We're in the process of either, you know, turning sod or actually advance planning on seven schools currently. But the Hydro aspect's awfully important there.

And so we want to make sure that we have—we don't have delays or obstructions in getting our kids into schools—which the NDP, of course, failed to build, which we are now building, and that—course gets kids out of these mobile homes and trailers and, I don't know, tents that the NDP had them trying to study in and get some into actual schools, which is a good thing.

So I would mention that, because it is important, especially in a province where economic growth has been very, very significant. And, in particular, under this government. We are making headway and we want to make more.

So, for example, since '16, our private sector capital spending and retail trade increased by 9.6 per cent annually, which is the second highest among the provinces. But just think where it could have been if there hadn't have been these delays with permitting and inspections that are alleged to have happened, that we're going to investigate and find out to what degree have happened.

And capital investment in new residential properties increased by 30 per cent in 2017—new residential properties that require permitting and inspections to be done. That's the second highest capital investment among the provinces. This is pretty significant gains we're making.

Capital investment in industrial properties increased by 29 per cent—the second highest. That's in '17 as well. And second highest among the provinces. So we've—we're talking about capital investment, private sector, new residential properties, industrial properties. Some of the most significant improvements in our province's history, part of which this government does deserve some credit for, and that is the improvements we've made in dealing with some of the obstacles to those investments such as ever-increasing taxes, such as ever-increasing red tape, such as delays in various processes happening internally because of siloism. And that should have been—those silos should have been laid down years ago, and we should have been able to co-ordinate our responses better.

We're doing those things. We're creating a better climate for investment and growth in Manitoba. It's happening. We're excited to see it happen. That doesn't mean we're going to rest on our loyal—laurels. We can do a better job. We need to do a better job with these inspections. And this is—I'm motivated by—I think, in part, our desire to not be second anymore but to be first instead.

**Mr. Kinew:** Just changing subjects slightly.

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

There was a question in question period today from the member from Elmwood. Has to do with construction on the Lake St. Martin projects and Lake Manitoba projects. Specifically, the Interlake Reserves Tribal Council feels as though their rights

are being respected, that the duty to consult is being fulfilled with respect to those projects.

So I'm wondering if the Premier can commit that the duty to consult will be fulfilled with respect to those projects and, in particular, with respect to the First Nations that are a part of IRTC and whose traditional territories these projects will be taking place on.

So will the duty to consult be fulfilled?

**Mr. Pallister:** Yes, absolutely, we believe in the duty to consult being fulfilled and that's why we developed a duty-to-consult framework that we are following and that will, I think, give greater confidence to all involved in the process.

But I must point out to the member that his members were rather harsh in their criticism of our Infrastructure Minister when he actually—his department made available contracts for Interlake Tribal Council members so that they could actually achieve job opportunities, which was the normal practice under the previous government for this outlook project, which the previous government did not get under way, which we are now getting under way. And I think that's really important because the bands the member alludes to and others—the Metis, non-indigenous people who live in that basin—deserve to be protected with improved floodworks and have not been protected with improved floodworks for many, many decades.

So we're taking steps to move forward on the project. We have had extensive dialogue with interested parties, not exclusively the indigenous bands, but members of the communities around the basin as well, and we'll continue to do that. But we are very, very clearly desirous of not having another situation where literally hundreds of people are forced to evacuate from their home communities and forced to live outside of those communities for over half a decade. That's created tremendous pain and hardship for people throughout that basin, and we also don't want to perpetuate a situation in that area any longer, where people's lives are put on hold; their businesses are threatened; their communities are threatened.

And so, yes, we've been very clear about our desire to see the process respected, but to also see the progress of a project move ahead. And we believe we can do those two things in tandem, and so I know that there has been a tremendous amount of work in

terms of outreach to the communities around the basin.

And I know a tremendous amount of additional work will have to be done to satisfy what have now been elevated requirements by the federal government as they anticipate, I suppose, in part, the passage of their Bill C-69 which will not only make it virtually impossible to build a pipeline in this country but, I'm afraid, will make it exceedingly difficult to build floodworks and protect people against high water levels, as well.

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

So we're working with the First Nations communities. I have met as—very recently, with the Grand Chief Arlen Dumas on this and other topics. These are issues that are very, very relevant, not just to the people at basin but, I think, all Manitobans, who are fair-minded people and don't want to see hardships befall anyone in this province or elsewhere, for that matter. Yet again, as a result of a lack of preparation and so—what was recommended to Premier Douglas Campbell in the 1950s is now in the process of being constructed, and that is an outlet out of the north end of Lake Manitoba to facilitate giving people in that basin their lives back.

**Mr. Kinew:** I was actually in the area last night, you know, drove over the Fairford Dam and—not on this issue, not on a political thing—I was there with friends and family, just on a personal matter. And, you know, I always like to visit with people in the area—Little Sask., Fairford, Lake St. Martin—including the new reserves that they're getting, not just the existing ones.

So I had a good visit, talked to a lot of people—you know, they're telling me about how things are going, including the sort of the last man standing, the one guy, Clint Beardy, who's been living in Lake St. Martin the whole time, never left as part of the evacuation. Him and his dad—pretty rugged old-timer—they stuck it out. And, you know, they do their hunting and fishing, outfitting job there, while they're still looking after their houses and cabins and that. So it's nice to visit some of those folks and, certainly, take seriously the impact that it's had on them and all my friends in the region.

\* (16:30)

But I guess setting aside that sort of personal recollection, the reason why it was raised today in question period is because the IRTC bands, First Nations, wrote this letter outlining some of their

concerns, and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) sort of, I guess, answered that he believes in the duty to consult. It's legal doctrine in the country, so that's good, kind of like fixed election dates, I guess, in some sense, you know, that there is a legal doctrine backing that up too.

But just on the issue at hand, I think one of the concerns that they had, among many—like, one of the issues they do have is about the joint venture and whether they're going to be able to get business opportunities out of this. But one of the, I guess, particular concerns that they outlined that I find interesting is that it had been communicated to them by the Province that they would be getting funding to do an assessment of traditional land use, of traditional knowledge on the land.

And, again, it's really interesting being I was just on a patch of land last night which is covered by floodwater from Lake St. Martin, and there's a wagon trail there, as an example, showing, like, the deep history in the area. Like, even if you mow the lawn and, you know, turn the soil, like, the wagon trail still remains in the ground there. So it just shows the impact, going back.

So I'm just curious about that specific concern that has been outlined about whether the—as part of the fulfillment of the duty to consult, whether the Province is currently providing funding to undertake this sort of traditional land use or traditional knowledge-type surveys, or is that something that will be fulfilled? If it's not been done to date, can the Premier (Mr. Pallister) tell us today whether it will be carried out, whether that is something that he is committed to?

Just to—again, the background, I guess, for people who may be wondering is you undertake these sort of kind of surveys in establishment of cultural and traditional knowledge for an area so that you can be aware if a channel or a road or some other development is going to impinge on an important site, a historical site—maybe it's currently a harvesting site, something like that—and then you can adjust whatever development plans you have accordingly so it doesn't, say, disturb one of these sites in question.

So, again, all that—again, to return to the question that I posed for the Premier earlier, which is, is the Province currently funding this sort of cultural or traditional land-use studies for IRTC, or if it's not currently being undertaken, are they committed to

making sure that that happens prior to construction taking place?

**Mr. Pallister:** So there's engagement, which is ongoing, which has begun, some of it, years ago, actually, some, at least a couple of years ago. There's consultation, which the member knows is different in a legal requirement; section 35, et cetera. So the consultation can't start until the environmental impact statement is prepared; that's this summer, at some point.

And that obviously has got to have—demonstrate some listening through the engagement process and has to be—lead to meaningful consultation. And meaningful consultation means, in part, focusing on reconciliation in a real way, assisting government to become more familiar with the histories, the traditions of the communities throughout the area and the impact that proposed actions are going to have on those communities and individuals within them.

So we've—through the engagement process, which, led by Infrastructure—through—Infrastructure's been leading that. They've—we've pulled together comments that were received from dozens, literally dozens, of communities. And that is assisting in forming best practices from—incorporating best practices from previous consultations.

I, like the member, I have friends throughout that area. I've had the opportunity to meet with—and not limited to communities from First Nations—around the affected areas, potentially, of the construction, but also around the basin, ranging from Ebb and Flow, Sandy Bay and the Metis community, St. Laurent, and various and others, cottage communities as well, and it's more in the south than the east basin than elsewhere, though there's some recreational property development on the west side as well, some of which has been destroyed by previous flooding.

The Lake St. Martin northern bands that have been so affected by the forced dispersal and removal from their communities from previous flooding are also in our hearts, as we move forward with this thing.

And of course, other bands, in the not immediate area of the construction, are—can be affected as well, in a secondary sense. Of course, Saskatchewan directly impacted by the 'pimeyoontang' by the removal of many of their people for prolonged periods from their communities.

It's something we just absolutely have to prevent in future and so far, so good this year. We're not looking at a high water situation in Lake Manitoba basin but it's something that can happen and, in particular, can be exacerbated by the use of the Portage Diversion structure for prolonged periods of time. And as well, is impacted by Saskatchewan drainage practices, which have unfortunately—and I've raised this with both the current premier and the previous one—have been undertaken, I believe, without a significant consideration of the impact on downstream communities.

My first meeting with Premier Wall, as Premier, I shared with him that I grew up on a farm and we didn't solve our water problem on the backs of our neighbours. And I continue to believe that the approach that Saskatchewan has taken for the last number of years could have been much more considerate of the needs of their neighbours.

In terms of the signals they sent that they would be developing drainage regulations, and then the delays in so doing that prompted every farmer from Wadena to Weyburn to drain their potholes—and I'm not talking about small areas of drainage, I'm talking about what we would consider significant bodies of water, which are now running principally in our direction. Some of them are moving down the Souris basin, fair enough, in the direction of Minot, say, and coming back our way. But certainly their draining practices were not designed with a long-term shared impacts as a prior—as a primary consideration, to my satisfaction.

And so I've raised this with both the current premier and former premier. We believe there can—and this is—this impacts on all of us downstream in our basins, not exclusively indigenous, Metis, non-indigenous farm, ag community, industrial community, tourism—there are impacts throughout a number of parts of the province, right from—I would say, right from The Pas, right down to even, not exclusively, but around the Souris, Assiniboine basins. There is a major impact on Saskatchewan drainage on our province.

And so, when the Assiniboine River is in a flood threat, combined with, say, the Souris, we see, naturally, the use of the Assiniboine River floodway just southwest of Portage la Prairie. And that pushes water into the Lake Manitoba basin. And then Lake Manitoba residents become the recipients of that water, and their lives are put on hold. This is what we're trying to address.

**Mr. Kinew:** I just want to say briefly on the record, and I would be remiss if I did not do so, that my wife's family is from Vogar and from Dog Creek, so pretty much the narrows, that area there. So definitely, first in my mind and first in my heart when it comes to the area.

The letter that IRTC wrote, it says—their ask other provinces to stop—immediately stop any further work on the project lands until all the sort of issues are resolved.

I'm just wondering, is the Premier (Mr. Pallister) going to respond to that directly? Will the Premier stop further development on the project lands for these projects until these other questions that we have been discussing are resolved?

**Mr. Pallister:** Given that I just became aware of the correspondence the member has shared today—with us today, I think it would be premature to suggest anything other than this is something obviously that's a serious concern being raised and we want to address it seriously and co-operatively with the Interlake tribal council.

So, we've worked very hard, our ministers in various capacities have worked very hard on building relationships of trust with our indigenous partners. We'll continue to do that.

\* (16:40)

And the member wants an instant to the question. I can't give him an instant answer to the question. I'll certainly assure him that we're going to be taking a look at the concerns that were raised, as we value very much the strong and trusting relationship we're building with indigenous communities and indigenous people all over the province.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition):** We talked a fair bit about issues of delays in permitting.

I know that there have been issues with Hydro in a number of areas across the province because there have been delays of businesses wanting to set up and having to wait 30, 60 days for a hookup. At the same time there have been some major challenges as far as permitting for both—for mines as well as oil.

So, I mean, I think the challenge is that it's difficult, I think, for the—in some ways, for the Province to say that they have lessons to teach others about permitting on time when there are these delays in mining and oil permits.

So if you could just address: What have been some of the roadblocks as far as being able to get permits out for prospecting in northern Manitoba and elsewhere?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I thank the member for raising the topic. It's an important one. But I would suggest to him that we do have a valuable and important role to play in assisting and improving processes, whether they're perfect or not, and I do appreciate the advice the opposition leader has given even though he hasn't necessarily—in terms of relationship building, he hasn't necessarily demonstrated he has the ability to do that himself.

I do appreciate the fact he's willing to give me advice, and I do take into consideration advice when I receive it. I tend to, like most people, look at whether a person has actually demonstrated they have any confidence or capability in the area they're advising me on before I take the advice. I weigh it on that basis.

But, in terms of the permitting processes for Hydro, the member is right that there are concerns, but he is not accurate in saying 30 to 60 days. Sometimes we've had complaints and concerns expressed about literally months and months of delays before permits are issued, and that is a real concern.

The—and I recognize that it can be a complex responsibility. In this, I emphasized earlier, I'm not wanting to denigrate the work of any Hydro worker in this area; that, I don't think is the intent. But the idea—and I think we all, I hope we all, strive for continuous improvement. I think it's not to suggest that we can't do better. I think we can and that's exactly what our goal is here.

It's—I've noted, and the opposition—Official Opposition Leader had noted, that the reaction from the mayor for our offers of improving—of evaluating and, hopefully, improving our inspection and permitting process wasn't well received by the mayor. That's okay. The mayor has onerous challenges in many areas of his administration, as we do in our own. That's a human reaction.

But, ultimately, we got to get beyond the human reactions and get to the human interest here, and the human interest would be that we do a better job of issuing these permits, that we do a better job of getting these inspections done. And if people are putting in a half day's work and getting paid for a full

day, that's wrong, and we have to address that, and that is part of this.

Now, the City says it's looking at the HR piece, and that's good they're doing that. What we want to focus on is better outcomes, more timely outcomes, for people who get into this application process.

They are, certainly—and we got this from a red tape panel and the work that they did, which was extensive, very, very good consultative work—and this is why we're ranked as the top jurisdiction in North America in terms of addressing these issues of regulatory concern—they were very, very concerned that these delays might well be impediments to them in their own business interests and pursuing those, but also to the economy of our province.

Being recognized as a leader in this area should tell the mayor that he has an opportunity to work—to benefit from the work that we are doing in our own departments and that we can do in co-operation with him. When you're recognized as the best in North America, it shouldn't be seen as a threat to any jurisdiction within Manitoba that we would like to help work—help them work better and more effectively in these areas.

So I would emphasize that this is—the offer to do these inspections is a good will offer that can lead to better outcomes for the people of our province, and that's what we should all be after. Whether it's the mayor of Winnipeg or anyone else, we should be working effectively together.

We've demonstrated a commitment to working on these important issues. We've demonstrated competence in working on these issues and now we need to make sure that we implement the great advice we received from many, many Manitobans in respect of how to do a better job.

So I'm definitely excited and thankful for the work that our caucus team has done, a couple of members here today at the committee that engaged very diligently and enthusiastically in this work and also that our ministers have done in making sure they're implementing the recommendations that came from that task force.

It's nice to get recognized by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business; that's true, but the real recognition we're after is more jobs for Manitobans and their families.

**Mr. Lamont:** Again, just to follow up. I mean, my question was really about the issue that—with

provincial permits being issued for mining and for oil. I've travelled to Flin Flon, I travelled to Thompson. The Manitoba-Saskatchewan prospector said that, at the current rate of exploration, it'll take 250 years to have a sustainable mining industry in Manitoba. And there's an incredible amount of frustration in Thompson where, you know, they made it clear to me that rumours of their death have been greatly exaggerated because we still have world-class ore deposits. But we can't actually get access to them, and it's clear that the obstacle here is the provincial government's ability to issue permits in a timely fashion.

That you have—it takes 18 to 24 months for mining—for prospecting permits. It can take 18 to 24 months for oil exploration, as well. So I'm just trying to figure out, aside—you know, let's put the whole issue of what's happening with the city aside. It's clear that delays in permits are a problem.

The question is what's happening with mining and oil in Manitoba because, again, we have this—we have the opportunity for—its—and I respect absolutely the small business, but we're talking about some very big businesses which could be doing hundreds of millions of billions of dollars in investment and billions of dollars over many years of income.

So I'm just trying to figure out what's the roadblock, what's happened in the department of mines or the department that they're not able to get out permits in a timely fashion?

