

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

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

Vol. LXXV No. 5 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 14, 2020

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, I rise today on a matter of privilege.

I rise at the earliest opportunity, as the breach I will identify of my privileges was based on a ruling only provided yesterday by yourself, Madam Speaker. I required time to assemble the relevant facts. I believe this shows the first test of the matter of privilege—that I rise at the earliest opportunity—to be met.

The second test of a matter of privilege—to show in what way my privileges as an MLA have been breached—are based on the following, Madam Speaker: my abilities to perform my job as an MLA and fundamentally hold this government to account has been undermined by the government's flouting of statutory requirements to lay before this House reports required by law.

Madam Speaker, in your ruling yesterday you stated, and I quote: On the matter of tabling documents by a minister, Bosc and Gagnon, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition, cites a ruling of Speaker Fraser from 1993, which can be found on page 443, citation 106. The Speaker ruled that a prima facie breach of privilege had occurred when the government failed to table a document required by statute in timely matter.

This is a key element of finding a prima facie breach of privilege. A member raising the issue must identify where in legislation there is a requirement that a specific document be tabled in this House. End quote.

And so, Madam Speaker, the facts are as follows: (1) The Path to Reconciliation Act states, in

section 5(1), and I quote: "For each fiscal year, the minister responsible for reconciliation must prepare a report about the measures taken by the government to advance reconciliation, including the measures taken to engage Indigenous nations and Indigenous peoples in the reconciliation process and the measures taken to implement the strategy." End quote, Madam Speaker.

And section 5(2) states, and I quote: Tabling report in Assembly and making public: "Within three months after the end of the fiscal year, the minister must table a copy of the report in the Assembly and make it available to the public." End quote, Madam Speaker.

It is October 2020, long past three months of the end of the fiscal year-end, and no report has been put before this House.

(2) Madam Speaker, The Climate and Green Plan Act states, at section 5(1), and I quote: "Annual report on climate and green plan: The minister must prepare an annual report on the programs, policies and measures employed in that year to implement the climate and green plan." End quote.

And section 5(7), Tabling report, and I quote: "The minister must table a copy of the annual report within 15 days after it has been prepared if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins." End quote, Madam Speaker.

The Climate and Green Plan came into force in November 2018. It is October 2020, and no annual report has been placed before this Assembly since that time, Madam Speaker.

(3) The Police Services Act states, at section 90, and I quote: "Within five years after this Act comes into force, the minister must undertake a comprehensive review of it, and must, within one year after the review is undertaken or within such further time as the Legislative Assembly may allow, submit a report on the review to the Assembly." End quote, Madam Speaker.

The majority of this act came into force in 2009, and the final provisions of the act came into force on June 18th, 2015. As a result, the minister undertook a comprehensive review of the act and announced this review on May 29th, 2019 in a press release.

There has been no report submitted to the Assembly from this review. The act states: The government—and I quote—must within one year after the review is undertaken submit a report on the review to the Assembly. End quote.

No report has been submitted to this Assembly. What's more, Madam Speaker, no attempt has been made to seek further time to submit the report.

What makes the breach of this privilege so egregious is that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), the minister responsible for the proper administration of justice and the following of our laws in Manitoba, has ignored the statutory requirements that apply to him.

In addition, the minister has publicly stated he's actually in possession of a copy of the report but has chosen to fail to present it to the Assembly.

This report is nearly five months overdue at this date, Madam Speaker. This flagrant flouting of statutory requirements that apply to this government directly impede my ability—*[interjection]*—I'll start over, Madam Speaker.

* (13:40)

This flagrant 'fouting' of the statutory—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —requirements that apply to this government directly impede my ability to do my job as an MLA and to hold this government accountable.

The facts are clear, Madam Speaker, and so are the procedural authorities.

What's more, I seek you to rule on this matter as quickly, as expeditiously as possible, Madam Speaker. Every day this information is withheld from the Assembly compounds and deepens the breach of privileges to members. Every day this information required by statute is withheld further prevents MLAs in this Chamber from doing their job properly.

As a result of the breach of the rules, of the practices of this very House, of my privileges as an MLA and of the laws in this province, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province and to put forward information to this Assembly, required by statute, be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I know that yesterday you ruled on a similar matter, and as you've restated now, there are two criteria that need to be fulfilled to establish a prima facie case of a matter of privilege.

The first, as you articulated, Madam Speaker, is that it needs to be raised at the earliest opportunity. Clearly we have now been back for a relatively short time, but certainly we sat yesterday, and the member opposite did not raise this matter yesterday, so I certainly believe that she failed on the first test of whether or not it was raised at the earliest opportunity.

But in an—or, in a desire and a willingness to work co-operatively with members, I still take her point. And while I don't accept, or won't at this moment suggest that any of the things that she listed are correct, we certainly will endeavour to look and to speak with the respective departments, recognizing that this has been unprecedented times.

And we use that phrase probably more than people want to hear, Madam Speaker, but over the last seven months we do know that not only ministers and members—all members of the Assembly, I would say—but those who are working within government have been doing an extraordinary work during extraordinary times, putting in extraordinary hours to ensure that Manitobans are safe.

But I will endeavour to look at the matters that were raised by the Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine).

Madam Speaker: A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I'm going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities and will return to the House with a ruling.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 14—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Health,

Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 14, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, while this is a relatively routine matter, it is my third attempt to try to actually get it passed in the Legislature.

The minor amendments and corrections act is a bill that is introduced in every Legislature. It corrects typographical, numbering, translation and other drafting errors, and I am pleased for the third time to try to steward this monumental bill through the House, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 32—The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act (Government Advertising)

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 32, The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act (Government Advertising), be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, this bill changes the length of time for the restrictions on government communications during the period leading up to an election from 90 days to 60 days. In addition, it reduces the uncertainty around government communications and publications during the restriction period.

Our government is committed to ensuring that Manitobans have access to the information they need while ensuring that government resources are not misused during an election period, and this bill achieves both goals, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 10—The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Health System Governance and Accountability)

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 10, The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Health System

Governance and Accountability) act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, it's the third time around for introducing Bill 10. It retains its number, which is helpful. It will amend The Regional Health Authorities Act and many other acts to support the successful implementation of changes to our health system. Manitoba's health system transformation implemented with this bill will modernize our health system, aligning it with the leading practices of other jurisdictions.

I would note that the bill in its current form includes amendments as a result of continued successful dialogue between government and doctors in Manitoba to—and include an appeal mechanism in the event of a dispute that arises from physician building.

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

Bill 12—The Crown Land Dispositions Act (Various Acts Amended)

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Central Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development, that Bill 12, The Crown Land Dispositions Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Helwer: This bill will make the overall process of land dispositions more efficient, effective and transparent. The changes proposed in this bill are a part of a new governance model that will allow routine land transactions to go forward in a timely manner. This will now benefit Manitobans who want to purchase surplus Crown Land from the Province for economic, recreational or other beneficial purposes.

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

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 36—The Public Health Amendment Act (Food Safety and Other Amendments)

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living, that

Bill 36, The Public Health Amendment Act (Food Safety and Other Amendments), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Pedersen: Madam Speaker, this bill clarifies that food safety is a public health issue. Food safety has long been regulated under The Public Health Act and will continue to be, but the passage of this bill we'll be 'launsing'-launching consultations and engaging with processors, restaurants, retailers and consumers as we move to modernize food safety regulations under The Public Health Act.

Thank you.

* (13:50)

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

Bill 7—The Planning Amendment Act

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Central Services (Mr. Helwer), that Bill 7, The Planning Amendment Act, be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: This bill will amend The Planning Act to extend subdivision approving authority to the City of Brandon. This amendment will also give ministerial authority to make regulations designating a municipal council as an approving authority and to establish eligibility requirements and conditions for when a council can approve subdivisions.

I'm pleased to present this bill to the House for consideration.

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

Bill 19—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2)

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 19, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: The minor amendments and corrections act is a bill that is introduced every year in this Legislature. This legislation corrects typographical, numbering, translation and other drafting errors and makes minor amendments to a number of statutes, and

I'm pleased to recommend it to the House for consideration.

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

Bill 25—The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation and Climate (Mrs. Guillemard), that Bill 25, The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: This bill will amend eight acts to increase clarity and create a level playing field in municipal elections. The bill will also streamline how all municipalities are required to refund excess taxes and exempt regional public libraries from municipal taxation to put them on a level playing field with local libraries. It will enable four cities that have their own charters to have the same ability as other municipalities, to determine their council composition and remove redundant approval requirements related to minor capital leases.

This bill also strengthens provisions to protect Winnipeg residents undergoing the tax sale process by not requiring publication of their properties, which leaves them vulnerable to unscrupulous lenders.

I'm pleased to present this bill to the House for consideration.

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

Bill 29—The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), that Bill 29, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: This bill amends 15 statutes and repeals five statutes to remove unnecessary regulatory requirements and streamline provincial services that support Manitoba residents and organizations. The bill eliminates more than 160 requirements to remove unnecessary administrative burdens.

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

**Bill 38—The Building and
Electrical Permitting Improvement Act
(Various Acts Amended and
Permit Dispute Resolution Act Enacted)**

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Wharton), that Bill 38, The Building and Electrical Permitting Improvement Act (Various Acts Amended and Permit Dispute Resolution Act Enacted), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: I'm pleased to introduce Bill 38, The Building and Electrical Permitting Improvement Act, to implement key recommendations from the Planning, Zoning and Permitting in Manitoba report.

This bill will enable regulations establishing time frames within approving—within which approving authorities must issue or refuse building and electrical permit applications and conduct associated inspections. It will establish a new dispute resolution process and align electrical code requirements in the city of Winnipeg with the rest of the province.

I'm pleased to present this bill to the House for consideration.

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

**Bill 5—The Liquor, Gaming and
Cannabis Control Amendment Act
(Cannabis Social Responsibility Fee)**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 5, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Social Responsibility Fee), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, our government recognizes that the legalization of recreational cannabis will bring with it significant social costs.

I am pleased to introduce Bill 5, which will establish a legislative foundation for the cannabis Social Responsibility Fee, ensuring that retailers will contribute directly to offset the costs associated with the sale and consumption of recreational cannabis.

Our government will apply the funds generated by the Social Responsibility Fee to public education, safety, health and addictions programming. I am

confident that this fee will make our communities healthier and safer for many years to come.

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

**Bill 6—The Liquor, Gaming and
Cannabis Control Amendment Act**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 6, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, Bill 6 reinforces Manitoba's commitment to protect the health and safety of Manitobans by prohibiting the public consumption of intoxicating cannabis products.

Amendments are proposed to the act to establish a general prohibition on the public consumption of all forms of non-medical cannabis, aligning this substance with long-standing prohibitions on the public consumption of liquor.

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

**Bill 9—The Opioid Damages and
Health Care Costs Recovery Act**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 9, The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce this legislation that will allow government to join the class action lawsuit against opioid manufacturers.

The lawsuit names more than 40 manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors of opioids in Canada. By passing this legislation, Manitoba will join other provinces in working to recover the estimated \$12 million in health-care costs incurred due to opioid addiction in Manitoba alone.

Our government looks forward to making progress on this important issue.

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

**Bill 21—The Conflict of Interest
(Members and Ministers) and
Related Amendments Act**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), that Bill 21, The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) and Related Amendments Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

* (14:00)

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, this bill implements many of the recommendations made by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner in his recent review of the act and goes further in some areas. It replaces our current, antiquated legislation with a new, modernized act, which will create a new ethics commissioner to enforce strict, ethical rules and advise members of their obligations under the act.

Madam Speaker, this bill will ensure that Manitobans can be confident that all members of the Legislative Assembly are held to the highest ethical standards as they serve their constituents.

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

Bill 24—The Legal Profession Amendment Act

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 24, The Legal Profession Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce legislation that will enable the Law Society of Manitoba to increase the types of legal service providers in Manitoba.

Improving access to justice is a top priority for our government. This legislation will allow the Law Society to permit a limited practitioner to deliver specific legal services governed by the Law Society itself. This will provide more affordable options for Manitobans seeking professional legal advice.

These amendments able the Law Society to diversify the types of legal service providers while protecting the public interest.

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

Bill 26—The Human Rights Code Amendment Act

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 26, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce legislation that will streamline the processes and services offered by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission and the Manitoba Human Rights Adjudication Panel.

Historically, it has taken far too long to resolve human rights complaints. This legislation will empower the human rights commission, clarify its mandate and standardize the hearing process. Once passed, Manitobans will benefit from having their human rights complaints investigated and adjudicated more quickly.

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

**Bill 27—The Administrative Tribunal
Jurisdiction Act**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 27, The Administrative Tribunal Jurisdiction Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce this legislation that will allow government to clarify which administrative tribunals have jurisdiction to hear Charter matters in Manitoba.

The act will ensure that Charter challenges are heard by tribunals that are properly resourced and have the necessary expertise to do so. Our government is committed to ensuring that Manitobans have timely access to justice, and this legislation will improve that.

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

**Bill 31—The Horse Racing
Regulatory Modernization Act
(Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act
and Pari-Mutuel Levy Act Amended)**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 31, The Horse Racing Regulatory Modernization Act (Liquor,

Gaming and Cannabis Control Act and Pari-Mutuel Levy Act Amended), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce legislation that will transfer responsibility for the regulation of horse racing in Manitoba to the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba.

Our government is committed to ensuring the regulatory sustainability of the horse racing industry. This legislation will modernize the regulatory framework for horse racing, reduce the regulatory burden on the industry, while ensuring it remains well-regulated.

Our government looks forward to a healthy horse racing industry in Manitoba for years to come.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister—oh.

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

Bill 15—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Claim Dispute Tribunal)

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Ms. Squires), that Bill 15, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Claim Dispute Tribunal), now be read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wharton: This bill amends the Manitoba Public Insurance act to establish the claims dispute tribunal. The tribunal will be created as an independent body to settle physical damage claim disputes between MPI and its customers. Decisions of the claim dispute tribunal will be binding on both parties.

The tribunal is intended to create access to a timely, efficient and transparent physical damage dispute resolution process and better overall experience for Manitoba Public Insurance customers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 8—The Pension Benefits Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, second by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen),

that Bill 8, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: The Pension Benefits Amendment Act will modernize legislation while maintaining its integrity.

Based on the Pension Commission recommendations, the feedback from online consultation, the department is proposing changes that will modernize the rules and reduce red tape without compromising security of pensions. These amendments will permit changes to the locked-in rules, solvency deficiency funding rules, division of assets on relationship breakdown and small modernization measures that reduce administrative inefficiencies.

These amendments will ensure a strong framework for pensions in Manitoba and secure a stable retirement income for Manitobans.

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

Bill 11—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, second by the Minister of Health, that Bill 11, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: The proposal will amend The Workplace Safety and Health Act to eliminate the chief prevention officer position, increase maximum penalties for offences under the act and approve collect-collection mechanisms for additional penalties levied by the courts, restrict complaints—frivolous complaints for specified timeframe and change terminology used in the act to reduce confusion for those statutes.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 16—The Labour Relations Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Central Services (Mr. Helwer), that Bill 16, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: I'm pleased to introduce Bill 16, which will amend The Labour Relations Act to modify the preamble, introduce new financial transparency requirements for public sector unions, remove provisions respecting subsequent collective agreement arbitration, make a variety of other process changes.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (14:10)

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

Bill 18—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 18, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: The bill reintroduced measures first released in bill 21 in the last session of the Legislature, but the changes to the corporate governance structure of the Workers Compensation Board which were introduced in Bill 2, the budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 22—The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that the Bill 22, The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: I'm pleased to introduce the bill today, which will strengthen the regulatory framework for the Credit Union Central of Manitoba.

The federal government withdrew its oversight services of provincial credit union centrals, leaving provincial governments the sole responsibility. This legislation will fill the gaps, Madam Speaker.

The financial service sector depends on public trust and confidence, which in turn depends on strong oversight and accountability frameworks. The new

regulatory framework that Manitoba is proposing closely resembles SaskCentral model, ensuring that it's consistent with other jurisdictions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 30—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 30, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: The bill will protect consumers by prohibiting the unsolicited direct door-to-door sales of certain household systems and supplies such as furnaces, air conditioners, air and water purifiers, unless the consumer invites the seller into their house, Madam Speaker. It will repeal the cellphone contract legislation that's duplicate of the federal regulation and adds uncertainty costs.

These amendments demonstrate our commitment to ensuring Manitoban consumers are protected and protected laws meet Manitoba's needs.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 35—The Public Utilities Ratepayer Protection and Regulatory Reform Act (Various Acts Amended)

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 35, The Public Utilities Ratepayer Protection and Regulatory Reform Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fielding: I'm pleased to introduce the bill today.

This will protect taxpayer–ratepayers and clarify respective roles of government and the Public Utilities Board. It will improve the structures, the governance and accountability of the PUB and improve the timing and cost-efficiency of rate reviews. These changes will reduce the regulatory burden and costs of regulatory entities.

Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to present the bill to the House for its consideration.

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

Bill 33—The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Economic Development and Training): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), that Bill 33, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Eichler: This bill will amend the advanced education amendment act to allow government to issue flexible policy-based guidelines to both tuition and student fees for Manitoba's universities and colleges.

This approach to tuition and student fees will balance affordability and access for students with financial sustainability of our post-secondary institutions, provide high-delivery quality programming, now and into the future, and ensure we can maintain the lowest average tuition for west-in western Canada.

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

Bill 34—The University College of the North Amendment Act

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Economic Development and Training): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health and Seniors for Active Living, that Bill 34, The University College of the North Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Eichler: This bill provides the university's board the authority to manage parking on campuses consistent with other post-secondary institutions in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Bill 13—The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): I move, seconded by the Minister for Indigenous and Northern Relations, that Bill 13, The Public Sector

Construction Projects (Tendering) Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, for the third time I am pleased to introduce Bill 13, The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act.

This legislation will create a more fair and competitive bidding process for publicly funded construction projects by ensuring that public sector entities tendering processes are unbiased with respect to the unionization status of bidders and their employees.

I present Bill 13 for the consideration of this Legislature.

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

Bill 17—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Crown Services, that Bill 17, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Bill 17, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act.

This legislation is required to strengthen consumer protection and compliance mechanisms for mandatory entry-level training for class 1 commercial truck drivers to support an approved standard of delivery service in Manitoba.

Bill 17 will establish regulation-making authorities to require surety bonds for driving training schools to provide financial protection to students in the event of a school closure and impose administrative penalties for schools and instructors that are non-compliant with legislation.

As part of a progressive disciplinary scheme, the legislation will also establish the Licence Suspension Appeal Board as the authority for hearing appeals related to administrative penalties.

I present Bill 17 for the consideration of this Legislature.

* (14:20)

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

**Bill 20—The Vehicle Technology Testing Act
(Various Acts Amended)**

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Crown Services, that Bill 20, The Vehicle Technology Testing Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 20, The Vehicle Technology Testing Act (Various Acts Amended), which fulfills our government's commitment to bring forward legislative amendments to allow the safe testing of automated vehicles on Manitoba roads.

This bill is a first step to prepare Manitoba for introduction of vehicle technology on our roads, while ensuring alignment with other jurisdictions and supports an investment-friendly and—climate for new technology in Manitoba.

I present Bill 20 for consideration of this Legislature.

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

**Bill 23—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act
(Control of Traffic by Flag Persons)**

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, that Bill 23, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Control of Traffic by Flag Persons), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 23, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

This legislation will allow a traffic authority to authorize a company or organization to use certified flag persons to control traffic on Manitoba highways. These changes will provide more options and flexibility to organizations, such as film production companies, that require traffic control services to produce movies in Manitoba.

This bill will also lessen the demand on law enforcement to provide traffic control services when appropriate.

I am pleased to present Bill 23 for consideration of this Legislature.

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

**Bill 28—The Water Resources
Administration Amendment Act**

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Indigenous and Northern Relations, that Bill 28, The Water Resources Administration Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 28, The Water Resources Administration Amendment Act, intended to strengthen administration and stewardship of provincial water infrastructure, including provincial waterways and provincial water control works.

This bill provides government increased powers to manage and protect provincial water infrastructure, including flood infrastructure.

I present Bill 28 for consideration of this Legislature.

An Honourable Member: Wear a mask while you're walking around in the Chamber.

Madam Speaker: Pardon?

I would point out to the member, I believe that masks have been worn by people that are walking around in the Chamber and I'm going to ask for a little bit of patience, too. We're just starting a new process here, and I think everybody's doing their best. We are maybe not going to get it right every time, but yelling across the House isn't going to be what's going to approve—improve our rules.

So I would ask for everybody's co-operation and patience. This is going to take a bit of time, but as far as I've seen, I have seen people that are wearing masks when they walk around and others that are just moving two feet from a podium to a desk and not near—and six feet away from everybody else, is not required to have a mask on for that two steps to the desk.

So I would ask for some patience, please. This is going to be a, you know, a long session. It could be going on for another year, who knows? So I'm asking everybody a little bit of patience, a bit of kindness, and let's just all do our best in this situation, please.

The honourable member for St.—[*interjection*]-
Oh.

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

**Bill 200—The Scrap Metal Sales
Accountability Act**

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that Bill 200, The Scrap Metal Sales Accountability Act; Loi sur l'obligation redditionnelle en matière de vente de ferraille, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamont: Property crime and metal theft have been a serious problem in my constituency of St. Boniface as well as across Winnipeg and Manitoba. The goal of this bill is to disrupt an illegal economy of metal theft by individuals and organized crime by requiring metal buyers to take copies of ID, to delay payments and keep records of sellers while still protecting legitimate recyclers and dealers.

This is modelled on successful legislation in other provinces. We hope that the Legislature will support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Madam Speaker: I do have a report to table.

I am pleased to table the following report: Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31st, 2019, including the conduct of the 42nd provincial general election, dated September 10th, 2019.

Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Spruce Products Sawmill Fire Response

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): On the evening of Wednesday, September 30th, first responders were dispatched to Spruce Products Ltd. sawmill in Swan River. Staff on this night shift discovered the fire, quickly dialed 911 and attempted to suppress the blaze.

Today I rise to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of our communities first—including Swan River Fire Department, Swan River RCMP and Shared Health emergency medical services. Due to the size

and complexity of the facility, a joint effort involving the Swan River, Bowsman, Minitonas and Birch River fire departments was essential.

A quick knockdown by crews first on the scene and a steady supply of water was provided by both commercial and private haulers. These included: Valley Water, Rick Bresky Trucking, Davidiuk trucking and Wolverine Water and Septic.

The extraordinary response by the first responders and employees, coupled with local support from LP Canada, Swan Valley Credit Union, Intermountain Contracting and MNP accounting, our community was able to salvage the mill.

The cause of the fire was ruled to be an accident and strong winds that day propelled the inferno. No other damages to the mill occurred, and no injuries were reported.