**Mr. Pallister:** Yes. The member's highlighting quite rightly; he's highlighting an area of concern that was an area neglected under the previous administration that saw us go from, I think we were ranked first back in the '90s for mineral exploration potential by the Fraser Institute's international study, and we slipped—I don't know what—33rd behind Botswana or someplace. We're playing catch-up now, trying to get back into the game.

And, as the member knows, the exploration issue is critical. The prospecting exploration piece obviously leads to the development of ore bodies, and we know we have those ore bodies in Manitoba.

So, this is why we took the action, in part, at least, to develop, through consultative work, a mineral development protocol. A mineral resource development protocol needs to be developed.

In the jurisdictions across the country where they have seen effective partnerships with First Nations and with claimed land, whether treaty or not, they

have developed such protocols. So, in the Yukon and Quebec and some out in BC, they have set up—through work with indigenous bands or groups—have set up better understandings of the expectations, so if the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) and I were in the mineral exploration business, we would go to those jurisdictions and we'd have a—the ability not to understand every nuance or every subtlety of our exploration company's initiatives, but to understand that there are general protocols that would be followed. And we would have that expectation.

In facilitating that, we then open the door to greater interest in our province by those exploration companies. So I want to commend the work of our co-chairs; former premier Jim Downey, Ron Evans, former Chief at Norway House, worked very, very hard to reach out to dozens of First Nations communities in the areas where we believe there is the potential. And their—basically, I think, their work in part—of course, with the contributions of First Nations themselves—is moving us in the direction we need to go. But more needs to be done.

\*(16:50)

And I appreciate the member raising the topic, because it is—the Golden Boy, as we like to say, looks north for a reason, but part of the reason is resource development. And those resources need to be developed. And we do have a concern with bill 69, as the member knows, which could potentially act as an impediment to the very kinds of mineral development projects that we would like to benefit from in Manitoba, as, unfortunately, they—and present environmental processes already have acted in a way to impede the development of resource extraction industries, or resource transportation initiatives, like pipelines, in our country.

So very real concern. And I know this bill is being examined by the senate now. But there are very real concerns going forward about legislative impediments. We aren't in control of that; the federal government is. We've had our input. We've expressed our ideas and positively, I think, demonstrated that we want to work with amendments to the bill that can make it work. We're not proposing, as some have, that it just be torn up. We're proposing it could be made to work better.

But, at the same time, we have to do what's in our jurisdiction to make it work better here. And part of that is partnering with our First Nations



communities to get better protocols in place that, in a far better way, encourage investments to be undertaken in exploration and prospecting here in Manitoba.

So that is a stated goal of our government. It's something that we're going to continue to focus on. And we are pleased with the response from a number of the First Nations who have actively participated in this process. So we're looking forward to continuing to make real progress not just have meetings.

**Mr. Lamont:** Thank you. And I know that—again, when I spoke with officials in Thompson, that they are fundamentally optimistic, as many people in 'fining'-mining communities tend to be, but also because we know that that is one of the—their world-class deposits between Flin Flon and Thompson.

The challenge is that because of the delays in prospecting the possibility of a full mine is being pushed further and further into the future. And that in the meantime there are serious challenges for Thompson and—as well as for Flin Flon. And one of the things that officials in both cities mentioned was the mining reserve, because for decades they paid into it. And it seemed to them, that it—if there's any really appropriate time to reach into the mining reserve for these communities, that it might be now.

So I'm just wondering what is the state of the mining reserve and has the Province given any consideration to using it to invest in—to either to diversify Flin Flon or to assist Thompson in the short term—in the short to medium term?

**Mr. Pallister:** So the member's concern about the mining reserve fund is well founded. It was—it is, I think, somewhat misunderstood. It's not a government initiative so much as it is a mining company initiative designed to assist in adjustment; we'll call it that. And it was—unfortunately, it was depleted to the point where its own sustainability was in danger. We've seen a little bit of an uptick in the amounts available in that fund. There may be more to say on that at some future point.

But, most certainly, the concerns about community revitalization are very real. That's—this is actually what drew me into public life in the first place—the very thing the member's alluding to, concerns about my own community, my home town and the threats posed to it when it lost two of its major industries. So I have tremendous sympathy for the adjustments that have to happen, and, certainly, not exclusively in mining communities. But, when—

you know, we saw it in Portage when we lost our Campbell Soup plant and our air force base. It doesn't sound like much to people from Toronto, maybe, but for anyone who understands mid-size and smaller communities, like many of our mining communities and ag communities are, losing 20 per cent of your jobs, 25 per cent of your jobs in two years is a pretty scary thing.

So the transitional thing—the transitional challenges are real. But what the member's first question showed is that he understands that the ongoing development of mineral resources is the key, because people—well, frankly, it's sometimes hard to say this, but labour is supposed to be mobile in a functioning economy.

And, if people have to move from one community to another to find meaningful work and they stay within Manitoba, well, that's better than going somewhere else, as many have done over the years. Under the previous administration, we set new records for exporting our—in particular, young people, and their talent was lost to us.

If we can develop through better mineral exploration protocols—and that's what the observations of the group were: seven key priority areas we need to focus on.

I'll just quickly share them: improved communication, information sharing and government relations. Secondly, recognition that clear and predictable permitting and licencing processes are necessary for mineral development investment, and that consultation's a critical step in those processes.

And this is exactly the theme of what we've been talking about today. Both opposition leaders have had questions around the permitting and inspection processes. They're vital to our province's economic growth and, I think, quite a legitimate area of concern for any provincial government.

Other provinces have taken steps. I think of Jean Chrétien's work with his Liberal government in Québec in terms of Plan Nord. Moving ahead with the very things that the NDP previously failed to do in Manitoba that we are now pursuing is critical, and part of that is the inspection processes and permitting processes.

Recognition of historical mineral development projects; resource revenue sharing; enhanced community participation, including capacity development training; employment opportunities; enhanced economic partnerships and benefits; and enhanced

proponent engagement and relationship building: all of these are part of what we're in pursuit of.

I would commend both former deputy premier Jim Downey, and former Chief Ron Evans, for their tremendous work. And I would also reference the Look North report, which is an extensive amount of work co-chaired by Chief Christian Sinclair from OCN, and Chuck Davidson from the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.

That extensive amount of work is leading to progressive development of some economic and tourism opportunities already in our North. There's much more potential up there, and we need to develop it, and we've taken significant actions to set the stage for that to happen. And I appreciate the member raising this topic.

**Mr. Lamont:** I just wanted to put something on the record briefly, which is that I know that there have been concerns when people talk about mineral exploration and so on, both across Canada and in Manitoba. And that there's—one of the things I'm very concerned about is the perception that First Nations may necessarily pose an obstacle to this.

There are, of course—you know, we have duty to consult, and there's all sorts of positive things we can do, but it is the case, I think that there's—and I bring this up in particular because there's a partnership—I believe it's with Nelson House and a mining company—and they have been unable to get permits.

So there's absolutely no question in this instance of any objections on the part of indigenous communities. There's full buy-in, but they haven't been able to get permits for 18 to 24 months, if I'm not mistaken.

And this is an extreme—this is a very important issue simply because, like, we all understand that natural resources and mineral resources are finite, which is why you can end up having—which is why we have adjustment funds, but the other is that we could be—because of this lack of permitting, that we could be facing a much longer economic pause up north than we should.

So I certainly hope that—I hope the government will be able to get to the bottom of what's holding up these permits and be able to expedite them.

**Mr. Pallister:** I would just say there's—the member's hitting on an area of real concern—do I have two minutes? One?—hitting on an area of shared concern. I appreciate him doing that. And it's particularly

appropriate to point out that the NDP position on this is that these resources should stay in the ground.

They have—their leader has signed on to what's called the Leap Manifesto—a David Suzuki brain stall—a document that basically says that resources should not be dug up out of the earth. And the NDP leader has said that he agrees with that, and that is absolutely an affront to the potential for developing in the North in our province.

Red Sucker Lake is moving ahead with Yamana Gold on exploration agreement. There's some hope—

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

## INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN RELATIONS

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations):** I do.

I'm pleased to be able to speak to the Department of Indigenous and Northern Relations 2019-2020 estimates and discuss some of the important activities that we have under way.

Before I begin, I'd like to take the opportunity to acknowledge that we are on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is on the ancestral land of the Anishinabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene peoples as well as the homeland of the Métis Nation.

I'd also like to acknowledge the hard work of the staff within our department this past year. It's through their efforts that we've been—make great strides in our work in northern and the indigenous communities, and as part of our work in 2018-19 my department has engaged in a substantial realignment that has been focused on ensuring that we are well positioned to pursue our government's priorities, as well as the priorities of indigenous and northern Manitobans.

At the same time, this realignment's intended to place us in a position of strength in order to meet our broader commitment to improve key areas, such as the most improved job creation and economic

growth, most improved in partnerships with business and industry, most improved province in achieving outcomes for the delivery of quality services and most improved province in public finances.

As the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations, it is my responsibility to lead Manitoba's efforts, to work positively and respectfully with indigenous and northern communities, and support reconciliation efforts across our government. This is a responsibility that I take very seriously, and I can say with considerable certainty that leading this department has been an extremely rewarding experience.

I'm honoured for the responsibilities that I've been given, and I've been humbled as I bear witness to the incredible passion and strength that exists within indigenous and northern communities in Manitoba.

The Crown has a duty to consult with indigenous communities whenever a government decision or action may infringe upon or adversely affect the exercise of an Aboriginal or a treaty right. As part of that duty, the Crown is to seek in good faith to address the concerns expressed by the community about potential adverse effects on the exercise of Aboriginal or treaty rights.

It's our view that meaningful consultation furthers reconciliation, and it assists government in becoming more familiar with the practices, histories and traditions of communities and the impact that proposed actions could have. With this in mind, we made a commitment to establish a renewed duty-to-consult framework for respectful and positive consultations with indigenous communities, and I'm pleased to report that this work is nearing completion and that we anticipate finalization of the framework early this fiscal year.

Aligned closely with our work on the duty-to-consult framework, we continue to work closely with Growth, Enterprise and Trade to review the report of the co-chairs on the Manitoba mineral development protocol, which was released in June of 2018.

The goal of the protocol is to support a process for mineral development that fosters collaboration and advances mineral development opportunities within our province. It is our hope that the Province's approach to duty to consult, in addition to the proposed mineral development protocol, will allow for timely and well-informed decisions to support the

sustainable development of mineral resources and other economic development opportunities.

In addition to being the Minister for Indigenous and Northern Relations, I've also been assigned as minister responsible for reconciliation, as outlined in Manitoba's path to the reconciliation act. In keeping with the act, we've committed to initiate an engagement process and collaboration with indigenous communities and all Manitobans to develop a comprehensive reconciliation framework and the action plan. I'm pleased to report that we'll soon begin the engagement process in collaboration with indigenous communities, as well as all Manitobans.

\*(15:20)

This complements the work all provincial departments are already undertaking to understand indigenous priorities and advance reconciliatory action. In addition, as part of our ongoing commitment to a transparent and accountable government, I will continue to report each year the measures of our government that we have taken to advance reconciliation in The Path to Reconciliation Act Annual Progress Report.

Manitoba's 'participation' in treaty land entitlement results from provincial constitutional obligations under the Manitoba Natural Resources Transfer Agreement. This agreement requires that Manitoba set aside sufficient, unoccupied Crown land, out of lands transferred to Manitoba, to enable Canada to satisfy its treaty obligations.

Treaty land entitlement is a provincial priority and work related—as it comprises a sizable and important component of our work. There are nine treaty land entitlement agreements in Manitoba covering 29 entitlement First Nations for a total of approximately 1.4 million acres of Crown as well as acquisition land.

As of February 28th, 2019, under all agreements in Manitoba, 665,697 acres have been transferred to Canada, with 642,623 acres converted to reserve. Throughout the coming year, we'll continue to work with our efforts to fulfill Manitoba's obligations and we will work in partnership with entitlement First Nations and Canada to complete the transfer of Crown land selections and acquisitions.

One of the key functions of our department is working to support Manitoba's Northern Affairs communities to ensure that they're safe, healthy and prosperous. We provide ongoing support to the

communities in the form of community programs, services, infrastructure and governance supports. Water compliance is an important issue and we will continue to work with Sustainable Development to develop initiatives that will improve compliance. The department is moving forward with capital infrastructure improvements that meet regulatory requirements and we look forward to many great advancements in the years to come.

Addressing violence against indigenous women and girls and the incidences of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is a priority of the utmost importance for Manitoba. Manitoba continues to be involved in community-based intergovernmental and interdepartmental work to help address issues related to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We've taken many steps regionally as well as nationally in an effort to address this critical and tragic issue.

Our government hope is that the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will result in realistic and meaningful changes that will begin to address the systematic causes of violence against indigenous women and girls. In the meantime, Manitoba will continue with our efforts to address this critical and tragic issue. This includes providing our support to community agencies such as Ka Ni Kanichihk and Eyaa-Keen, and to annual events such as Wiping Away the Tears.

The 2011 flood event in the Interlake region damaged housing and community infrastructure in First Nations Pinaymootang, Lake St. Martin, Little Saskatchewan, and Dauphin River. This event caused undue hardship on individual members, families and community leadership and we continue to work positively and respectfully with all those impacted to address the flood issues.

Our government and Indigenous Services Canada have agreed in a cost-sharing arrangement to allow the rebuilding of housing and supportive infrastructure under the banner of Operation Return Home. Through Operation Return Home, Manitoba remains committed to reconciliation with indigenous communities while fostering strong and mutually beneficial relationships.

On a more general note, I'm pleased to report that Indigenous and Northern Relations has remained and continues to remain on track and within our budget allocations. We continue to identify and realign human and financial resources to meet the

significant priorities that we have in front of us. This includes working to preserve 'current' programming and position ourselves to provide enhanced funding of capital projects to meet priority health and safety needs in Northern Affairs communities.

The Manitoba government remains committed to partnering with indigenous and northern communities in pursuit of our mutual goal of enhancing quality of life. We also remain committed, as I have noted before, to making decisions responsibly by directing resources towards areas that will make a true difference.

Once again, I remain firm in my belief that we are on track to deliver on our many commitments and I look forward to year ahead with excitement and enthusiasm and I thank you all for being here today.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes, I do.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the member.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** It's my pleasure to be here today. As many of you are aware, I'm the deputy critic. Unfortunately, Amanda couldn't be with us this afternoon. So I'm always grateful for the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns with the government during this process.

Indigenous and Northern Relations encompass many topics that affect all of those living in Manitoba's North: northern health, northern fishers, northern airports, mining, Communities Economic Development Fund, and the list goes on, of course.

There—these are issues in which changes have begun affecting northerners' everyday lives, and not always for the better. In fact, quite often just the opposite. It is important to ensure that all Manitobans have equal access to health care, job opportunities and other basic life necessities such as affordable food, housing and all of the things that are encompassed in what we take for granted elsewhere in the province.

It's also important to ensure that—long-term prosperity and sustainability of our North; so that will require investments and an actual plan on how to proceed with—to prosperity and the future of the North.

To date, really, the only plan we've seen from this government is a plan that talks about tourism. It doesn't talk about sustainable economies for the North.

Under this government, hundreds of jobs have been lost in the mining sector and more job losses are, unfortunately, on the way. This government has refused to provide Thompson with funding from the Mining Community Reserve Fund, a fund which is funded specifically by the mining companies, for communities that will be in trouble when mines begin to shut down.

Now the government has indicated that there may not be any money in the Mining Community Reserve Fund. So there's questions remaining. If not, why not; where is it? Believe there's great miscommunication or misunderstanding on what the fund is for and how it's funded and what levels it has to be.

So this is just the mining sector that we've talked very briefly about here. The government continues to dismantle northern health care. We see that in my own community, where you can't give birth anymore in the community of Flin Flon. This has a much bigger impact than just on the community of Flin Flon; it affects First Nations communities on both sides of the border, it impacts several other communities on the Manitoba side.

As this government is continuing to threaten the privatization of life flight—Lifeflight, putting patients' care at risk, we have many questions about how that process is going to work. In fact, I had some concerns earlier that I'd sent to a minister about situations that had happened with a patient being transported back to his home community. And the basic answer I received at that point was, well, it wasn't a Lifeflight, it was a private carrier, which concerns me even more with the continued privatization, then, of Lifeflight, if that's where the problems already are.