As SPL president, Ward Perchuk, commented, the response by fire departments in the area was outstanding.

Thankfully, the mill's power distribution was protected. The next day it was business as usual for the planer mills, shaving bagger, office, pellet plant, boilers and kilns. The following Monday, the mill was up and running, fully operational.

Congratulations to all for their hard work and for minimizing a potentially catastrophic situation.

Thank you.

Bishop Grandin Greenway

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I am so pleased to honour and celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Bishop Grandin Greenway today. With the mission to create, enhance and conserve an accessible network of natural areas and public pathways that link and support both human and wildlife communities along Bishop Grandin Boulevard, volunteers have spearheaded the development of the greenway in response to concerns of local seniors over the decline of the green space in St. Vital.

With help of partnering organizations, Bishop Grandin Greenway and its volunteers have engaged the community to restore greenspace, increase awareness, appreciate and—knowledge of the area's natural and historical value and—developing an active living venue for people to enjoy.

* (14:30)

Since its creation, the trail has expanded toward the east to Sage Creek and the west—Waverley West neighbourhood. The trail will eventually join up with trails along McGillivray Boulevard and Sterling Lyon Parkway to form part of the city-wide active transportation network.

I recently was joined by my colleague, Minister of Municipal Relations (Ms. Squires), and St. Vital City Councillor Brian Mayes to take part in the ceremonial opening of the Bittersweet Way trail. Rather than the traditional ribbon cutting, we threw seed bombs which, with a little luck, will result in new wildflowers on the greenway next spring.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the entire Bishop Grandin Greenway board and all their volunteers and contributors for their dedication to protecting our natural beauty.

I invite all Manitobans and all members to head outside and enjoy the beautiful trail that we in St. Vital are fortunate to have, or at least visit their website, bishopgrandingreenway.com, to learn more.

Please join me in congratulating Bishop Grandin Greenway and their team on 20 years. Good luck in your future.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Southdale—oh.

Mr. Moses: Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask leave to have their names entered into Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the names mentioned in the statement in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Bishop Grandin Greenway board members: Brian Born, Bruce Garner, Murray Gibson, Stephane Lacroix-Pouliot, Jacqueline Marques, Michelle Meade, Debbie Svaling, Derick Young.

Collège Béliveau Barracudas

Ms. Audrey Gordon (Southdale): For many years, my Southdale constituency has been a training ground of excellence for hockey. The Collège Béliveau Barracudas have continued this tradition by winning the Winnipeg high school hockey league B division championship on March 12th, 2020.

The Barracudas finished their regular season with 16 wins, seven losses and one overtime loss. They had 86 goals for and 62 against. The team won seven games in the playoffs, with only one defeat.

The championship game against the Glenlawn Lions was certainly a nail-biter for the team. Having

given up a goal early in the game, the Barracudas scored with just 0.4 seconds remaining in the first, tying the game.

The momentum had shifted towards the Barracudas in the second, and they scored four more goals. Glenlawn countered by scoring three additional goals, bringing them within one point of the Barracudas. The Barracudas then scored two goals, making the final score 7-4, securing them the championship.

For the past five years, the Barracudas have been eliminated in the semi-finals, so this victory is truly a testament of their resolve and perseverance. Special recognition goes out to Samuel De Pau, the Barracudas goalie, who was awarded the MVP of the series; Russell Buffie, the leading scorer of the playoffs; and Branden Millard for his defensive zone play. I would also like to recognize Alex Thor, the team captain, and Scott Cawson, the head coach of six years.

Please join me in congratulating the 2019-2020 Collège Béliveau Barracudas players and coaches on an exemplary season.

North End Women's Centre

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I am always proud to acknowledge the important work of the North End Women's Centre, which provides crucial services to residents of Point Douglas and the broader community. Established in 1984, North End Women's Centre is the longest running women's resource centre here in Winnipeg.

North End Women's Centre has three core service areas: community support, recovery and housing support, and community development and engagement. Under these three umbrellas, the centre offers a drop-in service, trauma-informed counselling, transitional housing, support for addictions and survivors of sexual exploitation. and a volunteer program, among many other programs and services.

North End Women's Centre's mission is to facilitate opportunities for women-identified people in healing, wellness and capacity-building through diverse, community-centred approaches. Based on the traditional teachings of the medicine wheel, the centre's holistic view of health supports people in improving their physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being. This mission is very important, but has become even more important during this global pandemic.

Recent research is shedding light on the fact that being cooped up at home due to COVID-19 is putting undue stress and putting survivors of abuse at higher risk of violence.

Victims may find themselves constantly at home with their abuser, with no time to reach out or—reach out for help. Financial strife due to lost employment can also limit the ability of the victims and their children to escape abusive situations and access services such as those provided by the North End Women's Centre.

North End Women's Centre has remained open and continues to navigate the challenges that the COVID pandemic brings, with some adjustments and new safety protocols. Which hasn't changed, however, is their commitment to serving the community with love and compassion and helping women-identified people thrive on their current path—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Shola Agboola

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): As we all know, Manitobans always rise to a challenge and stand out amongst a crowd. One such Manitoban is a constituent of mine, Mr. Shola Agboola.

When Canadians were left stranded in Nigeria as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Agboola rose to the occasion and made it his mission to help repatriate them.

As of August of this year, Madam Speaker, there were 185 Canadians, permanent residents and students stranded in Nigeria, a number of whom were Manitobans and had no way of returning home. The only way they could be: chartered with a flight, which was unfortunately quite expensive.

As the president of the Manitoba-based Nigerian Association for Young Adults of Canada, Mr. Agboola came up with a plan of action and decided to approach the Yoruba traditional leader in Nigeria for the assistance. His Imperial Majesty provided them with the initial financial support they required in order to get this extensive humanitarian effort under way.

The evacuation contract was arranged with the Spanish airline Wamos Air, so on August 7th of this year, the chartered flight brought all 185 stranded individuals back home to Canada, as well as returning to the United States an additional 85—or, 95 Americans who were also stranded.

It is Manitobans like Shola who are the role models that demonstrate the concern for others that we as Manitobans value so much. He is a made-in-Manitoba story, as he possesses a bachelor of science and a masters of public administration from the University of Manitoba and spends his free time heading up the 13-year-old Nigerian Association for Young Adults of Canada, a non-profit, Manitoba-based, national organization that provides a sustainable platform for positive youth development.

Such actions set a standard for which we should—all should aspire to follow in order to truly make a way for a brighter tomorrow here in Manitoba.

Please join me in congratulating Mr. Agboola.

ORAL QUESTIONS

COVID-19 Pandemic Steps to Combat

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, to you, to my colleague across the way, to people across Manitoba: let's wear our masks, let's stay home when we're sick—can't stress that one enough, let's stay home when we're sick—and let's take a step back from the social gatherings. If you're going to play beer-league hockey this weekend, then maybe let's not have beer with the boys afterwards.

These are some of the sacrifices that Manitobans are making right now to flatten the curve, and I'm just repeating these messages in case they haven't reached somebody so far. We're all in this together. We all need to take steps.

Of course, I'm saying this because there were 146 new cases of COVID-19 today, and unfortunately and very tragically, two additional deaths.

Now, while Manitobans are stepping up and they're showing their commitment to fighting this terrible plague, we need to see an equivalent effort from government. We need to see a government that matches your commitment as Manitobans.

So I'd ask the Premier: What are the next steps to help combat the coronavirus pandemic?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I thank the member for his comments and question.

I think that it is critical that we understand we are not powerless in this situation, that as people we have the power literally in our hands to do the right things, to do the things that the member just advocated for, to do the things that Dr. Roussin has been

advocating for, Lanette Siragusa, others, many others all across the province, to encourage one another to make sure that we do these things to keep ourselves safe, because in so doing that we enable ourselves to protect others.

* (14:40)

And we are in this together, as the member quite rightly said, and so of course we will continue to take all necessary steps, all necessary precautions to not only encourage other Manitobans to do what they must do to protect themselves and others, but also as a government to proceed in any way we possibly can to assist in building a safer province for all.

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

COVID-19 Spread Prevention Personal-Care Homes

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, it's another day with an unfortunate record-high case count, and I'm sure that there's going to be a lot of parents out there probably answering concerned questions from their kids, many other people, you know, just anxious about what's happening, and so that's why we are asking these questions as to what are the next steps that this government are prepared to take.

Unfortunately, we've seen that, as with many other jurisdictions around the world, it's our seniors, our elders, who are particularly hard hit by this plague. Personal-care homes need additional investment. We need to see more resources to help these locations combat the epidemic. We have not seen enough investment from this government to date. The steps so far have not been enough to stamp out the pandemic at places like Parkview Place. Of course, that one tugs on all of our heartstrings.

So, what will this government do; what will this Cabinet do to end the outbreak at places like Parkview Place and other personal-care homes across Manitoba?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I would use the member's entreaty to highlight and thank the work of our entire public health team, our front-line workers, right to the minister's office and certainly include in that all of our leaders in the health-care field, who have co-operatively developed strategies to improve safety—one worker, one facility—to stand up and to fight for paid leave, for example, which

Manitoba, joined by British Columbia, led in advocating.

This—these types of initiatives will pay dividends over the longer haul. And we are not in a sprint, Madam Speaker, we are in a marathon. It is not enjoyable. It is hard work. But this is a government prepared to do that work. And I appreciate the member's tone in his preambles today, because this is truly something that we all have an opportunity to work together on, a—truly a Manitoba project that we can be proud we have done our best to find success in.

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

COVID-19 Testing Wait Times

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, in addition to advocating for paid sick leave, we called early on to increase testing capacity. I think we all knew—many experts were also warning—that there was going to be a huge demand for tests once we got to the fall.

And while it's very unfortunate that this government is still scrambling to meet the demand for tests for people who want to get, you know, checked for the coronavirus, we also know that there's another terrible crisis with waits for tests right now in the form of seniors and sick Manitobans who are waiting in huge lineups outside of Dynacare testing locations.

I think every MLA in here has likely received emails from their constituents complaining about waiting in line: in some cases people in a very weakened state, in other cases seniors, the very people who built this province, waiting in line for hours and hours because this government contracted out too much of our laboratory services to this private, for-profit enterprise.

What will the Premier announce today to help ensure that seniors and other vulnerable Manitobans won't have to wait so, so long to get a test conducted at a Dynacare lab?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, there's an old adage, Madam Speaker, but I think it bears repeating, that it's amazing what can get done on a team when people don't worry so much about who gets the credit, and I would add to that, or blame.

The member chooses to engage in a rhetorical debate about privatization when he should be thinking about results. That's what we're focused on achieving and that's why we've been able to multiply the

availability of tests in our province, because we've availed ourselves of the services of public and private people who are partnering together to address a problem, not on a partisan basis, not on the basis of old ideologies, but rather with a genuine desire to see the best possible protections offered to all. That's how we'll continue to focus here, Madam Speaker.

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

Manitoba Hydro Telecom Request to Cancel RFP

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I'm glad the Premier signalled his support for privatization because it's a good set-up for the question that I have to ask about Manitoba Hydro and this government's unfortunate privatization of subsidiaries like Teshmont, which was very, very profitable.

Now, we know that this government is moving ahead with the privatization of other aspects of Manitoba Hydro. I have in my hands a secret document—very intriguing, is it not—an RFP issued by this government in which the government says it is willing to sell off the existing contracts, the existing business and the existing revenue streams of Manitoba Hydro Telecom to a private company. This is a privatization of a very, very crucial piece of Manitoba Hydro because it can connect Manitobans to broadband.

Will the Premier stop his plans for privatization and will he abandon this request for proposals today?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, as opposed to the NDP's position, Madam Speaker, which is that the Manitoba Hydro enterprise belongs to them, we believe it belongs to Manitobans, and we'll continue to encourage and will retain Manitoba Hydro as a public corporation.

Madam Speaker, I know that the member is very defensive about his party's mismanagement of Manitoba Hydro: the multiple billions of dollars of waste, the incredible politicization of decision-making, the willingness on the part of the NDP to overrule Manitoba Hydro senior executives, and their willingness to subvert the policies of transparency that should be involved any time that ratepayers are asked to spend billions of dollars on a project.

I know he's defensive about that and so he lunges at some of the old diatribe of the old days and NDP and makes his new position, Madam Speaker, nothing

but a dull retro rap position. He is simply repeating false charges from the past.

Madam Speaker, the difference between us is that we understand who the owners of Manitoba Hydro are: they are Manitobans and that's how it will stay.

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, it was just 30 minutes ago that this government introduced legislation that will take power away from Manitobans to manage Manitoba Hydro and give it exclusively to the Premier and to the Cabinet.

Now, what's more is that this government, piece by piece, is privatizing Manitoba Hydro. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Last month we proved definitively that they privatized Teshmont, a profitable subsidiary.

Today, in this RFP—which I would add closes on October 14th at noon—they are moving ahead with selling off the contracts, the revenue streams and the business of Manitoba Hydro to private players, like say, a Bell MTS, Madam Speaker. That is privatization. That is taking away money from Manitobans and it will make our bills more expensive.

Will the Premier please just stop this nonsense and cancel this request for proposals?

Mr. Pallister: I appreciate the member, in his preamble, addressing something he does have expertise on, Madam Speaker, and that is making Manitobans pay more for their hydro.

Madam Speaker, on the other hand, of course, the member obviously has not yet read the bill or he would have expressed or demonstrated some understanding of it, and the fact of the matter is that Manitoba Hydro is a Manitoba asset owned by Manitobans and will continue to be. It is not a partisan plaything for the member to abuse any longer.

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, Madam Speaker, we know what this Premier is up to. Less than a month after he sold off Teshmont, a profitable subsidiary of Manitoba Hydro, now he wants to sell off the business operations, the revenue streams of Manitoba Hydro Telecom. I'll table the document so that the general public can have access to this RFP that this

government has refused to release publicly. They don't want the people of Manitoba to see their dirty work, but we will ensure that this sees the light of day.

With less revenue, Madam Speaker, that means Manitoba Hydro will have to go back to the people of Manitoba and raise their rates yet again, not just the way that they're doing this year, when this government is unilaterally raising hydro rates this December 1st, but year after year for many, many years to come. This is wrong.

Will the Premier simply announce today he is going to abandon the privatization of all Manitoba Hydro subsidiaries?

Mr. Pallister: The NDP government gave away ownership of major dams in our province without asking Manitobans for permission. They built a bipole line halfway around the province of Manitoba without letting Manitobans even participate in the environmental hearings, milling down millions of trees in the process and ignoring the democratic freedoms and rights of Manitobans.

* (14:50)

Now the member has the gall to stand up and pretend he's a defender of something he attacked viciously in the past. Madam Speaker, he even offered to take \$70 million of Manitoba Hydro's ratepayers' money and hand it to David Chartrand for support before the last election.

This is the total disrespect, Madam Speaker, which the member shows, and which his party has shown repeatedly, for the owners of Manitoba Hydro. The owners of Manitoba Hydro—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —are not the NDP, Madam Speaker. They are not the NDP. They are the people of Manitoba.

Manitoba Hydro-Bell MTS Contract Conflict of Interest Inquiry

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Last week we tried to ask some important questions, but we failed to get any answers, so here we go again.

In 2017, the Premier told this House that Mr. Beauregard would recuse himself from any and all decision-making relating to Bell MTS. That's a pretty clear statement, Madam Speaker. That was the commitment that the Premier made, and now we know it was false.

The Premier's hand-picked political staff interfered and stopped Hydro from bidding on the Manitoba Network RFP, and as a direct result of that interference Bell MTS was given a \$40-million contract.

The question is very simple, Madam Speaker: Why did the Premier mislead this House, and why did he leave Mr. Beauregard to interfere?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I'll take the time, Madam Speaker, to itemize the falsehoods in the member's assertions.

First of all, Paul Beauregard is a respected member of our civil service. He has carried out the rulings and decisions of the Cabinet of this government to a T. The accusations the NDP is making, the pure perjury of the member's assertions, are shameful—are shameful.

What the member is doing in this Chamber—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —I invite him to do outside, where it will constitute 'libellious' behaviour, and I tell him that he should not use this sacred place in an attempt to attack—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —to attack a civil servant of our province. He should be ashamed of himself. He is engaging in bullying and he is engaging in harassment here in this Chamber again today.

Madam Speaker: I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please, on an issue that is obviously one that is of concern to both sides. I'm just going to urge some cautions on language that might be used in this House, for everybody to be very careful about words that are being used, and any words that equate to lies, you know that that will not be acceptable in this Chamber.

So just some caution on the language that everybody is going to perhaps use in this set of questions.

The honourable member for St. James, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Sala: Pretty sanctimonious language from the Premier. I know he doesn't like it because he made a statement in 2017 that turned out to be false, and he should be forced to account for that statement.

There's a clear conflict here—a clear conflict of interest, Madam Speaker—and the Premier knows it. Why else would he have told a committee of the House that Mr. Beauregard would recuse himself from any decision-making process relating to Bell MTS?

Those are the Premier's own words and his own commitment, but we now know, only thanks to FIPPA, that those words were completely false. Mr. Beauregard, a former Bell MTS executive who owned hundreds of thousands of dollars in that company, interfered in a contract that resulted in a \$40-million extension to Bell MTS.

Does the Premier still believe or does he not believe that Mr. Beauregard should recuse himself from decisions relating to Bell MTS? Yes or no?

Mr. Pallister: The member continues to hoist himself on his own petard, Madam Speaker, and he does a disservice to his party and himself as he does so.

There is absolutely zero conflict of interest involved here. All Mr. Beauregard's assets have been listed and explained to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner in full. There is absolutely—and all of that is available, Madam Speaker. The information that the member is citing is false, completely false.

And, Madam Speaker, I can only say to the member he should be ashamed of himself because it is one thing—it is one thing—to attack the decisions of a government. It is quite another to attack a civil servant who is not in a position to defend themselves.

An Honourable Member: Speak to the Chair.

An Honourable Member: Not supposed to be looking at the member. Stare at the Speaker.

Mr. Pallister: And so, Madam Speaker, what the member is doing, through his—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —blasphemous commentary—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —his pure falsehoods, is he is attacking—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —a civil servant.

An Honourable Member: Attempting to intimidate another member of the Manitoba Legislature and breaking the rules of the Chamber.

Mr. Pallister: The member doesn't even know the rules of the Chamber, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: Because I'm well within my rights to speak to any member here and will. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

An Honourable Member: The Speaker is standing.

Madam Speaker: Order. And the Speaker can also not hear.

As I am trying to hear the comments that are being made in this House, and I know that everybody wants me to be able to rule appropriately, so yelling and—which is actually rising the issue of heckling to a whole new level—I would ask for everybody to please stop. This is a House of democracy, and let's get the questions and answers properly spoken and heard from all sides, because I do need to hear what is being said.

So I think I did not hear for probably about 15 seconds, so I'm going to give the Premier (Mr. Pallister) 15 seconds to complete—*[interjection]*

Order. Order.

If one goes back, and I—if I understand the rules correctly, there is no absolute rule that says somebody has to look at the Speaker. Information is to be—*[interjection]*—yes. No. It's—*[interjection]*—Order. Order. Order.

Questions are to be put through the Speaker, and that is a rule. Now, if somebody wants to start playing politics with this, this is going to start to get really messy in here, and I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation. This is to be a civil, respectful room where we're demonstrating for kids and everybody else that we can do something that is important to Manitoba.

Don't forget, I'm asking everybody, please don't forget what you're here for. And to start to be abusive towards the Speaker is getting very, very close to crossing lines, and I'm not going to allow that to happen because that is a reflection on this Chair—not just me, but on this Chair. And this Chair stands for something very serious that has been going on in this province for 150 years. Do not abuse the role of the Chair.

And I would urge people, if you want to be respected by others out there, we've got to start to

show some better respect in this House at all levels, please, because that is what we are here to do.

The honourable Premier, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Pallister: Yes, Madam Speaker, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) has just learned one fundamental of 'Westminder'—Westminster parliamentary rules. In fact, in the British House, of course, members rise and face one another. In the House of Commons of Canada, members rise and face one another—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —and here, too, members can rise and face one another, should they 'sho' choose, and that is the way it should be.

In particular, when a member of this House makes a false assertion, a bold-faced—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The honourable member for St. James, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Sala: The Premier keeps talking about me making false statements. He should take a walk down to Hansard to take a look at his comments from 2017. They're there for everyone to see.

Emails obtained through FIPPA show that Paul Beauregard directed Manitoba Hydro International to avoid bidding on the Manitoba Network contract, a contract held by Bell MTS. Barely two months after this intervention, Bell MTS was given a \$40-million contract.

The Premier knew his hand-picked political staff shouldn't be anywhere near a Bell MTS contract in 2017, and that's why the Premier committed that that wouldn't happen. Now we know it wasn't true.

Will the Premier tell Manitobans why he misled them in 2017 when he said Mr. Beauregard would recuse himself?

Mr. Pallister: The member demonstrates repeatedly his ignorance of the facts, Madam Speaker. Here are the facts: the member clearly doesn't understand that in keeping my word and in Mr.—defending Mr. Beauregard, who kept his, that I am standing up for the truth.

* (15:00)

The fact is that the member is talking about a contract which was given out by the NDP to

Bell MTS, untendered, and which was not—which was extended during COVID for logical and understandable reasons any—any—person of basic intelligence would understand.

So the fact of the matter is that the member is misrepresenting the facts again. Repeating that doesn't make them any more true.

I encourage the member to refrain from attacking people—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —in our civil service. This is a—this is not a defensible tactic in this Chamber, nor is it a defensible tactic anywhere else. But if he wishes to do it, do it outside, and then the law enforcement can take care of it.

Parkview Place Personal-Care Home Managing COVID-19 Outbreak

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, families continue to express their concerns regarding the COVID outbreak at Parkview Place.

They say they're not receiving timely information about the status of their loved ones. And what they're hearing about is disturbing: residents sitting in feces and loved ones falling down and not being tended to for hours.

This greatly concerns me, as these are the kinds of stories we've heard from other hard-hit provinces, where private care homes literally fell apart under the strain of this pandemic.

I ask the minister: What is he doing to shore up the deteriorating situation at Parkview Place?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, it's difficult to hear new allegations from the member when the member's credibility is strained already.

On Friday, this member has tried to submit that somehow Health Links' system was failing, only to find out, and I quote from a Shaw note that says: Good morning, there was a national Internet outage on Friday that caused significant impact. This was also responsible for the impact Manitoba experienced. This service should now be restored and fully functional.

Will they retract their false statements from Friday? [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Union Station, on a supplementary question.

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, I'd be more than happy to connect the minister with the families who have brought these concerns forward. I'm sure they'd be happy to speak directly to the minister so that he would hear their concerns.