So in the North in particular, communities are struggling, wondering what's next. And I have the great honour of representing many communities throughout the North; Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, Tadoule, Brochet, Lac Brochet, Pukatawagan, Cranberry, Snow Lake, Sherridon. Many of those communities struggle with the basic economies of life.

\* (15:30)

And, while some of them may very well be more under the federal jurisdiction, certainly there are Northern Affairs communities, in the North, that have issues, that I hope to work more with the minister to address some of those issues. Such as the cost of basic food for people in those communities. While they are finding that they have to travel further and further to chase their traditional food stuffs, the caribou, because they're going further north, the cost of that hunt become unmanageable for many in those communities, but the cost of basic food stuffs in the local grocery store are also unmanageable for many of those people.

More consideration needs to be given to these communities. Even if the claim is that it's the federal government's responsibility, there needs to be more that the Province does to recognize that people living in those communities are Manitobans first and foremost and we cannot ignore them as citizens of this province.

We are hopeful that as we go through this process of Estimates, that members of communities as well as us as the opposition will get a better understanding of where the minister is headed with her department and the North.

Certainly, there's any number of issues that come up that aren't specifically this minister's area of expertise, but there will be questions that come out because it touches on part of her areas, such as the number of people that are assigned to duties in the North and what impact that is having on so many people in the North.

And, with those very few comments, I will end my opening statement and we'll get into questions. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the member.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 19.1.(a) contained in resolution 19.1.

At this point we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table and we ask that the minister introduce the staff in attendance.

**Ms. Clarke:** Yes I'm pleased to introduce the staff that's here with me today, and I'll start with Brenda. Brenda Feng is the executive finance officer for INR. Seated next to her, we have Paul Doolan, and he's the acting executive director. Next to me, we have Geoff

Sarenchuk. He is the acting director. He is also consultation reconciliation, and he's the acting, acting for the acting deputy minister right now. Next to Geoff, we've got Scott DeJaegher, and he is director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives. And I thank them for being here today.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

**Mr. Lindsey:** A global discussion.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you. It is agreed then that the questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner with all resolutions to be passed once questioning has concluded. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I appreciate the minister's opening comments. Just very quickly, before we get into too much of the meat of the matter, in your introduction of your staff members, you said you don't have a deputy minister and, in fact, the gentleman on your side whose name, I'm sorry, I didn't quite capture is the deputy, deputy, deputy or something of that effect. Perhaps you could clarify that for us, please.

**Ms. Clarke:** The Department of INR has an acting deputy minister at this time, Michelle Dubik; however, she is unavailable today for personal reasons and Geoff is acting for the acting deputy.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank you for that clarification.

So without further ado, I guess we'll get into it.

Let's talk a little bit about the Communities Economic Development Fund.

So, Mr. Speaker?—Chairman?—Chairman, the fund is the only provincial Crown corporation with headquarters in northern Manitoba. And, aside from its head office in the city of Thompson, CEDF has sub-offices in Swan River, The Pas, Gimli, Winnipeg.

Madam—or, Mr. Chair, under The Communities Economic Development Fund Act, the CEDF has very specific non-political goals. The objects of the fund are to encourage the economic development of (a) northern Manitoba, (b) Aboriginal people in the province outside the city of Winnipeg, and (c) the fishing industry in Manitoba.

So my question to the minister, then, is why has the government decided to politicize and broaden the purpose of the CEDF?

**Ms. Clarke:** Well, thank you. Actually, this is a part of our department that we're very excited about. This past session we've had additional meetings just with our staff, as we move into—I don't know if you'd call it new territory for this department, but we're really pleased to be included within the economic development strategy for our province.

We have a new committee of Cabinet: the economic development committee of Cabinet. I'm very honoured to have been asked to sit on that Cabinet posting, and as of this point, I'm the vice-chair. From our department perspective that's very exciting because we are very concerned also, and we're very excited about the possibilities for northern Manitoba.

Having spent a considerable amount of time in northern Manitoba the past three years and meeting, not just with the indigenous leadership and communities or the Northern Affairs communities, we've actually had joint meetings where the municipalities are there.

In fact, we had one most recently, just this past February, in The Pas, where we had a meeting with our new federal economic development minister. She was in attendance. I was there myself, with some staff. We also had the mayor of The Pas there, as well as their economic development officer. We had Chief Sinclair there.

So we had quite an extensive group and we had a really great discussion about the possibilities of advancing economic development in the northern part of the province. And I mean, The Pas was looking specifically in their region, but it was really great to have a federal partner there now. And we discussed a lot of opportunities and where we could go.

Within our own department, we've certainly had a lot of discussion with our First Nation leadership, and they desperately are wanting, as you know, they want jobs, they want sustainable futures for all their people.

And you mentioned about tourism. Tourism surely 'souldn't'—should not be overlooked; it is probably one of the economies, industries within our province that has grown exponentially, and a lot of it is really going to be focused on the North.

I had a consul from Germany here two years ago, asking specifically about northern Manitoba and the possibility for tourism. They've got people in faraway countries, like Germany, who are really

wanting to come and visit Manitoba, specifically northern Manitoba.

We have so much to offer in northern Manitoba; it's not just about—we have great resources, but in regards to tourism, the hunting, the fishing, the northern lights are a huge attraction. And the reasons for them wanting to come is extensive. I'm really excited because we have another visitor from Germany next week coming to discuss this once again.

So there is really a focus on Manitoba, so I wouldn't in any way overlook tourism. We've had that discussion with chiefs and councils already, and what their regions have to offer.

\* (15:40)

We talked to Skownan and, you know, they made it very clear that the hunting and fishing in their specific area is second to none. They're right, but we have to find a way to develop it. We've talked extensively with them about training, education and training in northern Manitoba, to prepare them for—not just tourism industry but other businesses as well.

All—you talked briefly about mining in your opening remarks and we also, not through our department, but in conjunction with Growth, Enterprise and Trade, the mining opportunities and the possibility for projects very soon is there. And I know that the minister from that department has been working for quite some time and, as you know, those things don't happen overnight, but there are already formations within the economic development structure happening.

We—they've been announced just a couple of weeks ago and northern Manitoba is most definitely included in that. And I've had a voice at this table, and I've made sure that the indigenous communities are also recognized as being full partners as we go forward in this strategy.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank you for that. So, I just want to be really clear, Mr. Chair, that when I said broaden, I meant the government is diluting the purpose of the Communities Economic Development Fund, interfering with the operation of a Crown corporation by bringing it directly in line with vague goals that this government has. According to CEDF's mandate letter issued by this government, the government is forcing CEDF to be personally responsible for implementing this government's Look North strategy and the Look North Action Plan.

So I ask again, when the CEDF, with a long outstanding track record for helping northern Manitobans—why is this government choosing to politicize and interfere with that Crown corporation rather than letting it get on with the work it was doing, which was vital to economic development in the North?

**Ms. Clarke:** Well, I don't see how you mean interference. I happen to know, as Oswald saw very well, who is a part of this group, and they have both been very instrumental in helping develop the Look North strategy. They've been involved in that and they, in fact, are very much on board with this. And I know from discussions with them up there, they're looking forward to enhancing what they're already doing with the help of this government.

I think to have a program in our province that is really focused on economic development; we haven't seen this for a number of years in the province. I—in my community, back when I was a municipal leader, we worked hard within our own communities to promote economic development. It's not easy and we did not have the support of any government during those years.

And I think now that we've got a government that is really focusing on economic development—not just in the southern part of the province, which typically has been the way in the past—we're really focusing. We have a huge focus. And to call that interference in the northern part of the province, I think, is totally wrong.

We have been up there, I don't know, numerous times working with them. It's not like we're dropping a ball in the court and saying here it is, you know, take it and run, and see you later. That's not the approach this government takes. We are working as, you know, the fact that we have a complete structure in place already up running and moving forward and they are providing a lot of different plans and what they see as opportunities for the people of the North.

What they see and relate to us that—is the desire of the people of the North. I don't see as that watering it down in any way. They've had a huge influence and will continue have—what happens in northern Manitoba. And that's specifically why this is being developed and run through CDEM because they know, they—they're there. They know what's needed, they know what they wanted for years.

And now the opportunity, as I indicated, will be enhanced and they're not going to be alone. You

know, they will have the opportunity to meet and to discuss with the other groups with—throughout the province to discuss as a whole where we want our province to be, where—and again, I'll have to say again, you know, when you try to indicate that tourism, you know, the only thing in Manitoba up north is tourism, well, you couldn't be more wrong.

To promote tourism in northern Manitoba would be a fantastic opportunity where our indigenous people can not only live within their culture as they want to live, but they can also share it with the whole country, the whole world. I don't see that as watering-down opportunities at all. I think we've got—as I said, I've been involved in economic development for a lot of years, and seen this as just a huge potential for the north of our province.

**Mr. Lindsey:** So, since 1993, the CEDF has provided at least \$99 million in development loans to 770-some businesses—business clients; created or maintained almost 5,000 jobs. And these businesses have been estimated to have earned \$184 million in annualized revenue; paid out \$71 million-plus in annualized wages; over \$7 million in income tax, annualized. In addition, the CEDF has provided \$87 million to commercial-fish loans, to fishers; has, on average, over a thousand commercial fishers as clients that represent over 70 per cent of all commercial fishers in Manitoba. And these individuals and businesses, in most cases, would have no other access to capital.

So it would seem to me that this model has been quite successful at creating economic opportunities for people, particularly in the North. So, again, the question, then, is: Why is the government interfering in a very successful Crown corporation and, really, undermining the economic health of northern Manitobans?

**An Honourable Member:** Well again, I don't know how you see—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister.

**Ms. Clarke:** Thank you. I really don't see how you see it as interference when we're working with a group to actually enhance what they're already doing. And I think, you know, the remarks that you've just spoke of really speak to the value of that group in northern Manitoba.

And that's why, you know, in order to promote and facilitate additional economic development opportunities, there is a lot of advancement in fishing and that. But that's not for everybody. There's a lot of

communities that aren't fishing that are inland, and they don't have the fishing, et cetera, like, what you're speaking to.

We also work with Indigenous Tourism Canada. They're a partner with tourism Manitoba. So I don't think saying that we are watering-down when we're actually adding a very substantial, indigenous component to northern Manitoba tourism. How—like, I think that's almost disrespectful of the indigenous people. When you're talking about inclusion of everybody up north because the—as we know, the percentage of indigenous people up north is very high and there needs to be other opportunities.

We need to work on behalf of all people up north. Not just those in mining. Not just those in fishing. Those are very significant. And you're right, they have been successful. They have been there for years. But we're a province that's moving forward. Status quo in all respects is not where we need to be. We need to keep improving. And when we have got something really good, sure. But what's wrong with improving on what we're doing with and for people in northern Manitoba?

We have a lot of people in northern Manitoba. And you know this well yourself, because I'm assuming you've lived up there for a number of years. But, typically in the past, what's happened with people who live in northern Manitoba, who are not indigenous, who do not live on reserve, what do they do? They work up there in the mining industry or whatever, and then they leave. When they want to retire, they leave. When they are not well, they move north where there's better health care. For any number of reasons, they leave. Because I know in my own community, we've got several people that are living there from Thompson and The Pas, that spent their whole career up north.

\* (15:50)

People in the North, as I'm sure you must know, want to stay in the North. But they want to have recreation. And they want to have jobs. And they want to have jobs that are substantially good jobs. So, then, I think, as a government, if we are not working to promote opportunities for them in northern Manitoba, then they'll continue to migrate away from northern Manitoba and it will never grow. It will never anything more and, as you've also indicated, and we all know that the mining industry in places like Flin Flon, Thompson, Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake, it's not what it was back 10 and 20 years ago.



So what do people do? Do they have to completely leave? Are they going to—they're leaving there—are they leaving our province? A lot of people that worked up in those northern communities were not from Manitoba. So what do we want to do? We want to grow our province. We want to sustain our province, not just the southern part but the northern part as well.

So, then, it's on us to do better for northern Manitoba. And I think you're quite well aware that we have been spending a substantial amount of time. There have been numerous meetings with northern communities, not just The Pas and Flin Flon. It's been with indigenous communities, as well, and we've been reaching out to them and we've been listening to them. The remarks and the decisions that have been made for economic development have come from the conversations for the people in the North. These aren't something that we're sitting here on Broadway determining what do we do with the North. No, it's been our people going out and meeting with people of the North and listening to the people of North—what do they want.

So, to say we're watering down the system that they've always had that was just for this specific group is kind of a disservice to the people of the North, because they are getting what they are asking for.

They're getting what they wanted, and people like Oswald Sawh have been very, very 'intramural'. Alan McLaughlin—these are people from the North. They're people in business. They're people that have been working in government. They are telling us what they want. We're giving them what they want, what they're asking for.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I think it's interesting that the minister talks about people when they retire, not wanting to perhaps stay in the North. I, certainly, know many people that were more than happy to stay in northern communities when they retired, but, with the current government's plans for northern health care, for example, you're actually—the government is actually driving people out of the North, because people see that they can't get a doctor.

The community of Snow Lake just last week announced that their public health nurse is gone, and the message I received was they didn't really think there'd be much success in getting someone else to come and take that place, of that public health nurse.

I talk to people all the time in the North that are concerned about, well, if I retire here in the North, but I get to the point where I can't live in my own home anymore, where will I live?

And so the minister is somewhat confused about what's driving people out of the North. I think it's a lack of health care. It's a lack of—seniors I'm talking, now—lack of health care, lack of seniors housing, lack of nursing, all those things that we talk about. And then you talk about young people.

Well, young people would like to have some likelihood of an occupation that is going to sustain them and, so far, every answer that this minister has given me to questions about CEDF has gotten specifically to tourism. And I'm not against tourism. Don't ever think for one minute that I am. But I don't believe that tourism can or should be the only employment opportunity in the North, because it is not going to supply a standard of living adequate for people living in the North.

So can the minister perhaps expound on some of the plans for what else is going to happen in the North, other than just tourism, when we see things like CEDF that did fund actual economic prosperity for people and provided employment and income? Can she expound on, perhaps what else this government is envisioning and what plans they've got in place to take the place of mining jobs that are disappearing? Or what has the government done to try and foster more mining jobs in the North?

**Ms. Clarke:** Well, thank you and I don't in any way, once again, indicate that CDEF is going to be just doing tourism. I truly recognize all the work they've done in the past and there is absolutely nothing, no barricades, no barriers from stopping to do that in the future, only enhance it. So I'll move on from there.

I just want to address, when I said about people moving from northern Manitoba, I know this from personal encounters with these people and they have not stayed in northern Manitoba, and that's a shift that we want to see change. We definitely want to see that change. Because a lot that have left, have left not because they wanted to—they loved their life in northern Manitoba. And that's what our government recognizes, what a great opportunity there is for a great life in the—one of the most beautiful parts of our province for anybody that's spent any time up north.

Like, it's—tourism is not to be underestimated, but there needs to be other jobs, as well. And that's

all part and package of this. It's an economic development strategy, it is not a tourism—although there is tourism strategies, but economic development is a high priority and that's what we're discussing.

You talk about health care. It's really interesting that you would sit here and talk about health care in such a negative tone when I was just in your community weeks ago and we opened a brand new emergency centre in Flin Flon hospital that is out of this world. It is the most highly technology—and the services that can be offered there are second to none.

From there, we were also in Thompson; we opened six additional dialysis units which ensures—and talking. We talked to some of the people that were there for dialysis at that time—the fact that they could stay in the community, they have additional spots, they don't have to leave.

We talked to the technicians that were there, we talked to the scheduling people that were in Thompson about how the whole process works when—from the time they're diagnosed with 'dibetes' and what they have to go through, and what they can all do in Thompson now through telehealth and everything else. It's amazing. When we talked to the staff—and I spent a good two hours with the staff in Flin Flon—and explaining everything that they are now capable of doing and doing with better opportunities—I don't know how you can be critical of health care.

And, yes, we do need staff. I don't disagree with that at all. Staffing in health care has been an issue in my community. Back in the day, we struggled to get a doctor, even in southern Manitoba. I think there has been—I forget how many additional doctors hired—there's additional doctors, there's been additional nurses hired. They're looking at different strategies for those working in the North, you know, whether it's weeks on, weeks off with doctors and nurses.

And you talk about 'ogstetrics'. Well, I got the opportunity to sit with our Minister of Health when we were in Flin Flon and we met with the two individuals who are very pro-obstetrics in your hospital for your area. We had a lengthy discussion with them, a very good discussion and they were, you know, expressing their concern moving forward. And rightfully so.