As of earlier this week, there were seven deaths at Parkview Place. The response to date has clearly been insufficient. We know the staff are doing their best, but this facility was not ready to manage an outbreak or to mitigate it. And from what we're hearing from families, the standard of care now is unacceptable, Madam Speaker.

The minister needs to directly intervene, and not simply inspect at some point down the road. Immediate action needs to be taken to put an end to this outbreak and ensure residents are treated humanely, Madam Speaker.

What steps, concretely, is the minister taking to ensure that that happens?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, it's just a series of reckless accusations from a member who suggests now that the residents of facilities are not being treated humanely.

I again ask this member to retract statements that they know to be untrue. That member and all members should know that every single day front-line workers are working hard, regional health authorities are working hard, nurses and doctors and health-care assistants are working hard to keep our residents in personal-care homes safe.

And that is why we do not have 6,000 deaths in our personal-care homes, as Quebec experienced.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, the worst outbreak in the province is happening right here in my own constituency of Union Station, just a five-minute walk from here. This did not have to happen, you know, and much more needs to be done to mitigate the outbreak and to keep it from further spreading.

Families are telling us that their loved ones are not getting their personal needs met and they're not getting what they need to feel safe.

Leadership is required. The minister's direct intervention is required.

What, concretely, is he going to do today to address this horrible situation at Parkview Place? And what is he doing to ensure that no other residents die?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, this is regrettable. That member and every member knows that there is not one jurisdiction in Canada that has been spared people passing away at personal-care homes.

It is a tragedy every time it happens, but for them to somehow suggest that it is avoidable: let that member tell Europe, let that member tell Italy, let that member tell China, let that member tell New York how those care-home deaths were avoidable and somehow that leadership did not take the proper steps.

We are taking the proper steps, Madam Speaker. We believe that our prompt interventions have saved lives and I will not have the front-line members of our civil service slagged by that member, who constantly criticizes the efforts of people to keep residents of personal-care homes safe.

Drinking Water Monitoring Safety Standards and Staffing

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, the Auditor General recently found serious problems with how the Province monitors drinking water. He found systems that did not have a licence and he found licences issued when safety standards were not actually being met.

Of great concern is that the Auditor General found that the Office of Drinking Water does not have the staff resources that they require. Over five years the number of licensed water systems increased 53 per cent, while the number of officers to inspect and license systems decreased.

Will the minister now ensure there is adequate staffing to address this important issue?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Conservation and Climate): I want to assure the member opposite that we do welcome the Auditor General's report and we have worked to address many of the recommendations that were already within that report, including \$3-million investment in our lead-mitigation strategy that will see our continued safe water levels within all of our public buildings, and especially those dealing with schools and daycares.

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

Ms. Naylor: Madam Speaker, the lessons from the deadly disaster at Walkerton in Ontario seemed to

have been forgotten. The commission that investigated Walkerton recommended that all water systems be inspected every five years, yet three years ago the Pallister government cut regulations that protect the safety of our drinking water to allow for less frequent inspection of water systems.

And now there are fewer staff than there were five years ago, despite a 53 per cent increase in water systems to be regulated. This needs to be urgently addressed.

Why has the minister not put more resources in place to protect our drinking water?

Mrs. Guillemard: I appreciate the question from the member opposite and I do want to point out that throughout the Auditor General's report there were no sentences written, no words written that ever indicated that we do not have safe drinking water.

In fact, our water has never, historically, been safer for Manitobans. I do not appreciate the member opposite insinuating that Manitobans should be fearful. Our inspectors on the ground have actually increased since 2016, more than what the NDP had ever put into our department.

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

Ms. Naylor: Madam Speaker, according to the minister's own annual reports, there are fewer staff in the Office of Drinking Water than there were five years ago and there's less money being spent overall in that department.

This is happening, as the Auditor General noted, while the number of licensed water systems increased by 53 per cent, so I would love the minister to tell us how she actually knows that our drinking water is safe. The minister and Conservative predecessors have weakened standards and are simply not addressing the basic needs of the system: regular inspections and proper licensing. It is this kind of lack of regard that can lead to another health crisis. This is a preventable crisis.

I urge the minister, will she now staff up this critical area to ensure the safety of our drinking water?

*(15:10)

Mrs. Guillemard: Again, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I know that her care for Manitobans is strong, as well as our government's care for Manitobans, and our drinking water has always

maintained a high standard for safety, and that will not change.

And, Madam Speaker, I will say that the departmental staff who are working within our Office of Drinking Water have done a phenomenal job of keeping Manitobans safe, and they will continue to do so. And I would really encourage members opposite to really stop pointing out concerns within departments when they are baseless.

Thank you.

Concordia Hospital CancerCare Services

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): Madam Speaker, cancer care should be available close to home. Unfortunately, on September 4th, the Pallister government announced it will be closing outpatient treatment at Concordia and Seven Oaks hospitals. It is a cut that's disturbing the treatment plan of many families dealing with cancer. It is a wrong decision for our residents of northwest Winnipeg.

Will the minister withdraw his plan for closing CancerCare at Concordia and Seven Oaks?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, the member is partly right. There are changes to the way CancerCare services are being delivered, but I would want to clarify for that member that the changes that are being undertaken are at the advice of CancerCare board through their CEO, and these changes are provided in order to guarantee safety and improve patient experience. And I would be happy to provide other details on how these changes that are instigated by CancerCare are there to serve all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Sandhu: Madam Speaker, nurses are concerned. They say these cuts violate CancerCare's commitment to care close to home. Patients face farther drives, cost of parking and disturbance to where they are currently treated. As these nurses say, this decision has more to do with saving money rather than what is the best interest of the patients.

Why is the minister and this government only focused on the bottom line?

Mr. Friesen: This government is focused on better care sooner for all Manitobans, Madam Speaker. The newer site provides for more convenience for patients, but it also provides for more comprehensive cancer

care. Patients now showing up once have access not just to treatment, but they have access to counselling, they have access to their radio-oncologist appointments on the same site as their treatments. That speeds up treatment. That is better for outcomes.

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

Mr. Sandhu: Madam Speaker, closing a location at Concordia and Seven Oaks is a disturber to the patients and reduces local access to the treatment. But the Pallister government does not care about that.

According to the RFP for the review of the CancerCare, the Pallister government was focused on efficiency and fiscal performance. In other words, it's all about the money. It's just more cuts and more closures for the health care in northwest Winnipeg.

Why is the minister dismantling our health-care system?

Mr. Friesen: The board of CancerCare Manitoba and their CEO believe and have confidence that these changes being undertaken will be better: better for treatment, better for the patient experience. We stand with that board. We stand with their CEO. We will judge by the results, but we have confidence that these changes are designed with the patient in mind.

But keep in mind that the same people now who came to complain about that were the ones that complained about the change to urgent care at Seven Oaks and Concordia, where we understand now that more patients are being seen, the satisfaction rate is up and the community is pleased to see this working so well.

Economic Recovery Public Health Recommendations

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): By every indication, the COVID-19 pandemic in Manitoba is worse than it has ever been, by cases, new infections and deaths. There is no excuse for the lack of preparation we've seen. We were calling on this government to get ready for a second wave in May, especially to protect seniors homes, but yesterday the Minister of Health was blaming Manitobans for going out to bars that he insists on keeping open.

We all know that Dr. Roussin is an independent expert in public health. The question is, who's giving this government economic advice? Public health is the road to 'recovery'—the recovery, not an obstacle, but COVID is spreading because this government is forcing businesses and workers to make a choice: stay

open and risk spreading COVID, or close and go broke.

If the Premier is not responsible for this policy, who is?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, he was on the whole ranch, there, Madam Speaker.

I'll just say, in terms of—the member referenced economic recovery. I will just say the numbers from Statistics Canada on Friday demonstrated that, in terms of economic recovery, Manitobans are 98 per cent back to work. That is the No. 1 province in Canada.

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

Flu Shot Availability Government Plan

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I would note that, in the news today, it's reported that 53 per cent of Manitobans are on the verge of insolvency, which is the highest rate in Canada.

After crushing the curve this summer, we now have the second highest active case rate per capita and, by any objective measure, Manitoba has completely blown any advantage we might once have had in dealing with a pandemic because the PC government did not get ready.

We are now approaching flu season. Many of my constituents have been asking about the availability of the flu shot, and people who are immune-compromised can't get access to it. I've spoken with pharmacists who haven't heard anything from this government on how flu clinics will be run, how it will be done safely, especially since it may require gathering together large groups of people who are susceptible to COVID.

BC already has their flu clinics up and running. Saskatchewan and Alberta are starting Monday.

When will we know when Manitobans who need a flu shot will be able to get one?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, it's fine, Madam Speaker. I get that there are Monday morning quarterbacks all over the place. The fact of the matter is, though, that the member is attempting to foist blame and that is pointless and useless in this environment.

We are in this together, as the Leader of the Opposition wisely said earlier in the question period,

and so I'd appreciate one constructive idea from the member. We haven't received one yet.

I would tell him, though, that we have stepped up and we have taken the lead in many aspects of response and anticipated actions that had to be taken early so that we have been able to effectively manage and lessen the impact of COVID versus other jurisdictions not only in Canada, but around the world. We'll continue to do that.

And I would say, for example, in terms of PPE, where the federal Liberals promised us they'd supply everything we needed, we ended up providing over 95 per cent of that here in Manitoba. Home-grown solutions. That's what we're about over here.

Personal-Care Homes Staff and Resident COVID-19 Testing

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, in response to the extremely serious outbreak in the Parkview Place personal-care home, the government has 'waived' the requirement that a person work only in one home. This measure will put people in the second home where this staffperson is working at risk.

Further, in personal-care-home situations, other jurisdictions have found, in order to best prevent spread of the virus, that they need to test all staff and residents on a regular basis to identify and isolate asymptomatic infected people.

Are all staff and residents being tested on a regular basis to pick up those who are infected who are asymptomatic, and why is this government not deploying a well-trained, rapid response team, as we have repeatedly called for?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): The member needs a reminder that he is not the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer. I can assure that member, and all members, that it is the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer who has undertaken to lift, temporarily, that one worker, one site doctrine that was in place formerly.

That member can understand that, with the challenges on COVID-19-positive cases in that personal-care home, there is a need to temporarily lift that measure to allow staffing to come up fully.

I understand that there are many initiatives under way to make sure that COVID-19 is not being imported into that facility by workers who are there to help.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

* (15:20)

Speaker's Ruling

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

On March 11th, 2020, the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) raised a matter of privilege contending that the government was violating his privileges by not calling a meeting of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations for consideration of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation annual reports.

He stated that this was, and I quote, "impeding my ability to adequately fulfill my responsibility to my constituents to ensure proper management of their Crown corporations."

At the conclusion of his remarks he moved that, and I quote, "that this issue be immediately referred to a committee of this House."

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) also spoke to the matter of privilege, which was then taken under advisement. I thank all honourable members for their advice to the Chair.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege.

First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity and, second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House?

On the first issue of timeliness, the honourable member did not address that issue nor provide any information that he was raising the issue at the earliest opportunity. Therefore, I conclude that the issue of timeliness was not met.

Regarding the second issue, I have stated on numerous occasions that a matter concerning the methods by which the House proceeds and the conduct of business is a matter of order not privilege.

Joseph Maingot, in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, states on page 14 that, and I quote: Allegations of breach of privilege by a member in the House that amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are by

their very nature matters of order. End quote. He also states on page 223 of the same edition, and I quote: "A breach of the Standing Orders or a failure to follow an established practice would invoke a 'point of order' rather than a 'question of privilege.'"