Good for them for taking an interest in their community. People need to do that; they need to protect what they have in that community. But as a

government, and this move that was made as you have heard many times with your questions in the House during question period—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order. Or—if I could just remind all members to direct their comments through the Chair, that would be appreciated.

**Ms. Clarke:** Anyways, the discussion with these individuals on obstetrics in their community—I've been through that, that happened in my community under my watch as a municipal official, losing not just obstetrics but losing emergency services. I know what it's like, I've been there, I've done it. And I indicated to the two women back in the day that was probably me sitting at that table fighting for services.

But, when decisions are made by the physicians and the obstetric doctors that they can no longer perform what needs to be formed in the safety of individuals, the minister has to take that very seriously. And that doesn't mean things don't change over the years, and, as we look forward to enhancing and growing the population in northern Manitoba, who knows what the future holds? But health care is a very high priority, as is economic development in northern Manitoba.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Lindsey:** Interesting comments to be sure that the minister went and toured a building that is a medical facility or a part of a medical facility that doesn't have doctors, that any doctors that she—minister may have encountered in the emergency room were from somewhere else.

People in the North, and not just the community of Flin Flon but throughout the North, have concerns about the level of care that they get in the North, recognizing full well that, of course, we're never going to have exactly the same level of medical services that people in the south or in the city of Winnipeg enjoy, but then when we see that really things like northern patient transportation that have been starved for resources, that were over budget once upon a time simply because the need was so great for people to get out of the North, to get medical care, to be able to get back to their home communities, that now those people aren't being afforded that same opportunity because of cutbacks that this minister's government has undertaken.

And I understand that this is not necessarily her portfolio, but when she talks about how wonderful it was to tour that facility—and it is a nice facility. It was—funding was committed by previous

government to build that; otherwise, I'm sure it wouldn't have ever gotten built. But, when we talk about how are we going to attract people to the North, again, the only concrete thing that I heard from the minister was tourism. Doctors aren't going to come and live in the North because tourists might come.

Communities are going to survive in the North because there's been actual investments in those communities to attract businesses, to look at mines and mining which has been a resource extraction, has been a primary driver of the economy in the North. Now it shouldn't be the only driver for sure, and mining certainly needs to be done differently than it used to be done.

So let's talk for a minute about the minister's comments about the consultation process with communities in the North. Perhaps she could explain where exactly that is at so that certainly mining companies have concerns around that process because they're just not sure what it is and where it's at, so perhaps the minister could talk a little bit about that.

**Ms. Clarke:** I'd invite you to ask mining questions to the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen) because that is his portfolio, and I'm not directly involved in the mining. I am, however, involved in working with our First Nations when mining occurs on or near treaty territory, and I'll continue to be involved in that and probably even more involved as we move forward.

I would have to say in regards to mining protocol in the province of 'Manitou-toba', stay tuned. I think you're going to hear some really great announcements where the silica sand up in Hollow Water-Seymourville area is well advanced and undergoing consultations and such right now. But I know our minister was at a mining conference in—out of province not too long ago, and the outlook for Manitoba is indeed very bright in regards to mining. So I would certainly encourage you to have that conversation with him, and I'm sure he has a lot of very interesting—and again, I'm discouraged when you keep putting tourism down. It is not the only thing taking place in the North.

We are very excited—economic development isn't tourism, but I will alert the member from northern Manitoba, just this week I'm sure you're going to hear great things coming out of northern Manitoba, I'm fairly certain.

There's a delegation, I believe there's some northern awards being—taking place this week, and there will be a contingent of Manitoba people attending that in northern Manitoba. And I'm not certain, but I think that's the first time.

In regards to consultations, as said, you need to speak to the other minister about that. And again, in regards to health care, I can only say, you know, there's a shortage of doctors throughout Manitoba. And I realize in northern Manitoba, very often there is only one, or we've got nurse practitioners, or nurses who do an extended job in a lot of the communities where there is only nursing stations, and so on and so forth.

I think the good news on that is, having met with the other people doing health care in northern Manitoba, once we get more connectivity throughout the North, in regards to better technologies, services, where they can have telehealth in all facilities and that they will be able to connect with doctors, whether it's in Winnipeg or larger centres, in regards to patients that they're treating, et cetera, there, we all recognize that that's going to be just a huge asset.

I actually got the opportunity to sit with the committee, about five or six years ago, of—government of the day, on recruitment and retention of physicians throughout Manitoba, and that was for all across Manitoba. And as a municipal official with AMM, I got to sit on that committee and meet with actual doctors from our province to find out why we have difficulty, not only recruiting, when we aren't providing enough doctors from our home, you know, from our home province, and why we can't retain these doctors.

And there is various issues brought forward. And they're none of the issues that we haven't heard before. And, you know, it seems minimalistic to us, but when we get doctors from foreign countries, which we desperately need because we're not graduating enough doctors of our own—and that was a much bigger issue back 10 years ago than it is right now, because Manitoba is doing quite well, as far as graduating doctors in our province now—much better, but certainly not fast enough.

But, you know, when you talk about northern Manitoba, their issues were airports: they want to be close to international airports, much bigger than Winnipeg. They do not like the cold weather at all. Mosquitoes. I mean, these all seem irrelevant to us because we put up with them day after day, but when you've got doctors coming from countries that are

used to intense heat and different conditions, and specially different cultural conditions, they were very clear that Manitoba wasn't always their first choice.

**Mr. Lindsey:** So, just to get back to the CEDF for a bit, before we move on. The government's framework for economic development cites a need to reduce overlap when it comes to provincially funded economic development programs. But, when it comes to the Communities Economic Development Fund, the report cites only one case of overlap with the Manitoba Industrial Opportunities. Furthermore, it doesn't state what that overlap is, and it states that steps are taken so that programs do not fund the same deals. Which, really, makes it sound like there is no overlap.

So, when this government's very own outsourced policy consultants can't provide adequate justification to interfere in the successful operation of CEDF, why does this government seem to want to choose to keep doing that anyway?

**Ms. Clarke:** Well, it's kind of interesting when you talk about, you know, CEDF and funding coming from different places and overlap. Having been an MLA in this government for the past three years as a minister, as a Cabinet minister, and having sat on Treasury Board, it was a little overwhelming, in our first year or so, when we would have a discussion about funding any particular group or organization or fund an event.

\* (16:10)

And I'm not going to use CEDF specifically, but you can imagine how frustrating it was when I would indicate that there was an event or whatever being funded through INR, and someone down the table would say no, I fund that, and then somebody else would pipe up at the other side of the table, no, I fund that, and no, I fund that.

And, you know, there would be any one event that would be funded through maybe three, four, five different departments, all unknowing of each other from the previous government. And I was particularly interested in my department where, you know, anybody was accustomed to coming when they needed money for something or whatever, that they would—it would just be given, you know.

There was no cohesive plan in regards to funding, and I think what you see now in Municipal Relations—where they have a single portal for applying for funding—all the money now from all the different little pots of money that were all over

government and in different departments is now focused in one pot. They draw from that pot. They make their own decisions what they're spending it on. It's not the government, say, well you can apply for this fund if you fit this contrite—criteria. You can apply for this if you fit this criteria. There's a different criteria for this one and a different criteria and they all come from different departments.

And I know that from personal experience, and all you ever did was sit applying for funding and following up on funding. And what's happened in the municipal department where they're applying, their funding comes out of one portal, basket funding, and it's turning out—it is extremely successful, and you've seen most recently that more is being done that way in regards to the roads and bridges.

Well, when we're talking economic development, it's the same process. There is funding all over, throughout government, for economic development for different groups, different organizations with different rules, different criteria.

And I think the fact that this government is following that process where we are creating an economic development committee or a department, not a department separate from, but within our government, where people want to come and do business. Whether it's business that they want to, you know, big businesses and you've seen it in agriculture. Roquette is a prime example where they're coming—if they want to come to Manitoba and start a business or become involved in business in Manitoba, where do you go?

Previously there was nowhere. There was no one person, no one place to go and talk business. Well, in northern Manitoba, which is much more secluded, it's remote. Where would you go if you wanted to do a business in northern Manitoba?

Well, we talk about CEDF. Yes, absolutely, CEDF. But right now you're talking what they have focused on is right there in northern Manitoba.

How about companies from outside of Manitoba, whether it's another province or outside of our country? They need to have a place to go and we want to work with CEDF, that if they choose northern Manitoba, they see potential there, that they've got—they are right up to speed but they're not only just that—we're all working in unison. We're all aligned. We are one province and we are aligned at improving the province and, absolutely, northern Manitoba is a very high priority.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Interesting comments from the minister about northern Manitoba being a very high priority. We've heard that for, what is it—three years since this government—three long years since this government has been in place and yet, since 2017, the CEDF development fund has been frozen.

So exactly what support has this government given to people that were trying to start industries, trying to start businesses, trying to create employment, trying to create a future? What support has this government given them when that fund that, in the past, did create those jobs, did create those opportunities. It's been frozen, so what's taking its place?

**Ms. Clarke:** Well you bring forward a really good point, and I wouldn't use the word frozen but I would say paused. And I'm sure you've heard that word many times in the past three years. But coming into the mess that we accumulated as we took over in 2016, where do you begin? Where do you begin? Education, Health, Finance, deficit? I mean the list is unending and I think the fact that we've had the opportunity to review and now have, I would say, greatly improved a lot of those different departments within this government, for the province, for the people of Manitoba, I think is remarkable that it's been done in three years.

I know that all of my colleagues have worked very, very hard as well as our staff. They've worked very hard to align our goals and I think it was—what, less than two weeks ago that the economic development strategy was announced as well as the partners, which CEDF was one of those partners.

So I would say we also have a new CEO, Phil Houde, that has been appointed for the Economic Development Office, which means that we have now a specific group that will be heading up economic development for the whole province. And I think that just strengthens everything that we've been doing.

And you indicate that there was a pause. Well, yes, perhaps there was. But I don't think you can deny that, during that time, that our government officials and ministers and staff were working with many partners in northern Manitoba. And as I've indicated, mining is—we are very excited about the opportunities for mining going forward.

Forestry, you know, the MOU that was signed with Hollow Water and three other First Nations in regards to forestry—although that's on the eastern side of the province—equally as important. There's many

opportunities going forward and, as I've indicated, I'm extremely excited about it—not just for our department but for all departments and for all of Manitoba. When we talk to other business and chambers of commerce throughout the province, they're really excited about the fact that we are working now in unison. Not everybody is working in their own little pocket throughout the province with no common goals.

And the goals for sure are going to stay different because, in northern Manitoba, I acknowledge, like, the challenges are different but the opportunities are there and they are—the people of northern Manitoba see that. I've talked to dozens of them. So I don't know why you would want to look at it so negatively, because they're excited about this. People of northern Manitoba, indigenous and non-indigenous, are excited about what's happening and the goals that we have for northern Manitoba.

So I would just say stay tuned, there's really good things coming.

**Mr. Lindsey:** The minister's comment about stay tuned, there's good there's coming; we've been in the North in particular been staying tuned for the last three years waiting for these good things to come but really all that people have seen when it comes to things like the Communities Economic Development Fund that used to actually fund good things happening in the North, is that funding has been—to use the minister's term, I guess—paused, which means frozen, which means that no funds have been released, which means that the fund hasn't created one job, it hasn't created one business, it hasn't created one hope because there has been no expenditure of funds.

So, in the last year, that's down 13; 13 things that were approved the previous year. Thirty-six opportunities from the year before that that aren't there. So now this business loan program is under review, so can the minister confirm if that review has been completed?

**Ms. Clarke:** The review, as well as the funding for CDEF, are not within my department. They're under Growth, Enterprise and Trade. And I certainly encourage you to have these questions available because I know the minister from Growth, Enterprise and Trade is even much more excited than I am about the advancements that have happened.

You indicate that three years is a long time, and I can't believe how quickly three years has gone by.

Looking in the rear view mirror, the changes—not just changes but good changes that have taken place are—the list is lengthy. There's been a lot of good things happening and there's—it takes a while to clean up the mess and we certainly acknowledge that there was quite a mess, and it's all across government; it is not just in one department, it is everywhere.

\*(16:20)

And even to build relationships—and that's what our department is about. We're about building relationships, and I have spent a considerable amount of time doing that and listening.

We don't provide a lot of funding for the northern communities—well, for the Northern Affairs communities, we certainly do provide the funding there, but in regards to, whether it's economic development or whether it's tourism, mining industry, all those types of things, the funding does not come from this department.

But my mandate was to create, not to improve, relationships, because there was very non-existing relationships in northern Manitoba as well as indigenous relations all across this province. And I have to—I really have to thank my staff for working hard, and we have worked hard to foster relationships of trust and that doesn't happen overnight. The indigenous people of this province were not accustomed to be included in discussions across Manitoba, especially when it comes to economic development and those types of things. This is new for them.

But they—this is what they're asking for. This is what they want for the people of the North, and we have to acknowledge, too, with the recent review that the Rural Development Institute did on the indigenous component of what they provide or create—have created within the province of Manitoba; it's huge. And we also have to acknowledge that almost 50 per cent of indigenous people live off of reserve.

So what we do for every community all across the province is really important, and we acknowledge that and we work on behalf of all Manitobans going forward, but the fact that there is an economic development strategy that is focused on rural—or pardon me, northern Manitoba, the fact that we are investing health-care dollars in Manitoba in the northern part, I'm really encouraged when I see all the training programs that are happening in northern Manitoba, even on-reserve. They're taking the

training to them. They don't have to go to The Pas to OCN—or UCN, or they don't have to come to Brandon or whatever. They're teaching them trades on-reserve in community.

There's more and more health-care training. Having been in the Thompson at UCN and the training that they have there for nurses and with new technology and everything is—it's amazing. These things aren't just happening in southern Manitoba anymore. We're creating those jobs. We're creating that training in northern Manitoba, and I don't know how you can't even be aware of this because the people of northern Manitoba are having different opportunities than they've ever had before.

And, again, I'll say, you know, with mining, that creates good jobs, you're right, but we want to create jobs for Manitobans. We want Manitobans to be able to stay in the province. We don't want Manitobans to have to go to Alberta or whatever. We want them to be able to stay here. We want to have sustainable employment in Manitoba and that includes northern Manitoba. So, as I said, good things ahead.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Just a general admonition to all committee members: If you could ensure your electronic devices are on silent, that would be appreciated.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Again, the minister's comment about stay tuned, something is going to happen someday. We've heard that for three years where they—I forget what the Look North program used to be called. It was called something during their election campaign, and then it became Look North and any day now, any year now, something is going to happen with vague references to what that something might be.

We haven't heard one actual plan in three years to create jobs, particularly in northern Manitoba, particularly in some of the northern communities that the minister has direct responsibility for. We haven't heard, other than perhaps tourism, without any real definition for how tourists are going to get there, how they're going to communicate whence they get there, and how many jobs might actually be created from this tourism initiative that, really, in and of itself, still remains a vague concept that—so perhaps the minister could enlighten us a little further on what the game plan is to create employment, to create opportunities, to create future for people, particularly in some of the more remote Northern communities, but also in the bigger ones, that really have faced a downturn in their economy.

And the minister referred to Roquette, and the government clearly invested tax dollars in that firm to create something there. They've clearly invested government money in things like Maple Leaf Foods, to create opportunity there. Those are things that you can put your hand on. You can point to them and say, the government spent X number of millions of dollars and hopes to—in the case of Roquette—hopes to create X number of jobs out of that, along with the private investment.

But the minister can't put her finger on something that this government is invested in in the North, that's creating one actual job. But we used to have a thing that did create jobs, but that funding has been frozen, so I'm struggling to enjoy the minister's enthusiasm about something that may happen someday. People in the North need to know that something is happening today.

So perhaps she could—the minister could tell us, exactly, what jobs they're planning to create, what companies they're hoping to invest in, that are going to create these jobs that she's talking about that, I don't know, in the next two months, next six months, to give us some idea that something is actually happening other than just talk.

**Ms. Clarke:** Well, I think it's unfortunate that you don't have the better connection with the people in the North, and the people that we've actually talked to and have been working with. And again—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

I'd just remind the minister to speak through the Chair.

**Ms. Clarke:** There's been a lot of opportunities, in the past two years for sure. There's been a lot of meetings in northern Manitoba, and I've only been to very few, because I am not the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen). But I certainly am a strong supporter, and, you know, certainly want to be included as a voice, along with the people of the North, and support them in their discussions.

They also are very confident about what's going to happen in northern Manitoba and the opportunities that exist. And again, I suggest, you know, discussion with the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade. He can certainly elaborate on some of the discussion we've had here today.