It has also been ruled on numerous times in this House that the opinion of the Speaker cannot be sought about matters arising concerning committees and that it is not competent for the Speaker to exercise procedural control over committees. Speaker Rocan made such a ruling in 1989, in 1993 and in 1994. Speaker Hickes also made five rulings: twice in 2004, once in 2005 and twice in 2006.

In regards to the member's comments that he could not fulfill his role to his constituents to review matters concerning MPI, Maingot further advises on page 224 of the same edition that, and I quote: "parliamentary privilege is concerned with the special rights of Members, not in their capacity as ministers or as party leaders, whips, or parliamentary secretaries, but strictly in their capacity as Members in their parliamentary work." Therefore, the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) cannot claim the protection of parliamentary privilege for the performance of his duties as a critic but only as an MLA.

All of the above references from Joseph Maingot are supported by rulings from myself as well as from Speakers Rocan, Dacquay and Hickes.

Although the honourable member for Flin Flon may have a difference of opinion regarding the timing of calling a Crown Corporations meeting, such a concern falls more into a category of a complaint against the government and not a breach of parliamentary privilege.

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

Finally, I would also encourage members to exercise caution in the raising of matters of privilege. While I would never deny a member the right to raise privilege in the House, I fear that we are beginning to see the trivialization and devaluation of what parliamentary privilege is claimed to be.

As stated on page 220 of Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, in the Canadian House of Commons, and I quote: Questions of privilege are frequently raised but few are found to be prima facie cases. Members have a tendency to use the rubric of privilege to raise what is really a matter of order or, in the words of the

Speaker of the House of Commons, a grievance against the government.

PETITIONS

Dauphin Correctional Centre

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, the D-C-C-C, in May 2020.

(2) The D-C-C-C is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the D-C-C-C and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin. This petition's been signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

Are there any further petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, interrupting Throne Speech debate, could you please call Supplementary Appropriation?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response) and The Loan Act, 2020.

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting the supplementary appropriation, 2020, COVID-19 response bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

* (15:30)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Supplementary Supply

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. We have before us consideration for the resolution respecting the supplementary appropriation bill.

The supplementary appropriations resolution reads as follow:

RESOLVED that a sum not exceeding \$577,000,000, as set forth in part A, Operating Expenditures, of the Supplementary Estimates, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021.

Does the minister have an opening comment?
No?

Does the official opposition critic have an opening comment?

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): No.

Mr. Chairperson: The floor is open for questions. Any questions?

Mr. Wasyliv: Yes. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

I would ask the minister: Obviously, in the springtime, we assembled as a Legislature and approved a supplementary budget. I'm wondering if the minister can explain whether or not all that money has been spent, and if it hasn't been spent, how much is still remaining?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Deputy Chair, we—your—the member is exactly right. We approved an appropriation bill of \$1 billion that consisted of \$500 million for health, \$400 million for ISA, and \$100 million for emergency. We're—not yet allocated all that money, but we will be by November.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions?

Mr. Wasyliv: Yes. So what has been left? Like, what's the unspent portion of that \$1 billion?

Mr. Fielding: Well, it depends on which way you look at it.

There is a number of different programs we allocated. Of course, there's the Parliamentary Budget Office said that Manitoba spent second or third most of all the provinces. So our programs are continued to be opened up and people continue to utilize some of

these programs. Also, things like personal protection equipment, PPE—commonly referred to as PPE—it is actually expensed while it's—what is being used. So you might purchase it, but the expensing portions of things goes when the actual equipment is used.

Mr. Wasyliv: Is the minister aware of how much has not been spent?

Mr. Fielding: Well, we've appropriated a number of different programs. In fact, for Manitoba Protection Plan and restart, some is capital; that's related to capital expenditures we've—have. But others are other projects. We've allocated around \$933 million, and as such with some of the programming as mentioned, we put an allocation out there for millions of dollars, and until it's utilized up, there is some money that's left over. And, again, things like personal protection equipment, depending on when it's being used, on the accounting basis, you can't expense it in terms of our books until it's actually being used.

Mr. Wasyliv: Yes, so given what you've just said, why is it now necessary to ask for a further \$477 million?

Mr. Fielding: Well, the main reason why we are is because we have entered into an agreement for restart, agreement with the federal government. So to flow monies to things like municipalities—and a part of this bill, it has money that is flowing towards municipalities in the tune of \$106 million—we need the spending authority to do as such, as well as flowing additional money to education. Our commitments to education of \$100 million is one of the highest in the country in terms of the supports. So we need this spending authority to do these particular items. There is also money that's put away for capital-related projects through ISA as well as other items in terms of contingency because we know we're not all the way through the pandemic.

Mr. Wasyliv: I'm wondering if the minister could break down the \$477 million and explain to the Legislature where those dollars will be spent.

Mr. Fielding: Yes, I can. It's actually isn't \$477 million; it's \$577 million. So it's made up of a different—number of different areas: \$40 million for education, that's above and beyond the \$48 million that's—that school divisions saved during the initial shutdown, plus \$12 million through PPE appropriations, plus the \$40 million for the appropriation, the \$100 million that we had talked about. There's \$106 million flowing to municipalities, made up of \$72 million on a per capita operating basis, and

around 32-some-odd million dollars for transit that flows to municipalities, and the rest enabling appropriations is \$431 million, which is made up of the restart, the capital types of programs that we've offered, things like ICIP funding and waste-water projects to municipalities and a further money put in contingency because we don't know when the pandemic will end and supports will be finished off.

Mr. Wasyliw: I don't have any further questions at this stage of the proceedings.

Mr. Chairperson: No other further questions in the House?

An Honourable Member: Yes, I have a question.

Mr. Chairperson: Oh, there's one quick question for the honourable member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, my question relates to the fact that there's been a lot of demands for spending in personal-care homes, but I'm wondering how much has actually flowed to personal-care homes at this point?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I can tell you that we appropriate over \$500 million for the health care. That's something I think all members of the Chamber voted on, so there's \$500 million appropriation for health, 400 in ISA, and that's a place, because when the virus started, we needed supports that were in place, and so we put that plus \$100 million. So the makeup of that is the \$500 million we talked about, mainly made up things like PPE, supports for other types of services and supports that are there.

Mr. Gerrard: So you don't know exactly how much has actually been spent at this point. You just know what you've allocated.

Mr. Fielding: Well, this Chamber as a whole, in fact, I think the member as well, I believe he voted in favour it, so we voted for billion-dollar appropriation.

* (15:40)

What we are asking for here is \$577 million of additional appropriation for about over \$1.5 billion in supports. They are broken down in those particular areas that I'd mentioned in the money—the additional supports are related to the safe restart program that the federal government has introduced. I think that is well documented, but we are getting some monies from the federal government support in terms of around \$417 million. That will support a number of different health and social services related areas.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, so, I mean what I'm hearing from personal-care homes is that there's actually very little money that has been flowed, and you're not actually able to say how much money has actually flowed to personal-care homes at this juncture.

And if that's—that's fine; I just wanted to get that on the record. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there any further questions?

Mr. Fielding: Well, that's actually not true. We've obviously flowed money for the visitation. This is people that go to personal-care homes. There's been millions of dollars that have been allocated. In fact, a lot of these visitation areas are already showing up at personal-care homes. There is money through the federal agreement, the federal restart agreement, with the federal government in the tunes of \$26.88 million, and that's supported for personal-care homes.

So we are very supportive of that and made significant investments to ensure personal-care homes have the appropriate monies allocated to support people as well as businesses as well as health care in terms of personal-care homes.

Mr. Gerrard: Okay, I have a further question. My follow-up question has to do with the education. My understanding is that the provincial government is receiving something like \$85 million for education from the federal government.

How does that fit in to the amount that you're spending? It's hard to understand when you're just spending \$40 million new and you got \$85 million from the federal government. It looks like there's about \$45 million which is missing.

Mr. Fielding: Thank you for the question and I appreciate it.

It is, you know, with all the moving targets with the finance, it is important to make sure we've got all the money on the record.

Our government committed \$100 million to the education side. It's made up of \$48 million that were saved when the school divisions closed down earlier. That was something that school divisions came. There is \$12 million allocated for personal protection equipment that flowed to the schools, and the rest of the appropriation here is the \$40 million that is before you. The federal money is in the neighbourhood of around \$84 million. It flows over two-year period. The vast majority of this money that was identified in the Throne Speech goes to safe re-opening and

making sure people have remote learning in the time of the crisis.

Mr. Gerrard: Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: No other further questions? Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the resolution pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The resolution is accordingly passed.

That concludes the business before the committee.

The committee rises.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered the—adopted a resolution respecting the Supplementary Appropriation.

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

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On House business, I'd like to announce that, in addition to the reports previously announced, the Public Accounts Committee meeting this evening at 6 p.m. will also be considering the following: The Auditor General's Report: Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated May 2015, section 4: Appointment Process to Agencies, Boards and Commissions; Auditor General's Report: Follow-up of Recommendations, dated May 2016, Appointment Process to Agencies, Boards and Commissions; and Auditor General's Report: Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated May 2015, section 15: Manitoba eHealth Procurement of Contractors

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that, in addition to the reports previously announced, the Public Accounts Committee meeting this evening at 6 p.m. will also be considering the following: Auditor General's Report: Follow-up of Previously Issued

Recommendations, dated May 2015, section 4: Appointment Process to Agencies, Boards and Commissions; Auditor General's Report: Follow-up of Recommendations, dated May 2016, Appointment Process to Agencies, Boards and Commissions; Auditor General's Report: Follow-up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated May 2015, section 15: Manitoba eHealth Procurement of Contracts.

Concurrence Motion

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), that this House concur in the report of the Committee of Supply respecting concurrence in the resolution respecting the supplementary appropriation, 2020, COVID-19 response bill for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021.

Motion agreed to.

Supplementary Supply Motion

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, second by the Minister of Families, there be granted to Her Majesty on account of Certain Expenditures of the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021, out of the Consolidated Fund, a sum of up to \$577 million, as set out in part A, Operating Expenditures, of the Supplementary Estimates, laid before the House at the present Session of the Legislature.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 39—The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, second by the Minister of Families, that Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), be now read a first time and be ordered for the second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

* (15:50)

SECOND READINGS

Bill 39—The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families, that Bill 39, The

Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020, be now read a second time and be referred to the committee as a whole.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), seconded by the honourable Minister of Families, that Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), be now read a second time and be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Was the Minister of Finance intending to speak to the bill?

Mr. Fielding: I'm going to give some brief comments here. This bill provides spending authority for \$577 million for COVID-19 response as set out in the Manitoba Estimates of expenditure, which will be tabled in the Legislature on the 8th day of October, 2020—as we did.

The spending authority will be split as follows: \$40 million for support for schools, \$106 million for funding for municipalities and \$431 million for internal service adjustments, appropriations for the government for 2020-21. The total sum to be voted as set forth in part A, estimates of operating expenditure, of \$577 million are listed below.

I will now provide a brief explanation of each section.

Section 1 defines the term Supplementary Estimates used in the act as the Manitoba Estimates of Expenditure, supplement 2 for the 2020-21 fiscal year are tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Section 2 includes the amounts spending authority for \$577 million, which is the amount to be voted in part A of the 2020-21 Estimates of Expenditure, supplement 2.

Section 2(2) confers—affirms that money expended under the authority of the act must be duly accounted for in appropriate department in the event that there is a change in responsibility during the fiscal year.

Section 3 includes authority of \$200 million being provided for the development or acquisition of inventory primary for personal-care equipment and similar materials that would be expensed in future fiscal years.

With these comments I commend the bill for the members of the committee.

Madam Speaker: Do members wish to ask questions on the bill?

Questions

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

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I'd like to clarify with the minister, you had previously—your government had previously announced \$100 million for supports to the education system, including \$48 million from their internal savings and then another \$52 million from your government. That happened some time ago.

Was that not part of the billion-dollar appropriation from spring, and is this new appropriation for \$40 million in education in this request, is this new money or is this a re-announcement?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the total commitment for education that our government has, which is one of the highest in the country, is for \$100 million. The moneys that are appropriated are, the member is right, \$48 million initially from the savings from when schools shut down during March—around the March break.

There's \$12 million that was appropriated previously for personal protection equipment and the other \$40 million adds up to the \$100-million commitment, so we need a spending authority for that additional \$40 million.

Mr. Wasyliv: So just to be absolutely clear here, that extra \$40 million that was already announced was not covered by the initial appropriation in the spring.

Mr. Fielding: Well, just referring back to my previous comments, the way the cash flow is handled for the most part is there's \$48 million which was part of an existing appropriation, right? There was \$12 million, part of the initial billion-dollar commitment for things like personal protection equipment. That adds up to \$60 million. And to meet our commitment, we had in this document we're

debating here, spending authority for another \$40 million. That adds up to \$100 million.

Mr. Wasyliw: The largest sum of money is the \$431 million for internal adjustments. So, the government, at this point, has not committed to allocating any of that money, and my question is: Why is that not being allocated now and when will it be allocated and who will be making the decisions as to where that allocation will be going?

Mr. Fielding: Well, we have committed as a government over \$100 million. The Minister of Education has been out-spelling out exactly where the expenditures will go—that goes obviously to the school system, that goes to protective equipment, that goes to a whole variety of things within the education system. All total, it adds up to over 100—or a \$100 million supports, which is one of the highest in the nation.

Mr. Wasyliw: My question was in relation to the \$431 million for internal adjustments.

There—why is the government using such a large sum for internal adjustments? Why isn't that money being allocated to various needs? When will it be allocated and by whom—will make the decision as to what is going to be allocated and to where?

Mr. Fielding: The 200 or 431 million dollars that the speaker is referring to is made up of a number of different categories. First, \$280 million for the Manitoba Restart Capital Program; that's our commitment to infrastructure. It's made up of the water stewardship; there's \$50 million to waste water for municipalities. And over \$230 million to things like the ICIP types of programs. That makes up \$280 million.

There's \$47 million; this is new, related to workforce development agreement with the federal government, that is to support businesses that are there. And there's \$104 million for contingency related to COVID-19. We know that there's a second wave; there may be additional supports and so that money is in contingency to address any supports for people or businesses that are needed.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, if you can unmute.

Is the honourable member for River Heights—okay.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Okay. Yes, I'm here now. Sorry, I was having difficulty unmuting.

Now, my question is this: we understand that there were significant amounts of PPE which the government ordered, which didn't meet ordinary standards and therefore were wasted.

And I would ask the minister, what is the minister doing this time around to make sure that we don't have PPE which doesn't meet appropriate standards and therefore can't be used in the future?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I would suggest that this Chamber, in fact, I think the member did vote on this as well, an additional billion-dollar appropriation for supports—things like PPE, things like supports for people, as well as businesses. A part of this bill, it also deals, in section 3, deals with the situation where expenditures for money and expenditures for accounting purposes are not able to be counted this year—that goes to the issue of, from an accounting basis, you may be able to purchase the PPE but until you expend it or you use it, that's when you actually account for it.

So what this bill does is it allows us on a cash basis to have the money in place but to appropriate the money, which will be accounted for under next year, an additional \$200 million.

* (16:00)

Mr. Wasyliw: I'm wondering if the minister can give an update of what the projected deficit will be for the Province at the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Fielding: Well, I can't do that because we're at Q1, which we released the 'relecent' reports.

As you may have seen from Stats Canada, Manitoba's rebounding more than anyone else in the country, which is a very good thing. We've added another 15,000 jobs and we've got the second lowest unemployment rate around. With that being said, we're headed, obviously, into a second wave of COVID, so there may be more supports that are needed.

After the Q1 report, we tabled a \$2.9 billion deficit. That's based on nine different forecasting agencies and moderating agencies where we evaluate that. We also get estimates from Ottawa in terms of what our corporate and income tax levels will be. We anticipate losing close to \$1.5 billion and expending \$1.1 billion next year.

Mr. Wasyliw: Yes. I'm wondering if you can give us a status update about whether or not the rainy day fund, for lack of a better word, is that completely extinguished? Do we have any money in it or all that

money—the \$800 million—has all been spent at this point?

Mr. Fielding: No, the money has not been spent in the rainy day fund. We have over \$800 million as a public accounts. Part of that, of course, that was drained under the former NDP government to around \$110 million. Our government is very proud of the fact that we replenished the rainy day fund and put money in the bank.

We didn't have to use that money yet. There was a time during March when the capital markets closed and people weren't able to access market—access the markets, and so it's good that we had the rainy day fund, but we have not appropriated some dollars that's here as it relates to this. This is something that we have been able to do on the capital markets.

Mr. Wasyliw: I guess it begs the question, minister: If you haven't spent the \$800 million, the rainy day fund, why are you now seeking \$577 million to borrow?

Mr. Fielding: Well, it's quite simple. We've got agreement with the federal government for close to over \$400 million that flows, to flow the money to places like municipalities where we're flowing \$106 million. We need spending authority to do that. We wouldn't be able to flow the money to municipalities without this spending document, the authority to do as such.

Mr. Wasyliw: Yes. I'm wondering, the minister announced recently that he's still going ahead with the PST cut to accounting services and the probate-fee elimination, as well as the education property tax elimination.

I'm wondering if he can give an estimate to the Legislature of how much is going to be lost in tax revenue from those tax cuts.

Mr. Fielding: Well, this is the fundamental difference between our government and the NDP governments. They think it's government money, we think it's the people's money.

We made a tax commitment for a 2020 tax rollback that includes things like a PST reduction, that includes things like indexing of basic personal exemption, that includes things like retail sales tax exemptions for wills preparations.

We know that they don't think it's citizens' money and they deserve to have it back. We, as Conservatives, as the government, think that Manitobans are taxed to the max because of the

former policies of the NDP government, and we want to give some money back to Manitobans. That was a commitment we made in election campaign, that's how we got our majority government, and we're going to follow through with that, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wasyliw: According to your press releases, the two tax cuts, the accounting as well as probate, would amount to about \$15.5 million in lost revenue.

I'm wondering how you can justify cutting and losing that revenue and turning around and borrowing money to institute those tax cuts during a recession.

Mr. Fielding: Well, it's our belief that Manitobans are taxed to the max, and during a pandemic is the time to flow money to Manitobans. We're committed to this. We want to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

We know that the track record of the NDP government, their spending, their waste, the taxes that they would routinely impose on individuals—we're not going to have any of that, Madam Speaker. We made commitments to Manitobans and we're going to live up to it.

Mr. Wasyliw: I'm wondering if the minister can give us an estimate of how much Manitobans are going to pay in interest to borrow the money in order to institute these tax cuts, and how long it will take Manitoba to pay back the principal and interest on these loans so that we can have your tax cuts.

Mr. Fielding: Madam Speaker, we know for the first time—one of the first times in Manitoba's history that we're spending over a billion dollars on debt servicing charges, and that's because of the reckless spending by the former NDP government when they were there.

They didn't have any sound sense of making sure we hit—they hit their budgets. That's why they had downgrades from credit-rating agencies. That's why we're spending over a billion dollars in debt servicing charges. We as a government came in ahead of our schedule every year in terms of meeting our projections; that's by holding a line on things like taxes.

And that's probably some of the reasons why, during the pandemic, we're expected to come back better than any other province in the country.

Madam Speaker: Was the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) wishing to ask a question?

The honourable member for Fort Garry?

Mr. Wasyliw: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm wondering if the minister can tell us when the

education property tax will be eliminated this year, how much will be reduced and what expense to the Treasury, and how will that money get replaced for school boards.

Mr. Fielding: Well, maybe the member wasn't listening to the Throne Speech; he was off—I know he was listening from afar, which we do now with these types of things. Was there—what I am saying is, the member was there, but clearly he wasn't listening, because our Throne Speech identified that we're committed to \$1.6 billion more spending, and we're committing to eliminate the education property taxes.

Mr. Wasyliw: Yes, I understand that. I'm wondering if the minister can explain how the property tax will be eliminated this year, and what Manitobans could expect to see as a reduction to their education property tax this year and how much revenue will be lost this year.

Mr. Fielding: Well, might not have—just—not like the NDP government that would make decisions without consulting Manitobans, we're going to be engaged in a budget consultation to consult with Manitobans and find out what they want.

But we're absolutely committed to reducing the education taxes. If you think that I'm going to be here and announce something before the budget, you're absolutely wrong; that's not the way budgeting works. We consult with Manitobans; we consulted with over thousands of Manitobans before. The NDP don't know anything about consulting because I attended one of their consultation meetings when they were government. It was a complete sham.

We're not going to make mistakes like the NDP don't—did without consulting Manitobans.

Mr. Wasyliw: The \$80 million that's been allocated from the federal government: Is that actually going to go to the school divisions? Is it going to be spent this year or is it going to be held back?

Mr. Fielding: The member wasn't listening during the Throne Speech. We identified remote learning will get a large portion of that expenditure. The federal government will be flowing that money over a two-year period.

Mr. Wasyliw: Yes, I'm wondering if the minister can tell the Legislature how much federal money has been committed to Manitoba, and is that federal money, which is earmarked, actually going to go to what it's intended?

Mr. Fielding: We committed to have an agreement, a Safe Restart Agreement, with over \$417 million that will be flowing to the Province. We also have a commitment in terms of the schools for somewhere around \$84 million that will be flowed over two particular years.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period on this bill is over.

I understand the member for St. Boniface may have a request. On House business?

House Business

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): On House business, I have a leave request.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a leave request.

Mr. Lamont: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Could you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to allow the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) to stand in as a substitute for myself in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts meeting tonight at 6 p.m., for the meeting tonight only?

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface is requesting that leave of the House be granted to allow the member for Tyndall Park to sit as a substitute at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts this evening at 6 p.m., for the meeting tonight only.

* (16:10)

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Madam Speaker: Debate is open. Are there any members wishing to debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), seconded by the honourable Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), be now read a second time and be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

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

The House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), for concurrence and third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 39—The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

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

We have before us our consideration for resolution respecting the supplementary—no, sorry, this is not the one.

Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order. We will now consider Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response).

Does the honourable minister have any opening statements? No?

Does the official opposition critic have an opening statement? No? Fort Garry? No.

And we now will proceed with the—we shall now proceed with the—consider of—the bill clause by clause. The title and enacting clause are postponed until all other clauses have been considered.

Clause 1—pass.

Shall clause 2 pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: No. I hear a no.

Okay, we're on clause 2.

Shall clause 2—the honourable member for Fort Garry has a question on clause 1—two, clause 2.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I'm wondering if the minister can confirm that basically this appropriation is simply to flow through federal money this year and it's not going to result in any new provincial money.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Do I need to stand?

Mr. Chairperson: No, you can sit.