And what they see is potential for the North. I've certainly had discussions with him on some of the

opportunities, which I'm not at—I'm not able to speak openly about them today, nor is he. There's certain things that remain discussion until such a time that they're announceable.

But there's a lot of discussions taking place at this time. And they're not only positive, but they are exciting, because we do see the need for jobs in northern Manitoba. We want people to be able to work in northern Manitoba, we want them to have a healthy lifestyle in northern Manitoba, and we want them to be able to get whatever education and training they need in northern Manitoba and certainly provide them with the amenities that are required to stay there, if they want to, as seniors. And in the past that hasn't been an option for them.

I've had family that lived in northern Manitoba for a number of years, in Snow Lake, in the mining business. They also—they left, when, you know, when the mining has—is often term, you know, it's good for a while, and then it's gone, and nobody knows that better than yourself.

\* (16:30)

But we want to ensure that the jobs that are created in northern Manitoba, or the industry, or whatever, that happens—and I think Tolko's a good example.

And I know there's no provincial money. In fact, you know, we're actually—the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has been told that they were glad that the government didn't step in and throw money their way again, as has been done in the past. Tolko came in, they took that business, and they're increasing it and it is doing extremely well. They did not need a government infusion of money because they are committed and they're serious. And that's what we want: we want companies, we want corporations to come to Manitoba that are sustainable, not because of they're getting government handouts, but because they believe in what they're doing

And they know the workforce is there. I mean that's—that—when you look at employment in Manitoba and that we've—they've looked at this for a number of years—and HyLife is one of them. I also sat on a committee with the previous government, looking at the workforce for the province of Manitoba. And what's the workforce of Manitoba? Our indigenous people, but they need to be educated, they need to be trained, and they want that. They want that and we're trying to work with that.

In my constituency alone, we've had six classes graduate already for meat-cutting and they are now working in HyLife, they are working in Northern stores, they're going up there, they're not only working in the meat department but they are being trained as managers in the Northern stores. They fit in; they like the culture because it's what they're accustomed to. They want to live within their culture. And they're also working in places like Winkler, and they're doing really well because there are now created jobs and they've had the training, and that's what we want. If that's what they want to further their lifestyles in northern Manitoba, we want to be there for them.

**Mr. Lindsey:** It's interesting the only thing that the minister can cite for something that the government did—well, in fact, by her own admission the government did nothing—was the plant in The Pas. Now, the workers gave up wage increases, the workers gave up potential future pensions, the Town of The Pas gave up tax revenue, and the minister expounds on what a good thing it was to create something without any government money, but then goes on to talk about how much—how important it is that government money went to Roquette to create something there.

So I'm missing something on the minister and how she thinks investing nothing in the North is a good thing, but private enterprise should be the only ones that do that—and workers. But investing in the south, using government money, is a really good thing.

Could the minister explain the difference? Because I'm getting confused by her statements.

**Ms. Clarke:** Well, I think the interesting part of Tolko in the North is it was an established business and there was great potential there. And I understand the member opposite, you know, when you're talking about government infusion of money, because typically in the past, that's what it always was: the government funded everything.

And I fact—I think the fact that this government, we want businesses to expand, we want businesses to look at Manitoba as a good place to invest, good partnerships, you know, with communities and providing jobs—I don't really see where it always has to be, you know, you indicate why you fund this, why you don't fund that. It's not always about the funding, and I think that's where you're really missing the point. It's about the relationships that are built during the process of talking.

Like, when a company wants to come to any specific location—and I can use, in my own area, Parrish and Heimbecker elevator, an elevator that came to rural Manitoba, to a community area where economic development has literally been dead for I don't know how many years with the previous government because they didn't acknowledge that there even was a rural Manitoba, let alone northern.

And, you know, when they come and they establish and they build an elevator that draws from hundreds of miles around—they invest \$400 million in an elevator in rural Manitoba community.

Why do they do that? They do it because of relationships. They do it because they come to a municipality where they can work together, where they are—it's the relationship that's built. And I have to acknowledge our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), because he has done an amazing job of working with companies out-of-country, out-of-province and working with them and getting them to locate in Manitoba, when they are looking at perhaps one or two other locations outside of our province.

We want those same opportunities for northern Manitoba and we know that they're there. We know that we can build on that and we are going to.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Again, the minister's answer leaves me more confused than not confused. She talked about, well, some businesses were established businesses that they were going to invest in, and then some businesses aren't established but they invested in those, such as Roquette. I guess it's established somewhere else.

But when it came to an opportunity to really invest in a northern Manitoba business, to not just ensure it's survival but, potentially, to help it grow—and certainly I don't think anybody asked the government to completely fund anything that was happening with the plant in The Pas but, perhaps if there would have been some government investment along with the private investment that took place, then the Town of The Pas wouldn't have had to take the hit in taxes for—what was it? Three years that they've had to forgo taxes from that business—which is a huge hit for the Town of The Pas. It's a huge hit for the workers.

But, again, there was no commitment from this government to invest in opportunities to potentially not just keep that industry but maybe to expand it, maybe to get the other part of the operation up and running. There was no talk of the government doing



anything to try and stimulate the private entity to invest more because the government was willing to do some investment, as they've done in other industries in the south.

So the minister keeps saying, well, stay tuned, there's going to be something some day, but there was an opportunity right there that something could have been done that really showed all people in the North, because that particular plant does have a large contingent of First Nations people that work there, people that haul logs, that had independent businesses that really were left up in the air while this government refused to invest five cents in that industry, which flies in the face of everything that they've invested in agricultural industry to attract or maintain—Maple Leaf Foods being another perfect example.

That fully established business in this province, making money, wasn't losing money, wasn't in danger of going bankrupt, but the government—this government—saw fit to invest to grow that business but refuses to invest in anything in the North to grow any of those businesses. But it's always, stay tuned, some day there'll be something.

People in the North and contrary to what the minister said—I've talked to a lot of people in the North—who are wanting government action, whether it's mining company executives that I talk to, whether it's miners, whether it's First Nations communities that get told, well, that's federal responsibility. It's nothing to do with us.

\* (16:40)

Creating opportunity for Manitobans should be this government's priority. All Manitobans. And helping out, I would hope, is part of the minister's mandate. So perhaps she could expound on what exactly she's done in some of those Northern Affairs communities to invest in economic opportunity for those people.

**Ms. Clarke:** You know, yes, I'd be more than happy to talk about the Northern Affairs communities, because I—last fall I spent a few days up—travelling around to different Northern Affairs communities. And they're a very unique group of communities in our province, and I don't think most people in our province even recognize or realize the existence of these communities.

And we talk about places like Flin Flon and The Pas and Thompson and the mining, and all those types of things, and, you know, your hardships with

getting doctors and education, all the rest of it. And that—these are very real issues and I certainly don't deny that one bit.

But, when I travelled to the Northern Affairs communities of this province, and I've had several meetings with many of them, and just for them to exist is extremely difficult. They are very, very small populations. They typically have no services at all. They have practically nothing. But they exist. They are fishing or they are doing, you know, in some areas, farming.

And you talk about tourism. Well, it's surprising; some of those Northern Affairs communities do very, very well from tourism and their cottage developments. And they're looking at expanding cottage developments and we're certainly supportive.

We have a really great staff in Thompson as well as Dauphin that work with our Northern Affairs communities, and we had some really good discussions with their councils on some of the hardships they're facing, specifically, water, waste water, solid waste. And I think the really encouraging news for them is new partnerships with First Nations. So, with the Indigenous Services of Canada through there, as well as Manitoba Water Services Board now.

And our municipalities, where they are working to provide regional water, they're providing regional waste water, those types of services for them. And this is really working to ensure that they have the basic needs. We're talking communities with, you know, sometimes less than 10 people. So, definitely, they have a lot more hardships. They are far removed from major centres, in most cases.

And, you know, they don't—we hear people, you know, in the city of Winnipeg complaining because they have to travel 20 minutes from one hospital to the other. They need to all go out to the northern part of our province where they live in Northern Affairs communities, and they have to travel an hour and a half, or two hours, to get any kind of services at all.

So a very important part of my portfolio, one that I take very seriously. I enjoy my visits with them. The most interesting part is, you know what, they enjoy their life. They are where they are. They want to be there, and they enjoy their life, and it's—those meetings are never ones where I sit and listen to complaints. They are usually very upbeat, and it's a very interesting part of my job that I wish more of my colleagues even had the opportunity to visit some

of these communities because they are—they're a really interesting part of the dynamics of the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Yes, they certainly are interesting communities.

But the question was, what exactly has the minister or her government done to try and enhance any kind of economic opportunity for people in those communities?

And I didn't hear an answer in her comment. She's had many meetings; she's gone up there; she's talked to people. But what has the government done? What actual thing can the minister point to and say, we did this? We created an opportunity; we helped some of those people have a better future.

So I look forward to the minister answering that very specifically.

**Ms. Clarke:** Well, I think you'll clearly understand, when you live in communities of 10 people, 25 people, less than—definitely less than a hundred in most cases, the opportunity for economic development within that community doesn't always exist, however, many of those rural—or Northern Affairs communities do exist. They are very closely located to First Nations or to other communities and I think the opportunity exists there, too, you know, when you specifically talk about mining and I know that's your background, so that's very near and dear to you, which is totally understandable.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

If I could remind the minister, please, to direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms. Clarke:** As we know, mining's very important to all of northern Manitoba. And, at one point, the jobs were many and you know, yourself, what it was—you know far better than—okay, I'm sorry—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please.

If I could encourage the honourable minister to direct her comments through the Chair. She can say, through the—she can say the member or speak in a way that doesn't necessarily use the word you.

**Ms. Clarke:** Sorry for that. It's just I'm having a good conversation with the member opposite.

As indicated, you know, the mining potential in the past was very lucrative. We had people coming from all over Canada and beyond to work in northern Manitoba. And they also enjoyed their lifestyle there.

It is a—anybody that has not visited northern Manitoba is really missing out on what Manitoba holds because it's a beautiful place with all the lakes and areas throughout there. And there was good jobs. Good paying jobs. We had people coming from all across Canada, especially from the eastern part of the province. And, I mean, we recognize, you know, in the past the mining has gone down for—I mean, it is basically shut down. And I don't know all the reasons why. I don't pretend to know.

But I do know that working with my colleagues in this government, that mining is a huge focus and that we are trying to make our province a place where we are working with mining corporations. And I met with one not that long ago. And the mining corporations are very excited about Manitoba. I know all the different potential sites and areas that they have shared with me where there's great potential. And, of course, it's predominantly in northern Manitoba.

They are very confident going forward that there is going to be exploration followed by mining. And we have no reason—and I know that our Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen) is working very hard to ensure that we have a good working relationship and that the regulations, et cetera, in this province are such that they are going to be able to come here.

And that's the problem from past government. Companies were not looking at Manitoba because it was too expensive. And I don't know what all the issues were, but they were not any longer looking at Manitoba for exploration for the mining industry.

Our minerals in northern Manitoba is one of the gems of our province and we know that there's—that opportunity exists. We have worked diligently. These things do not happen overnight. I don't—I've only been in government for three years and I'll say again that I'm just overwhelmed with the steps forward that this government has taken for the betterment of all Manitobans—but specifically in the North. There has been a lot of time and effort and it's not unlike anything else. It takes time to build a foundation and then go forward and we're well on the way.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Lindsey:** Let's—one of things that I'd spoken to the minister some time ago about—in fact, I think I wrote a letter about it—was about the number of

people presently employed in the Northern Affairs office in Thompson.

Now, it's my understanding that, once upon a time, there was six people there, and now there's two. And, while some southern journalists have said, okay, so there's less civil servants working, has anybody noticed? Well, as the minister may well recall, certainly individuals in the North did notice when they didn't get paid anymore for months, because there was no one left to process the paperwork.

So could the minister tell us how many people presently work in that Northern Affairs office in Thompson and how many people were there in 2018, 2017 and 2016?

**Ms. Clarke:** I'll do them one year at a time, giving the staff the opportunity to make sure that they've got accurate figures for it.

So, in the Northern Region, Thompson office, currently we have—there's six full-time out of 13. However, there was competitions open for four just currently, and two of those actually started this week. So the—actually, it would be 10 out of the 13.

And we had the recent retirement of the director there, Freda Albert, at the end of February. And I would just like to acknowledge her long-term employment. Freda did a really great job for us in the Thompson office, so, you know, when she—in her last few months and that, there—it's extremely difficult to hire in northern areas, as one can understand—you've indicated, but the competitions are open.

And they don't—sometimes there's applications, but they don't meet the criteria that has to be, or they don't—they can't meet the checks and balances that have to be, in order to be employed. So that's the—that's what's current, and I'll get you the—we're just getting '16 and '17 as well.

**Mr. Chairperson:** And, if I might implore the minister to speak through the Chair.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Okay, so just to clarify the information that the minister's given us so far, there's 13 positions available in that office. Currently there are six people actually employed in those positions, four positions posted and two just hired.

So today, if I went to that office, I would discover eight human beings actually gainfully employed there.

**Ms. Clarke:** That's correct. Eight positions as of this week and two more where the competitions are open, not closed yet.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Just to be clear, if the minister said eight positions, but there's actually eight people in those positions presently and there's two more positions that are awaiting getting filled, so that would be 10 human beings gainfully employed, working in that office.

**Ms. Clarke:** That's correct.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank the minister for that clarification.

So, of course, that begs the question, what about the other three positions that are presently empty because you said they're—the minister said there were 13 positions. There's currently eight positions filled, a couple more waiting to get filled, but that leaves three positions that are not currently planned to be filled.

So is that three less positions, going forward, for this year that were there previously?

**Ms. Clarke:** Those positions will be filled. We've had no cutting, no changes in staffing in any of our departments at all.

**Mr. Lindsey:** So how long have these positions been vacant, I guess would be the logical question. If there's supposed to be 13 people working in that office and up until just very recently there was only six, how long were those remaining positions sitting empty without being filled?

**Ms. Clarke:** That certainly depends on which ones. I don't know how long ago they were vacated or whatever. We can probably get you that information, but at any time, it's very difficult getting up to a full complement because there's maternity leave, there's retirements and we have been seeing retirements and we have been seeing—we have seen staff off with illness as well. So we are working constantly with HR to ensure that these positions are filled as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank the minister for that. And so perhaps the minister could tell us, then, what the staff turnover rate actually is, year over year, '16-17, '17-18, '18-19, so that we get a sense of just how many people are coming and going just from that office alone?

**Ms. Clarke:** We can forward that information to you. It would take a bit to compile for the past two

years to see what the vacancy rate is at any particular time, but I know there has been turnover, certainly, for numerous reasons, and those reasons have been cited to me, but I don't know specifically right here and now what those positions were and how long they were vacant.

But I do know from our director, like Freda, when she was working there, that she was having extreme difficulties filling some of those positions. So she was concerned about it but we've done very well in just recent to—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please.

The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

### HEALTH, SENIORS AND ACTIVE LIVING

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of Committee of Supply is now considered the Estimates of the Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living.

Does the honourable minister have any opening statements?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Mr. Chairperson, I am pleased to present the 2019-2020 financial Estimates for the Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living. In doing so, we are committing to Manitobans that, through this budget, we will continue to deliver quality wellness and health-care services in a sustainable manner to patients, clients and residents. We will also continue to deliver safe and quality services, and continue to maximize good health outcomes for Manitobans at large.

Knowing there is much to do, our government is proud of the successes that we have already achieved since taking government in the spring of 2016. We are the only province in the country to see lower emergency department wait times in the latest CIHI report. MRI wait times are down from 24 hours in June 2017 to 16 hours in June 2018, a 30 per cent reduction. Nurse overtime hours are down 29 per cent. Thirty-three nurses have recently completed a critical care training and are working in the WRHA to help improve wait times.

We recently announced \$5.3 million invested in hip, knee and cataract surgeries to ensure an additional 1,000 hip and knee replacement surgeries and 2,000 cataract surgeries.

There were recently two additional PCH, personal-care home announcements totalling 253 personal-care-home beds in Steinbach and in Carman. Wait-lists for personal-care-home bed placement are down to historic levels, from 80 people waiting in hospital for a personal-care-home bed in the dying days of the former NDP government to less than 20 as of August 2018.

We recently invested an additional \$240,000 to support post-vision loss rehabilitation and peer-support services with the CNIB. We purchased 65 replacement ambulances as part of efforts to modernize the fleet, while supporting paramedics in responding rapidly and effectively to medical emergencies.

There is much, much more, and I believe that these deliberations will give me opportunity, at length, to continue to list the ways in which our government is making good investments and getting better results.

Continuing success will be achieved through the design and development of provincial goals along the—along with accompanying performance indicators that health organizations will be expected to perform to in the years to come. This enhancement of accountability and performance, as recommended in the Health sustainability and innovation review, is vital and will be underpinned by additional amendments to The Regional Health Authorities Act, as recently tabled in Bill 10.

The proposed 2019-2020 Health budget represents the largest investment in health care in our province's history, just over \$6.18 billion in core government; this is a 0.5 per cent increase in core expenditures compared to the previous year's amount. As I will explain in a moment, it is anticipated that the printed estimate will further grow by an additional \$20 million during 2019-2020.

This overall increase in investment, however, shouldn't be confused with the Health sector summary budget. It was discovered that the 2018-2019 budgeted amounts were set too high by government reporting entities, therefore generating significant surpluses in 2018-2019. Part of the challenge in the budget setting process in 2018-2019 was the adoption of new accounting standards for Health entities during the year. Budget 2019-2020 is seeking to reset these values to more realistic amounts in collaboration with our Health entities. To be clear, the level of government investment in the

Health sector is up \$118 million when comparing Budget 2018 with the 2018-19 forecast.

Budget 2019 includes a number of significant investments and enhancements in the Health area. I want to take a few minutes to describe those investments.

Continued and increasing investments in global funding in the amount of \$23.3 million to regional health authorities, Shared Health, CancerCare Manitoba and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba: this will, collectively, be provided to these organizations to maintain levels of service amidst increases in the overall size of Manitoba's growing population.

Consistent with other provinces, Manitoba spends approximately 73 cents of every dollar in hospitals and health facilities on salaries and benefits for workforce and front-line service providers. In Budget 2019, there are continued investments in those resources, including over \$8 million in negotiated wage settlements in the Health system.

For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, over \$6.4 million in incremental capital operating funding has been made to support the operating costs of several capital projects, including but not limited to the Holy Family personal care home, Grace Hospital emergency department, the Brandon Regional Health Centre and Flin Flon emergency redevelopment.

New investments made in support of an additional 35 new primary care paramedics: since forming government in 2016, we're proud to have added over 125 paramedics to the system in Manitoba.

Increased capacity for lifesaving dialysis treatment for those living with end-stage chronic kidney disease in a number of provincial locations, including Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and Boundary Trails hospital: we've budgeted an additional \$2.4 million in 2019-2020 and plan to invest in capacity for over 70 more dialysis spaces in the upcoming year.

We've made \$1.8 million in additional support of Manitoba's Pharmacare program. We have reduced allowable pharmaceutical distribution rates, formulary management initiatives and clarification of claims- submission procedures.

We're investing, as well, in new cutting-edge cancer therapies like \$1 million for the CAR-T cell therapy to ensure that Manitobans with rare forms of

cancer have access to the most innovative and latest technology.

\* (15:20)

We have made strides in ministerial mandate items, which we believe will have a very positive impact on fiscal performance in the years to come. These include, as part of our commitment to reducing ambulance fees—fees have now been effectively reduced to \$250 per transport, effective April 1st, as announced in Budget 2019. That is half of what those amounts were under the previous NDP government.

Arising from the Wait Time Reduction Task Force and the Peachey report, we continue with our efforts to shorten wait times for joint replacements and cataracts as well as emergency department waits. We've expanded Manitoba's personal-care home capacity, as evidenced by recent announcements, as well, in Steinbach and Boyne Lodge, and Holy Family Home in Winnipeg is nearing completion.

We continue in our efforts to recruit and retain physicians. We're proud to share that Manitoba added the second highest number of physicians in the last 10 years. As the functions of Shared Health are established, we will continue to work towards this important mandate.

And we continue enhancements in mental health and addictions, and I'm very pleased to note a number of investments we have made in Budget 2019, including in the area of substance use and addictions programming, more money for the withdrawal-management services programming, aligned with Canada's Emergency Treatment Fund Bilateral Agreement. We can indicate, as well, that we have an additional \$20 million of ongoing operating funding related to mental health and addiction programming.

We are reconfiguring our health-care system through the transformation that is taking place in the creation of Shared Health. I look forward to these discussions and the chance to elaborate on how Shared Health will assist to create a stronger, more stable, more consistent, more efficient health-care system in the future.

There is a lot to say, and I look forward to the conversations I will have with members of the opposition over the course of these Estimates of Expenditure for the area of health. Let me say how well served we are in this department by excellent civil servants who do their work every day out of

duty and a commitment they make to Manitobans. I thank my own staff in my office, who continue allow me to do the work I do every day.

And I thank everyone in the department. It is an enormous undertaking, this department, the largest department in the provincial government, and in my eight months in this role, I have been continuously impressed with the level of commitment by all those who serve in this area. I, too, am proud to serve at the Minister of Health in this area and look forward to our discussions in the coming days in this committee hearing.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Gives me great privilege to participate as the new critic for health and to put some words on the record in terms of our health care and the state that it's in in Manitoba.

It's a serious time in Manitoba's health-care system. You know, as this Pallister government continues to rush and bulldoze through and consolidate and close hospitals, ERs, and cut funding to programs that help Manitobans—that they're having a real impact on the services that Manitobans are able to access.

We have a lot of questions regarding this transition and about the cuts that have happened throughout the system, including cutting the special drug program, a program that gave Manitobans a longer lifespan that has now been cut and has forced Manitobans to take money off their kitchen tables—referencing the government's terminology that they like to use—and pay for it out of their pocket, up to \$3,000. And these are drugs that actually help keep Manitobans alive. Without them, these Manitobans, you know, will cease to live. So they've had to find alternatives to pay for these drugs, and some have even leave—left our province due to the health-care state in Manitoba.

This government has cut CancerCare and even cancelled their planned renovation. We know that cancer in Manitoba is, you know, affects probably every Manitoban all across the province, that I don't think there's one person that can say that they don't know someone that has cancer or has a family member that hasn't gone through it or, you know,

have lost their life to it. So these are things that we need to ensure that continue in this province.

We have QuickCare clinics that were closed; I was just elected when that was happening. There were a couple in my constituency, the North End, Point Douglas, that have really left, you know, my constituents with no alternative but to go to Seven Oaks hospital, Seven Oaks ER or to go to the Health Sciences Centre because there's no clinics in the North End—that this government has continued to, you know, close them and force nurses to leave Manitoba to find different jobs, as well as doctors, because there's not enough jobs because they continue to cut programming.

They're cutting the budget for personal-care homes. You know, we found out through a FIPPA that there was only \$39,200 spent in the three years that this government has been in government, and, you know, we know that there's an aging population, and, you know, where are these—where are seniors of Manitoba supposed to go if there's no personal-care homes?

So, you know, we need to continue to advocate and push for this government not to make those cuts that affect Manitobans.

They've cut out-patient physiotherapy and occupational therapy in Winnipeg. You know, this is a great mistake when we're talking about front-loading. They're sending people home without the necessary tools to be able to exercise, to get stronger, you know, the tools they need to stay home and be well. This is forcing Manitobans, you know, to possibly get re-injured and also forcing them, again, to take money off their kitchen tables to pay for these services out of pocket.

Many Manitobans don't have money to be able to do that, and I know the government has referenced, oh, at the end of the day there's about \$200 that Manitobans have in their pocket at the end. But physiotherapy is expensive and, you know, it's above \$200, and I know in my constituency that they don't even have \$2, you know, to get on a bus, some families, so.

They cut the sleep apnea program, again, you know, a \$500 charge to Manitobans who are struggling. This machine helps keep them alive; they stop breathing as they're sleeping. You know, so for this government to cut that program and make Manitobans pay for that machine, you know, is atrocious.

Closing the mature women's clinic, and we've seen how this government has continually attacked Manitobans, women, right across the board. We know Manitoban nurses are predominantly women, and this government, you know, just continues to bulldoze through and think that health care is getting better in this province when we know it's not. We are listening to Manitobans and they're telling us that it's not.

So there's been health-care professionals that have been laid off across the system in a chaotic and disorganized transition. For those who remain in the health-care system, they're forcing people to compete for jobs, and these are people who have worked together for, you know, 20 years that are now forced to, you know, compete with their colleague, which is very unfair.

We have serious concerns about the lack of access to primary health care. You know, this Pallister government closed the 'Cordion'—Corydon clinic and has plans to close the St. Boniface Clinic. I, for one, have had over 300 emails from people who accessed the St. Boniface Clinic that say, you know, now where are we supposed to go? There's not—there's no doctors taking new patients, and here was a vital service offered right across from the hospital. People don't have to travel if they needed to be admitted, but, you know, this government is closing that.

Not surprisingly, the number of people matched with primary-care physicians is declining in Manitoba. That's what the minister's own annual report shows. That's concerning to me, to my colleagues on this side of the House, to all Manitobans, because it shows that there's a population that isn't getting access to the kind of care that they deserve, that is going to help more acute conditions and keep them at home, and that's what we're saying: we need to have care close to home, in their communities, and keep people at home in good care.

And for acute care in Manitoba as well, we all know that Manitoba is—*is* undergoing the most severe change to acute care in the history of the province.

\*(15:30)

After closing the Misericordia Urgent Care, the Pallister government seems to now be set on closing Concordia this spring and then Seven Oaks in the early fall, two hospitals that served the northwest

corner of the city and the northeast corner of the city. These patients are already being asked to go to Selkirk hospital. They get to Selkirk emergency room and they're packed there. They can't take any more patients. I've had constituents call my office that have gone to Seven Oaks hospital that were forced to go to a different hospital because they're already over capacity by 35 per cent. They don't have enough beds, and this government seems to think by closing two hospitals that more beds are all of a sudden going to appear and that patients are going to get care faster. I don't agree with that.

It's a mistake, as a wait times task force confirms, all the talk about the number of emergency rooms in this city is a real herring. In fact, they call it a oversimplification and distraction. What matters is a capacity within a system, and that requires beds to actually handle the flow of patients from the emergency room through to other treatment and back into their community.

We're also deeply concerned about the timely access to health care in rural and northern Manitoba. The Pallister government has forced cuts on our rural and northern health regions. It means tough decisions, like the restrictions now faced in the northern patient transfer program. We heard, you know, that there was a man that came on a bus that lost his life because he wasn't afforded a companion and he had a heart condition. That's the kinds of things that's—that are happening in this province due to these cuts that this government's making.

At the end of the day, Manitobans simply don't trust the Pallister government with their health care, and for good reason. The Pallister government has made the biggest cuts to the health-care budget in the history of this province. That's in public accounts for fiscal 2017-2018. The Pallister government has chronically underspent their targets in health care.

Last year, they missed their third quarter projection by an astonishing \$150 million. It is my hope that the minister will be forthcoming about the cuts that his government is making in Manitoba's health-care system, so that Manitobans are ready for this, instead of being blindsided, like when we're asking about our ERs. Manitobans deserve to know when that transition is making.

So I really hope that the minister will answer some of our questions and help Manitobans understand what's coming, and that he sees that some of the cuts that he's making is having a serious impact on Manitobans.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the critic of the official opposition for those remarks.

Does the second opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Mr. Chair, this is the first time that the Liberal Party of Manitoba has had party status during Estimates, and so the first time we've had the opportunity to have—sorry, since I've been elected—so the first time we've had the opportunity to make an opening statement during Estimates.

Mr. Chairperson, this is—it's a wonderful opportunity. Estimates is always something I look forward to a lot because it's an opportunity that presents us politicians the time to really ask all the questions that we have, and work with the departmental staff to receive very informative answers that we can then bring back to our constituents.

Throughout this time, I'm looking forward to asking a lot of questions about care facilities for seniors. In particular, Mr. Chairperson, we've talked a little bit about personal-care homes here, in the chambers, but I think it's important that care homes, such as supportive-housing homes, retirement homes, independent-living homes, hospices—we need to start having those discussions as well.

We also need to be talking about home repairs for senior citizens. Allowing them, creating opportunities for them to stay in their homes as long as possible. You know, their homes are often where their friends, their families are, where their connections are.

As well as home care, which falls under both health care and the seniors department, under health care, we want to make sure that the home care our constituents are receiving, that all Manitobans are receiving is adequate, is quality. We often hear stories where home-care aides don't have enough time to sit with our constituents inside of their homes and get all of their work done, and we want to make sure that is not the case, that everyone is getting fair treatment.

Mr. Chairperson, I also look forward to asking more questions about a seniors' advocate. I've talked a lot about the potential of a seniors' advocate here in Manitoba. I've actually worked a little bit with the Seniors Advocate in Victoria; her name's Isobel and

she's a wonderful lady, and I think we need to steal some ideas from Victoria. We need to start watching out for our seniors, and it's scary turning to the news sometimes and all the stories that we hear and seniors being taken advantage of and taken for granted, and a seniors' advocate would be a really great non-partisan way to ensure that our seniors here in Manitoba are being taken care of.

Looking forward to asking questions about CADTH and how money is specifically being distributed. In particular, I'm curious about spinal muscular atrophy—a question that I've asked quite a bit here in the House—and just how the money is going to be distributed from a national level here in the agreements that we are making with them, ensuring that Manitobans aren't being—their hands aren't being tied and being forced to leave our province to receive the care that they need.

And, Mr. Chairperson, we have questions coming in; I have emails in my inbox right now about personal physicians. People are concerned. They're feeling a little discriminated against, and we want to make sure that everyone has the health care that they need and that, when their physicians are prescribing them with medications, that they can afford these medications. And that's why we talk about a national Pharmacare plan, and I hope those discussions continue; I think it's something that Manitoba needs. We don't want anyone to go without their prescribed medications, as they're prescribed for a reason.

We can also talk about Handi-Transit, which has recently gone into Handi—or Transit Plus—sorry—and I've heard stories where, not only does it take an incredible long time for people using Transit Plus, but—for their vehicles to arrive and for them to make orders for vehicles to arrive—but now people who are requesting to go to places like church, which is a social factor, a religious factor, going out for food with family members or at a community group, their Transit Plus is no longer picking them up for that. They're actually being rejected based off where they're going.

Mr. Chairperson, we heard a lot about Seven Oaks hospital, and everyone is so worried and we have no idea what is going on, and that's one of the scariest parts of it, is the uncertainty. You know, at one point Seven Oaks hospital was created to be huge. There's a helicopter pad on top of Seven Oaks hospital and that was with the idea that it was going to be well-utilized, and now we have a government



taking away all of the resources and causing an immense amount of frustration and uncertainty amongst constituents. And even us, as politicians, we can't seem to keep up because the changes, they're happening so quickly; they're happening with very little explanation, and I've had constituents say to me that they go to Seven Oaks hospital to only then be turned away.

So we literally have people going to hospitals, being turned away, being tossed around to different hospitals. These hospitals then don't know what to do with them and, Mr. Chairperson, that's not okay. These are people's lives, their health, that are being jeopardized.

Now, I'm going to—I plan to ask a lot of questions about dedicated stroke units and palliative care and Alzheimer's Society, CancerCare Manitoba. These are all associations and groups that many members of the House have worked very closely with, and we hope that we can be moving forward with these groups.

You know, a big concern, too, are the ambulance fees, and we are hopeful the fees are starting to go down, but let's not forget that this government ran on a platform that fees were going to be cut 50 per cent, implying that that was going to happen immediately, as an election promise, and it took them three years, Mr. Chairperson, and we are all for that. We are happy about that. They're still too expensive but I'm hoping that that's something we can continue to work towards. I know I've had seniors fall outside their homes and they're nervous to call an ambulance strict basely off the fee, which then goes into residual problems.

All we want, at the end of the day, is to ensure that Manitobans' health-care needs are met, and we're hoping that through things like Estimates and through working with the government, through representing our constituents that we'll be able to do that the best way we can.

Thank you.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the critic for the second opposition for those remarks.

Under the Manitoba practice, debate of the 'minstral'—minister's salary is the last item considered for the department of Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer to

consideration of line item 21.1.(a) contained in resolution 21.1.

At this time, I invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

As everyone is getting seated, I'll get the minister to introduce his staff in attendance.

The honourable minister, to introduce your staff.

**Mr. Friesen:** I have with me at the table today Karen Herd, who is the deputy minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living. And I also have Dan Skwarchuk, who is at—the assistant deputy minister and chief financial officer for formerly administration and finance, and now I think may be entitled resources and performance, a new title.

And also, I have Bernadette Preun, who is the assistant deputy minister for policy and accountability, also a new title. I also have at table Nate Clark, who is my special assistant in the office of Health, Seniors and Active Living.

I should also say, because time ran out before, I do also have—and you've probably seen him around as well, and that's Balex Kambamba, who is one of my executive assistants. And he is not in the Chamber right now, but undoubtedly hard at work up in room 302.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, now I'll—thank you, Minister. Now I'll get the official opposition critic to introduce her staff.

**Mrs. Smith:** Chris Sanderson does amazing job in our caucus. He's one of our policy analysts. And, yes, thanks for joining us.

**Mr. Chairperson:** And I'll get the second opposition critic to introduce her staff.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Claire Johnson [*phonetic*]. She is our caucus intern, who also does an amazing job.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you very much.

Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or global discussion?

**Mr. Friesen:** I'll allow the opposition parties to determine the matter in which they want to undertake the consideration of these Estimates.

**Mrs. Smith:** Global.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Global. Are—you agree, the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux)?

Okay, we'll go in a global discussion.

Thank you, and—to agree that the questions will be—in this department will be proceeded on in a global manner, which will now—all resolutions will be passed once question is concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Smith:** So we've—and I've talked about this in my opening statement. I've received several calls from people who are very concerned about the closure—imminent closure of Seven Oaks emergency room.

So I'm wondering if the minister can talk about—or tell us, actually, when that hospital's going to—that emergency room is going to be closing.

**Mr. Friesen:** I'm happy to answer the question.

I want to also welcome the critic to her new role. I didn't have a chance to do that in my first response. So, welcome to the member, to point grey, and her responsibilities for the Health portfolio and also, as well, to the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) in her new role. As she said, this is a somewhat historic arrangement—or at least a refreshed arrangement.

And I am going to ask a question of the parties, but I will answer the question, as well.

The question I'm wondering is just for procedure, when it comes to these Estimates, I'm wondering how questions will be divided and just so, as they contemplate the answer here, perhaps they could also answer by—in order to be 'maximumly' effective, just looking for any guidance they could give, whether they'll oscillate between parties for questions or whether one group will take a group of questions and then go back and forth. And whatever guidance they can put—or give me on that, I would be happy to receive, because I'm not accustomed to a kind of proceeding where we have more than one opposition party in a principal role at the table.

In any case, in order to answer the member's question, I think it's very important to start with the context. And I think it's a good question to ask. Why is the government doing any of this? Why would the government not just maintain in the manner that the previous government maintained the health system in the province of Manitoba?

I often will begin addresses by saying that whenever you say change, people get, you know, apprehensive, but when you say change and health

care in the same sentence, they become increasingly apprehensive and for good reason; because people want to make sure that decisions will be made in order to place the patient at the centre and to get the maximum kind of treatment and care for people in our health-care system as is possible.

That is exactly why this government is undertaking the changes that we are undertaking, in order to get better patient care, better patient experience and better patient outcomes. And I know that in that member's preamble, she suggested that there, you know, was—there's concern in the system, but I would reflect that there was tremendous concern under the previous government for years and years and years because of its inability to change the channel when it came to outcomes in Manitoba.

\* (15:50)

We know that Manitobans had among the highest emergency room wait times under the previous NDP government, and I say that while I remind the members of this Assembly that when it came to the amount of money invested across the system by the previous government, it was among the highest in Canada. Where the national average was \$6,839 per person, the average in Manitoba was well above \$7,000—at times, a full \$1,000 per person additional amount in the health-care system. There were years I can remember in this Legislature where health spending grew year over year, as much as 6.8 per cent in one year that I can recall, and yet the former government was not able to change and get better results.

Under their government, we know that the emergency room wait times remained some of the highest in Canada. As a matter of fact, earlier today in question period, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) said himself that the—for one year it was Victoria with the longest wait times, and the next year it was Concordia with the longest wait times.

Why are we undertaking any of these things? In the words of Dr. David Peachey, to improve quality for patients. He says this in his Peachey report: A transition to grouping emergency medicine, critical care and related medical and surgical services from six sites to three in Winnipeg will give these hospitals a critical mass to improve access and efficiency, all significant factors in improving quality for patients.

I would add, in addition to these things, the member asked, when, in regard to Seven Oaks

hospital, will these changes take place? That transition from the current emergency department form of service to urgent care at that campus would— is expected to occur in the fall of 2019.

**Mrs. Smith:** So, in that preamble, the minister made reference to making sure that patients were at the centre of care in treatment. So I'm going to ask the minister again. You know, there—the transitioning— transition is helping in—or happening in 2019. You reference that wait times were high at these ERs that you're planning to close. So, if wait times are high, there's obviously a need for care at these hospitals.

So, again, why would the minister think that wait times are going to go down by closing emergency rooms in Manitoba?

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the member for the question and the opportunity to continue, because this is an important discussion to have, both in this Chamber but also across the province.

Why concentrate services in fewer facilities, and what would the value be to Manitobans? Those are the questions that system experts asked, even about Manitoba, and I remind that member that the plan that we dusted off and took off the shelf when coming to government in the spring of 2016 was a plan that the former NDP government had commissioned through an uncompetitive process.

They hand-picked Dr. David Peachey from, well, now from Nova Scotia—formerly from Ontario—to provide a detailed plan that would seek to better organize a system that that expert called overly complex. And that is a phrase that we have repeated—overly complex for a jurisdiction of our size, overly complex for a population for a population of 1.36 million people.

So, if we compare Manitoba to other jurisdictions, we find that in cities far larger than Winnipeg, we actually see emergency room resources concentrated more greatly than here. Edmonton and Calgary and places like Vancouver—all per capita with fewer emergency rooms than Manitoba. Now, the member asks, if three emergency rooms are good, wouldn't six be better? And, if six are good, wouldn't 12 be better? But that is not what the evidence shows us, and it is definitely not the direction in which we see other jurisdictions going, because in the member's questions and in her stated concerns is the assertion that somehow we are the outlier in these things—that in making these

changes, Manitoba will stand alone and not proceed on the basis of best practice.

But that would be incorrect, because in making these changes in this very significant reorganization of our health-care system, we are actually aligning our system better to approximate what we see in other jurisdictions—that, essentially, the member implies that you either have efficiency or you have a patient-centered model, when, in fact, we see in the evidence and we see the inexperience of other jurisdictions that it is not one or the other.

Some things that I can point out to that member is that, by spreading those system resources across too many facilities when it comes, let's say, to emergency rooms, we saw the variation in outcomes was too great. We also saw that it was difficult to plan when it came to human resources, because you are doing human resource planning in such a variety of spaces.

Also, it became an unattractive place to practise for health-care professionals who wanted to have areas of robust collaboration. I had one doctor describe to me, just a few weeks ago, what she said was hallway consultation. She said, that is what you get when you allow a broader array of health-care providers to be together. Essentially, they will leave a surgery room or they will leave an examination room and they will go in the hall and meet a colleague and they'll say, well, I have a question for you based on my experience just now.

\* (16:00)

And that is the kind of collaboration that is possible when you reorganize your system, as so many other provinces have done, to better put the patient at the centre, better plan for resources, and I would look forward to the opportunity to provide a list to that member of the number of emergency rooms for populations much bigger than Winnipeg and Manitoba.

But, suffice it to say, when it comes to our plan, as Dr. Peachey said, it's an opportunity to redefine health care—boldly, in evidence-based and cost-efficient manner.

**Mrs. Smith:** As the wait times task force confirms, all this talk about the number of emergency rooms in the city is a red herring. In fact, they call it an oversimplification and distraction. What matters is a capacity within the system and that requires beds to handle the flow of patients from the emergency

room, through to other treatment and back into the community.

So, again, I'll ask the minister: When is the date—so, an exact day, so not fall of 2019, we'll start to transition—but when is the actual date that you are planning to close Seven Oaks emergency room?

**Mr. Friesen:** Thank the member for the question.

To preface my answer, I would want to also make sure I had included this statement by Dr. David Peachey, the author of the Peachey report received by the NDP government when they were still in power prior to 2016, and forming part of the foundation for the health transformation of which we are speaking today.

He says this: All of the requirements for the plan to succeed are in place in Manitoba. In the context of care, driven by a belief in the values of a safe and sustainable health-care system that is equitable and accessible, doing things differently and better will reflect new models of collaborative care, where all providers are working at the top of their scopes of practice.

And I would say to that member, that's part of the reason for the coalescing of services into fewer campuses when it comes to emergency medicine in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, because you want providers to work at the top of their scope of practice with a minimal amount of barriers that are prohibiting those professionals from actually performing health care in the manner in which they were trained, to the extent that they are safely able and to the extent to which they are governed to be able to do so.

So this is the vision of what this government has in mind. It is what we continue to explain to Manitobans, but let us be clear that the need for the system to change was demonstrable. Like I said, we saw health-care spending increase in some years by almost 7 per cent—in years when we did no better year over year, when Manitoba continued to trail the nation, when it came to Canadian Institute for Health Information looking at areas like length of stay for patients, looking at areas and metrics like emergency department wait time, looking at metrics like emergency department admitted patient wait time, looking at outcomes.

You know, Manitoba has some areas in which we've continued to do quite well compared to other jurisdictions, and yet far too many areas where we lag behind, and simply no amount of additional

money that the previous government pushed at a conventional delivery mechanism was able to improve outcomes.

I can recall, as a member of the opposition in 2013, the WRHA undertaking a new and expensive initiative in which they said they were going to concentrate on five things in specific, and those five things would result in lower wait times. I can recall a report one year later that said this clearly did not work. So we are undertaking a significant change, as the member rightly notes, but for good reason.

I would also provide to that member the following evidence, and I'd ask her to take note of this: Vancouver, with a 2016 population of 1.168 million people, has four emergency departments. When it comes to Calgary, Calgary has one emergency department for every 325,000 people in that city, compared to one emergency department for every 150,000 people in Winnipeg, and yet, if you look at the outcomes, some hospitals in Calgary were near the top, best-performing when it came to the time people had to wait to actually receive services.

So what we've demonstrated here in the last answer is there is no correlation, there is no straight shot between the number of emergency rooms and the length of wait. In fact, it can be that it's the—actually the opposite configuration. Configure a system in which the maximum number of providers can safely and effectively and in a collaborative setting provide that care, and the wait times actually go down. That is the vision for the transition that we have currently underway in Manitoba. We are not there yet, but we are already starting to experience the evidence that our plan is, indeed, working.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister's time is up.

**Mrs. Smith:** The closure of Seven Oaks will be disruptive to patients and to those who are providing care on the front lines. Don't—doesn't the minister feel that Manitobans and the front-line workers and those that use the hospital deserve to know when the hospital is closing?

So, again, I'll ask: What is the exact date for when Seven Oaks emergency room will be closing?

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the member for the question.

I would like to clarify something: that Seven Oaks hospital is in the middle of a transition from an emergency department current configuration of

service to one that will, in a future state, support an urgent-care centre. As I've explained to her, that transition is expected to take place in the fall.

I agree with her that community members and people in Manitoba have a right to know when that transition will take place, and that is precisely the reason that we can't provide a date today because the focus, of course, is on ensuring that all provisions have been put in place to ensure a successful transition from emergency department to urgent care.

But let us be clear that there's no hospital closing. Instead, the people in that community and that area of Winnipeg will continue to receive, in future, a very significant provision of care. I would go so far to suggest, perhaps, that in a future state, that hospital will be even more important and more integrated than previously was the case.

That member and I probably would both admit there are people who, on a regular basis, would bypass the emergency department in their own neighbourhood, as people have told me even from the Concordia area in the past, because they would travel instead past that emergency department towards one of their choosing.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has said more than once in question period in the Chamber, what did it benefit a Manitoban to be eight minutes closer to an emergency department just in order to wait an additional three hours in order to receive services? It was a direct result of the concerns that clinical experts and clinical design experts expressed about the variation in outcome, the variation in the provision of service on so many campuses, that the determination was made to consolidate those services.

So what will Seven Oaks look like after that transition to an urgent-care centre? It means that that hospital will continue to have a focus on the care of the elderly and geriatric rehabilitation. It will be configured for sub-acute care for patients who need a longer hospital stay in order to recover. It will specialize in out-patient renal dialysis and also in elective procedures, including endoscopy.

Surgery and mental health services has shifted to other sites and, as a matter of fact, I was just recently at Victoria hospital, which will become that centre of excellence for mental health services, and I look forward to exploring more with that member the considerable excitement and buy-in by that hospital to take up its new and unique role in being that

centre of excellence for in-patient mental health services.

I had a chance to view, recently, the very significant rehabilitation of some of the upper floors—state-of-the-art areas of that hospital that will provide services, both in a geriatric and otherwise acute way, for people who need those services.

We know, as well, I should say, about Seven Oaks, that the 18 sub-acute beds were also opened in January of 2019, and moving surgery out of Seven Oaks also avoids the needed \$30 million of investment into their operating rooms and medical device reprocessing department. This is all another way in which we can make an investment that will be more efficient and be able to make that investment one time and not twice on multiple campuses.

**Mrs. Smith:** The minister referenced that there was conditions that had to be met as they were transitioning.

Can the minister put on record what these conditions are?

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the member for the question.

The member has asked: What are those conditions that need to be made to facilitate the transition then, for Seven Oaks General Hospital from having an emergency department to urgent care? Those things would include, but not be limited to: ensuring that the current capital project underway at the St. Boniface Hospital will be complete. That member will remember that there were recommendations for renovations at that emergency room, recommended by the wait-times task force. And those capital investments are underway at the emergency department at St. Boniface Hospital, to create an expanded minor treatment area. Further expansion is underway to provide increased capacity. And this all serves as an interim solution because we know that ultimately, at St. Boniface Hospital, a new emergency department will be necessary.

\* (16:20)

There are many capital projects of which our new government has become aware that have a certain degrees of urgency, that were not completed by the previous government, and both of those opposition members, in their opening statements today, made reference to some of those projects that remain on the to-do list despite 17 years of the previous government in power. And the planning for

these capital projects is very, very important, as is our capacity, as a province, to undertake these very significant investments.

Now, our government has been clear that we are—we talk about shopping smarter, the idea of procuring in a better way, and I would point out there was another report, this one undertaken, I believe, by PricewaterhouseCoopers in the last two years of the NDP government, that was a master report on how to do procurement better and get better value for money.

That report was put on a shelf, and I remember one previous member—or one previous minister actually expressing in the House—he was unaware that the report had been commissioned, had been completed or had been returned.

Capital planning is essential to make sure that we can make the investments we need to make, and I do look forward, in these discussions, to capital planning discussions that talk about capacity and ceilings for borrowing and what a rising debt service charge does to our ability to carry additional capital expense.

These were considerations that were simply not made by the former NDP government that, in the space of five years, quadrupled their capital program and showed no signs of stopping. At the same time, the debt service charge under the previous government rose in the space of three years by \$170 million, and I have never heard an NDP member or former minister reflect on what that additional burden of cost means and how it erases the ability for successive governments to make good investments.

Other issues that are being addressed that of course are necessary to address in making that transition from emergency department to urgent care at Seven Oaks General Hospital include the lead-up to that system change, the evaluation and the analysis of the current state of that system. Think of it as a system-readiness exercise in which human resource planning is taken into account, an assessment is undertaken to make sure that staffing is at a level, both for the St. Boniface expanded emergency department and in respect of the Seven Oaks urgent-care centre, that all staffing resources are in place.

The member seemed to complain, in her opening statement, that—she said, in her words: We are making people compete for jobs. But I would remind her we respect the collective bargaining process, and

that ability, based on seniority, for people to decide where they want to practice, is part of that collective agreement. We respect that right for professionals, including nurses and others and allied health workers, to say, I want to be here, or I want to be there, and that is done on the basis of seniority and years of service in that position.

And, as well, education has to be part of this ongoing conversation to make sure that Manitobans know how to get the right care in the right place at the right time.

**Mrs. Smith:** The minister is misleading about what wait time task force said regarding in the expansion at St. Boniface. They called for a wholesale overhaul of the ER, not the small renovation that the minister is currently talking about.

They warned of a 55 per cent increase in traffic at St. Boniface when the closure of Seven Oaks and Concordia happen. You know, it's discerning that the minister doesn't want to tell Manitobans when Seven Oaks ER is going to close. He keeps, you know, misleading and talking about these other things besides giving an actual date of when it's going to close.

So, we'll move on but we'll come back to that because, I mean, we're all getting calls about Seven Oaks, and that's actually an important emergency room as well, so we'll move on to Concordia, which is, you know, more imminently going to close, and maybe the minister will tell us a date of when that hospital is going to close—not a projected date, not a transition, but an actual date of when Concordia Hospital emergency is going to close.

**Mr. Friesen:** I want to, first of all, indicate to the member, that it was exactly the advice of the wait-times task force that the conversion of Seven Oaks emergency department to an urgent care be delayed while Shared Health had the opportunity to fully evaluate the WRHA phase 1 consolidations—the strategically planned phase 2 of consolidation—and ensure formal modes of service integration between Seven Oaks and the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

So that's exactly what I had described to her. In other words, that care be taken to proceed on the right timeline. This is intricate work that is undertaken. It is work that we believe in. It is work that is advised by—that is recommended by experts. It is work that has been undertaken in almost every other jurisdiction of Canada before Manitoba. But

still I would emphasize to her and underscore that that conversion of Seven Oaks' capacity is being undertaken as Shared Health has that opportunity to look at the phase 1 consolidations, to assess what needs to happen, and then to make every effort to make that transition successful.

However, I do want to caution her when it comes to the statement she makes about—she just implied that somehow I had misled Manitobans. I would advise the member, she is new here—I try to be very cautious about choosing my own language, and I hope that she also will be cautious about choosing her language.

\*(16:30)

Had the member done the reading, she would have understood that the call for an expanded, comprehensive new emergency department at St. Boniface probably predates the time of any of us who are currently now in this Chamber.

I know the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) would have heard the St. Boniface Hospital tell his government again and again and again that the facility was getting older and older, and that eventually, a full-scale emergency development would be necessary.

I would also inform that minister that she's wrong when she says that I was misleading these proceedings, because if she rereads that advice, she would understand that the interim renovations are recognized and it—that report talks about the \$3-million renovation that is currently in progress—should be the first phase of an integrated emergency development or emergency department redevelopment plan. It clearly refers to these \$3 million of ongoing renovations that are happening right now. Sure, she goes over there right now, there are hammers hammering and nails going in and that work is ongoing to complete, but it was all part of an overall plan.

Now, if the member wants, instead, to talk about the delay of necessary capital projects in this province by her own previous government, I am only too happy to have that conversation, whether it is in respect of the Cadham labs, whether it is in respect of a nursing faculty in the Bannatyne campus, whether it is in respect of a stroke unit, of which we are the last province in Canada not to have a dedicated stroke unit. I am happy to take up all of these things where the NDP constantly nodded their

head and said they were getting to it, but in 17 years never got to it.

And our government has been in power since almost exactly three years ago, and in this time we have opened new personal-care homes, we look forward to the opening of the women's health centre, we have recently opened the Flin Flon emergency department. We will be making many good investments in the coming years, many years to come for Manitobans.

But let us be clear that the NDP continuously kicked the can down the road for far too many of these critical pieces of Manitoba's health-care infrastructure.

How do we build it now? We shop smarter, we make our system more efficient and we recognize that we've got to get better value for Manitobans' money.

**Mrs. Smith:** Again, you know, the wait times task force warns of 50–55 per cent increase when those two hospitals close, and this is the minister's words. He said, the transition will include a minor treatment area which will increase capacity. \$3 million to create a little bit more space is not going to accommodate 55 per cent more uptake in patients.

We already see that patients are being turned away from Seven Oaks, probably from Concordia, sent to other hospitals who are also over capacity. We've heard the W-H-R-A also say that they've had to pull out over-capacity beds and turn away patients, and this minister is trying to sell Manitobans on closing two ER rooms that a minor treatment area is going to increase the capacity by 55 per cent and somehow, miraculously, be able to decrease wait times and serve more patients.

And actually I'm going to quote him again. He said: Make sure that patients get the care that they need and the treatment that they need.

So, again I'll continue to ask, because Manitobans deserve to know, when the Concordia hospital emergency room is going to close.

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, I thank the member for a question about generating capacity in the health-care system, because that is tremendously important in our system. That member knows, as I know, that our population in Manitoba is getting older. We know—I heard a statistic just a week ago, that the segment of the population in Manitoba that is 65 and older—that

cohort will double in size by the year 2038. Very significant.

And we know that the cost of health care is going up. We know that the cost of pharmacy is going up. We know that the cost of dealing with the scourge of chronic disease in our province is going up. I understand that a dialysis station can be \$100,000 per patient, per year. And the member will remember, that just in a previous answer, I indicated that Manitoba's health-care costs are above the national average, in excess of \$7,500 per patient. Now imagine the cost for one in-facility dialysis station.

But the question of capacity is a good one. We need more. I would suggest to the member it is exactly the pathway that this health-care transformation that we are articulating and putting in place, will bring about. It is increased capacity. It is that ability to move people through the system in a more efficient manner. It is being able to give specialization to the hospitals that we have in our system now, and for that staff that is there—doctors, nurses, allied health workers, nurse practitioners, midwives and other professionals, you know, medical assistants—to be—physician assistants—to be able to provide equality of care and see a requisite volume of the population, where they can get better and better and better at doing those things. I would also suggest, and experts continue to describe to me, that that will increase other things like job satisfaction because it will give people a good sense that they are doing the work for which they were trained.

On the issue of capacity, I would also indicate to that member that new data just released by the Canadian Institute for Health Information clearly shows that Manitoba has increased the number of CT scans performed. Since when we took government, the number of those scans is up 217,000, 26 per cent more. The number of MRIs being performed since we took government is up 29 per cent, nearly 94,000 additional scans being completed. Now that is, in part, due to some good investments that our government has made, like the opening of a new scanner in Selkirk, the opening of a new scanner that we were proud to open just weeks ago, in Dauphin. It is also, as a result, I believe, in some of our choosing wisely strategies that are helping our practitioners to be able to know when, and how, and how many diagnostic tests to order for their client.

\* (16:40)

But it's also, I believe, in part, just simply because of the good investments we are making as a government, and these are not the only investments we're making. I mean, I would remind that member that we announced, on November the 22nd, \$5.3 million in additional hip, knee and cataract surgeries for 2019.

These investments mean an additional 2,000 cataract surgeries will be completed this year. That's 16 per cent more, and 1,000 hip and knee surgeries. That's 25 per cent more of these critical procedures that Manitobans need.

I had a woman approach me at a public event a few weeks ago, and she said: Are you the Minister of Health? I want to talk to you. And those are not always beginnings of conversations that go well. But she said: I want you to understand that I am a professional who was collecting EI benefits. I was identified as one of these priority patients. I received my cataract surgery. I am back in the workplace. Thank you and the government for the investments that you are making.

That is only one of the Manitobans—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable minister's time is up.

**Mrs. Smith:** Again, I've been asking the minister—now this is the third time I'm going to ask and he hasn't answered once—about the closure of Concordia ER.

We've heard that the date is June 6th. Now doctors have confirmed that it's possibly June 22nd that they're being moved.

So, again, the minister owes it to Manitobans; this is his job; this is a part of his mandate; he needs to be transparent; and he needs to tell Manitobans when Concordia hospital is going to close. We're less than a month away and this minister can't give a definitive date?

We know full well he has that date, so why is he keeping it from Manitobans?

When is Concordia ER closing?

**Mr. Friesen:** Again, I want to preambule my answer by assuring that member that there is no hospital called Concordia that is closing. So I don't know if that is simply fear mongering—[interjection]

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, order.



**Mr. Friesen:** I'm being interrupted by the member of Concordia, and perhaps if he would like the microphone, he can ask for it. His presence here astounds me, because it was only last year when I was the Minister of Finance and I can recall that my critic at the time didn't take the chair in the Committee of Supply. And who took the chair? It was actually the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), who, day after day, took the chair and, day after day, I asked that member would he confirm for the record that he now is, indeed, the critic for Finance. And, day after day, that member declined to answer the question. Day after day, he took the helm.

The member for Fort-Garry Riverview (Mr. Allum), who was the critic, I believe at that time, for Finance, never took the chair, never once, day after day, took the chair.

So today he calls out in this Chamber; I can only assume now he wants to recuse that member and be asking these questions. I would be delighted to answer questions also from the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) on these subjects.

What I can tell that member is this: In the same way as we said care will be taken to make sure that both the Seven Oaks General Hospital and St. Boniface Hospital are ready for the transition, that will be undertaken, in the same way, that careful planning is underway for the transition at Concordia.

Where Concordia, unlike what the member just suggested now, would play, on a go-forward basis, I would suggest a more important role in our system, a more robust role in our system. As I said before, what would it profit a person to show up at an emergency room eight minutes earlier simply to wait twice the national average, and that is the part of the member's question that she never explores more.

In her fierce pursuit of status quo, where her government failed, year after year, to do a better job, she never provides an answer for how she would address that inability by her former government to actually improve outcomes. And should that not be what all of this is about? Better outcomes for Manitobans, shorter stays at emergency room, shorter times between suspicion and diagnosis, shorter length of stay, shorter out-patient services. And, in other jurisdictions, this is what has occurred.

Now, I am not pretending that this work to transition is not involving courage. I am not pretending it doesn't involve some change both for patients and medical practitioners. Those things are

all very real. You cannot move our system from its current configuration to a future state without change, and I understand that that change gives the opposition parties some opportunity to thump the government on a daily basis, but we are undeterred in our desire to get better results for Manitobans, and that's what our opposition parties can't point to.

If—there's an old adage that says, if it isn't broke, don't fix it. But the fact of the matter is that in Manitoba, the CIHI information pointed out year after year that our system was broken. So how will we undergo this change, and when will the change occur at Concordia? I would tell the member: at the right time. My predecessor in this role continued to say that he made decisions on—about when that transition would take place in close concert with medical experts and hospital directors to say, where are we at? I can tell that member that we scrutinize these changes on an ongoing basis and that it will be the advice of experts that will indicate when that level of readiness is there.

Education and notification of the public remain incredibly important when it comes for helping Manitobans know how to access that right care in the right place at the right time.

**Mrs. Smith:** Well, I thought that was a pretty easy question. I mean, the minister keeps diverting from when he's going to close the Concordia Hospital. Again, of course, I'm going to have fierce pursuit—fierce pursuit in finding out when you are actually going to close this hospital, so Manitobans in that corner of that city know when, so they're not going to be driving by that hospital in an ambulance going to St. Boniface or Health Sciences Centre, and possibly pass away on the way, because the government decides that we need less, less health care in Manitoba.

So, again, I'll give the minister a chance to answer, when he is going to close the Concordia ER, an exact date, so that Manitobans know. They deserve a minister who is going to be transparent, that is going to tell them when their hospital is going to close.

**Mr. Friesen:** Thank you and I thank the member for the question.

In her question, she once again repeated the incorrect charge that somehow the Concordia Hospital is closing. She said the Concordia Hospital is closing. [*interjection*] No, she distinctly said that.

And I would invite the member to review Hansard when it comes tomorrow.

The fact of the matter is the Concordia Hospital is not closing. Concordia Hospital is incredibly important to our health-care system, and I would want to disabuse anyone of that notion. Just because that member repeats it, it doesn't make it any more true. As a matter of fact, as one of the three community hospitals in the Winnipeg regional health association—the regional health area—Concordia builds on its strength in family medicine.

\* (16:50)

And, in the future, it will focus on sub-acute care. It will, as Seven Oaks will, focus on care for patients who need a longer hospital stay to fully recover. It will also, as we know, focus on orthopedic surgery, both in-patient and outpatient.

Recently, our government made an announcement about how advances in medical procedures are allowing us to do more and more outpatient surgeries when it comes to orthopedic practice. There have been incredible advances in this area, which means that volumes are increasing. We hope over time that the price per procedure falls.

Of course, you can only determine those things if you know the costs per procedure. That's why we say it's so important in our system, to analyse cost. Listen to how the NDP opposition howled when the government said that it would undertake, with the co-operation of CancerCare, an operational review. And the NDP howled and they said it was an outrage and how embarrassing for them when Sri Navaratnam [*phonetic*], the CEO for CancerCare, came out in the hall, shrugged and said, why would you not undertake an operational review if there was an opportunity to understand our system better and know how to bring on a better provision of service.

Essentially what she told all the media that day was, bring it on. She also said, we do reviews all the time; why would we not also undertake an operational review. And, while the NDP tried to pretend that there was something tremendously foul underway, you had CancerCare itself saying this is being done in full co-operation and collaboration with CancerCare.

If we could improve our system because of an advance made in Calgary or Trois-Rivières or in Windsor, Manitoba, or in Vancouver, why would we not avail ourselves of the opportunity? And indeed,

that's the kind of future that our government would point to.

It will be medical experts who direct these things.

I can tell that member that, at a recent address that I made to some of the system authors who are working on our provincial clinical and preventative services plan, we had a—an individual visiting here whose home is Australia, and in one of those states there was a very significant transformation of the health-care system that was successful. And that system author, who was himself both a medical practitioner—believe he was a doctor—he was also a deputy minister and one time, and he said this: Manitoba has the size of population, it has the degree of buy-in from clinical experts, it has the relationship that is necessary between clinical leaders and it has the support of government in order for this transition to be successful.

And I didn't accept that lightly. It was a moment that was significant to me, because here was an individual from the outside—and we know that it is noisy right now in this system transformation, and rightly so; people are asking questions that they have every right to ask—but here you had someone from the outside saying not only is it possible that this transformation could work, it is probable that it should work in a place like Manitoba.

So, in response to that member's question, I will again state for her, the transition from one level of service from emergency department to urgent-care will—or some other provision of service at Concordia Hospital will occur at the right time, coupled with education and notification. She seemed to suggest we would do it in the dark of night. No such thing. We will do it with the broad notification of all affected 'individuals'. [*interjection*]

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order.

**Mrs. Smith:** So I just googled Concordia Hospital. Right now it says it's open. So, open—Concordia Hospital, open 24 hours.

So, again, will the member tell us when the Concordia Hospital is going to close—emergency room is going to close?

**Mr. Friesen:** I would add for the member, who once again, I would indicate, said, and you can check Hansard later on to see, she once again said that the Concordia Hospital is closing. So, once again, I will just pause here for a moment to remind that member

that the Concordia Hospital is incredibly important to our health-care system. In fact, I was at Concordia Hospital only a matter of weeks ago, talking with doctors there, talking with nurses, talking with administrators, about how important that hospital is in the community.

I know a number of those board members who serve on that foundation whose vision it was that saw the establishment of this Orthopedic Centre of Excellence. That centre of excellence saw 1,888 hip and knee replacements there last year alone. And I can assure that member that the future looks bright for a campus like Concordia because we're going to need more hip and knee surgeries in the future, but by finding efficiencies in our system. Every dollar saved in finding an efficiency in health care in this province becomes an opportunity to re-invest that dollar back into health care for a better provision of service.

The member implied that we were somehow going to see less health care in the future, but that simply isn't true. Our government is investing \$414 million per year more in the delivery of health care than the NDP government ever did. We need more health care. The path forward to that more robust, better-aligned, coherent health-care system is a path that relies on the efficiencies and the realignment that we are describing.

What will Concordia—or when will Concordia transition to that different end-state provision of care? In the same way I described that the Seven Oaks will transition. It will transition in a way that makes sure that the capital projects under way right now are complete at St. Boniface. It will proceed in a way that takes into account a lead-up to that change—the evaluation and analysis of the system, the system readiness exercise that I described to the member that even my predecessor, the former minister of Health, described as a constant monitoring and re-monitoring to make sure that the requisite pieces are in place.

Part of this includes careful human resource planning and staffing considerations. Part of it is the process that is entrenched in our collective

agreements whereby health providers decide whether they want to practice here or there. And on the basis of seniority and their time served in the system at that location, they have that ability to choose for themselves. The minister seemed to—or the member seemed to complain about that process, but I want to remind her it's spelled out in our collective agreements. So if she's taking umbrage with collective agreements in those conditions, this would be the time for her to say so. Our government respects those collective agreements.

But also—and this is very important—our plan has relied on careful education of the public. I recall now that just about a week ago, I saw a new wave of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority ads that talks about when to go to emergency departments, when to go to urgent care and when to seek primary care. And I remember when those commercials first came out—and they were actually quite helpful for people—because we said in the past, people didn't know where to go, and so they would show up with an earache at emergency departments, and that doesn't help anyone, doesn't help them get the care they need any sooner. We need to do a better job of describing in our system where people should go and when.

And so I now see again that those ads were playing—I believe they were playing during the Winnipeg Jets playoff season, which I would regret to now say, as well, for posterity, came to a close far too early in a heartbreaking second-last and last games. But the ads were playing and reminding Manitobans again where they should seek those care—that care.

I can assure that member that nothing will be done without a robust plan to remind Manitobans of when that transition will occur.

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

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Madam Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, April 23, 2019**

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