Mr. Fielding: The provincial government, as opposed to all provincial governments, or with all provincial governments, negotiated agreements with the federal

government on a safe restart commitment. We also have commitments to finish off our \$100-million commitment to education, a total of \$100 million education, as well as some additional monies for things like the safe restart, which is our capital program, our portions of ICIP and our portions of the \$50-million waste water to municipalities that would be part of that and \$104 million for contingency.

So, the answer to the question is no.

Mr. Wasyliv: So, of the \$577 million, \$417 million is flow-through money from the federal government and the remainder is new provincial money?

Mr. Fielding: The \$577 million is made up of \$40 million—additional \$40 million in education. We've already allocated \$60 million to the two different appropriations, saving the money through the provincial education system, \$12 million for PPE and another \$40 million for a \$100-million commitment. So that's a \$100-million commitment.

The MI is in agreement with the federal government on safe restart for \$106 million. The ISA is made up of \$431 million; \$280 million is things our—the provincial dollars—support for things like the ICIP, and \$50 million—provincial dollars—that are going towards waste water for provincial areas, plus \$104 million for contingency.

So, the member is completely wrong.

Mr. Wasyliv: So, how much of the \$577 million is throw, like—flow-through federal dollars?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I wouldn't categorize it as flow-through dollars, because we had to strike an agreement with the federal government. The premiers—through the premiers confederation of—the premiers each had an agreement with the federal government in terms of monies. We needed an agreement that we gave to Ottawa. There's an agreement for it.

So there's a commitment in terms of our support for it. There is absolutely some money and we appreciate the support with the federal government, but there is also a lot of provincial dollars.

The end of the day, I don't think your constituents, from the member to Fort Garry, probably cares whether it's federal or provincial dollars, as long as the supports are there for individuals and businesses. And we know the Parliamentary Budget Office is saying Manitoba is spending second or third most of all the provinces in the country. And that's bearing fruit with some of our programs, as Manitoba is one of the first,

in fact, is the first, in terms of our restart program—getting people back to the workplace with a low unemployment rate, the second lowest in Canada.

Mr. Wasyliw: So, how much of that \$577 million is from the federal government?

Mr. Fielding: I'm going to refer you to my previous question. I identified all the money; in fact, I've done this four times. If you like, I can go through it one more time.

Of the \$577 million, there's a commitment—additional commitment of \$40 million, that is, provincial dollars, that's attached to the \$60 million already appropriated. That's \$100 million.

There's MI—or municipal relations, there's \$106 million; that is part of the agreement from the federal government. The rest of the money through ISA—or vast majority of the money through the ISA—is capital dollars that we're spending on our portions of dollars for ISA programs to the tune of \$230 million, and \$50 million for waste water types of projects for municipalities to buy in.

And there's also \$104 million for additional COVID responses. This is a contingency because we know we're only partway through the crisis and there may be additional supports that are needed.

Mr. Wasyliw: Now, it's my understanding the federal government had already given the Province \$109 million for contract tracing and testing, and there was reported in the media that that money actually hasn't been spent for its earmarked purpose. Is that correct?

Mr. Fielding: The agreements with the federal government are for \$417.78 million, made up of testing contract tracing to the tune of \$108 million.

There's health-care system capacity: \$43 million; vulnerable populations like PCHs: \$26 million; municipalities and transportation: a total of \$106 million, made up of \$72 million and 33 for the transit side of the equation; PPE for health-care and non-health-care workers: \$108 million; and child care: \$23.7 million.

I want to make this clear. There was appropriations already made under the previous bill, so this is money—we've got flexibility to spend this money, and that's what this does. This spends—this allocates the money that the federal government worked with the provinces on agreement to pay for things like PPE and other things.

You don't need additional spending authority in a new bill because we already have the spending authority from the previous bill—the \$1 billion that was there.

* (16:20)

Mr. Wasyliw: Of the \$108 million that was earmarked for contract tracing, how much of the federal money has actually been spent by the Province, and how much is still unspent?

Mr. Fielding: I can tell you that we committed over \$500 million for health-related costs. We are—we just released, obviously, Q1, but we're about halfway through the year so we have halfway throughout the—we've got more than half the year, six months left for testing and these types of initiatives.

There'd be other health-care initiatives that we need money, so I can't tell you what the estimates are going to be by year end because we're only halfway through the year.

Mr. Wasyliw: Is the minister aware of how much actually of the federal money has been spent on contract tracing?

Mr. Fielding: We've—I can't tell you what we're going to spend because we're only halfway through the year. If you had asked me six months ago, would we be spending \$2.9 billion—or, having a deficit of \$2.9 billion, I would have said no.

We're losing revenues from the federal government—about one point—revenues altogether, not from the federal government, \$1.5 million. We're spending \$1.1 billion in this year. That's made up of \$2.3 billion overall because there's some capital projects that we're spending \$500 million more in capital-related projects that you advertise. And you—and also, some are being spent over a two-year period.

Mr. Wasyliw: So I take it from the minister's answer no federal money has been actually spent on contact tracing.

Do I have that correct?

Mr. Fielding: Absolutely not.

Mr. Wasyliw: If that's the case, then how much has been spent—of the federal money—on contact tracing?

Mr. Fielding: Look, we've allocated over \$500 million. The member was here when we appropriated the existing bill. We've also allocated millions of dollars for supports for individuals and families as well.

Mr. Wasyliw: Of the \$80 million of federal money that's supposed to flow to the schools, how much has been spent?

Mr. Fielding: Our commitment is \$100 million for the education system.

I'm not going to go through the numbers again. It's \$40 million additional spending authority—that's what this bill does—plus the \$60 million that was a part of it. With the federal government, we're getting over \$84 million that's flowed this year, and next year there'll be \$44 million.

We actually are only one third—not even that, we're in October. The school year goes to the end of June, so I can't tell you what we're going to be spending, but I can tell you there's a commitment to spend the vast majority of this money on, kind of, remote learning types of initiatives.

Mr. Wasyliw: Can the government commit that you will spend the entire \$108 million on contract tracing and the entire \$80 million on school funding?

Mr. Fielding: We're committed to doing what it takes to support individual Manitobans as well as businesses. That's what we've done. That's why the Parliamentary Budget Office is saying that Manitoba is spending one of the most of all the provinces in supports for individuals and businesses. We're very proud of that fact.

We'll continue to look at the situation on the ground and, if there's a need to spend more money, absolutely we will spend what it takes to protect Manitobans and to support the restart of our economy.

Mr. Wasyliw: I'm wondering why the minister won't commit today in this House to spending the money that he's been given from the federal government for contact tracing and for the schools.

Mr. Fielding: I have no idea what the member's talking about. I clearly didn't say that. That's his words, not mine.

Mr. Wasyliw: Well, I'm certainly willing to apologize to the minister if he would, you know, commit now before the Legislature on the record that his government will spend every single penny of that \$108 million on what it's intended for—contract tracing—and the \$80 million—every cent of it—on our schools.

Will the minister do that now? And if not, why not?

Mr. Fielding: I've already answered the question. The member doesn't want to listen to the answer, but I'll give it to him again.

We've got a commitment with the federal government. We struck an agreement with them for in the neighbourhood of \$417 million. The categories I've identified in terms of what the money is are there. We've also got agreement with the federal government in terms of the safe schools restart money.

So of course we're going to spend all that money. We want to make sure that we're supported in—Manitobans are supported for the most part. Although we're seeing a surge, we are providing and we want to make sure that the protections are there for Manitobans. But we also want to make sure that we have an economy left, and so far we think on—specifically on the economy as well, that we're doing better than most provinces.

Mr. Wasyliw: I'm wondering if the minister can tell the Legislature whether or not there was any sort of analysis done with your tax cuts in relation to the removal of PST for accounting and for the elimination of probate fields as to who's most likely going to get the benefit from these tax cuts, which, you know, what is the percentage per tax bracket, whether the individuals in the top tax bracket will disproportionately benefit from these tax cuts.

I'm wondering if you can tell us what type of an analysis was done in regard to that.

Mr. Fielding: Yes, I can. I can say this. It's not surprising the NDP doesn't want to talk and wants to keep money from Manitobans. We think that Manitobans are overtaxed. Our tax plan consists of 2020 over the time period. We've done things like reducing the PST. We've done things like increasing the basic personal exemption that the NDP never did. That's taken thousands of Manitobans, poor, low-income Manitobans, off the tax rolls altogether.

We provided other tax measures that are in place—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —in terms of providing tax relief for Manitobans. We know the NDP don't want—they want to take money away from Manitobans. We want to give money back to Manitobans. We're a government that does what we said we're going to do. We made a number of commitments; we fulfilled them.

Number 1: we reduced the PST; that was a big commitment for us. Number 2: we brought our fiscal—ourselves into fiscal—[*interjection*]

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —balance again ahead of schedule, and we replaced the rainy day that the NDP 'depleted' the rainy day fund to fight things like emergencies that did happen.

So we are a government that does what we said we're going to do, and we're going to reduce the education property tax as well, as committed. [*interjection*]

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mr. Wasyliw: My question to the minister was, has there been any analysis done with the tax cuts that you're proposing, and who will benefit? What tax brackets will benefit most from these tax cuts?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I would suggest to you that cutting the PST is something that's going to benefit all Manitobans. I know the NDP doesn't want to talk about cutting taxes because they've got such a poor record of jacking up taxes, not giving Manitobans that before the election. That's really disappointing. That's disrespectful. The fact that they blow their budgets on—every year—that was part of it—and then drain the rainy day fund.

What we're doing is providing tax relief for Manitobans. There's a whole bunch of tax measures we've done: cutting the PST; our commitment to education property taxes, which, by the way, all Manitobans will benefit from; increasing the basic personal exemption, with all Manitobans will benefit from; increasing or getting rid of home insurance, the tax on home insurance, which all Manitobans are going to benefit from.

And, yes, if there—if people, through the other tax measures are able to use those services, then they get the supports and they get the tax cuts as well.

Mr. Wasyliw: So hearing from the minister, he hasn't done any analysis and cannot tell the Legislature which tax brackets are going to what, you know, proportionately benefit from these two tax reductions.

Do I have that correct? And if I don't, which tax brackets and what proportion will they receive a benefit from these breaks?

Mr. Fielding: Well, I identified this to the member. If you want, I can repeat it. I seem to be repeating it four or five times here, but I'll repeat this. Our tax

measures, our 2020 tax commitment, that's in historic contrast to what the NDP did where they jacked up taxes without telling Manitobans before the election.

We provided tax relief for a PST cut, which all Manitobans are going to get the benefit of. We provided tax relief on basic personal exemption that all Manitobans are going to benefit from. In fact, a lot of low-income individuals don't have to pay taxes at all for it.

There's a number of other different tax measures, whether it be in home insurance, whether it be for businesses that have to pay the same sort of home insurance, they're all going to benefit from these things. There's other things in personal services that all Manitobans are going to benefit from. And there's also things like probate fees and things like in terms of you're—when you're preparing your wills and other things where people will benefit.

So my point is the average person in Manitoba, family of four, will save \$2,020 over that four-year period. We think that's important for Manitobans. I know the NDP want to talk about jacking up taxes and running huge deficits and depleting the rainy day fund again. That's their government. That's not our government.

Mr. Wasyliw: Your government announced earlier \$120 million for the Manitoba gap program. I'm wondering if you can give an update to the House of how much has actually been spent and how many companies have applied for it.

* (16:30)

Mr. Fielding: We committed over \$120 million to support Manitobans. We think this is beneficial. We think that the fact that the Parliamentary Budget Office has suggested that our program, our supports for people—people as well as businesses on COVID—is one of the highest in the country and that's bearing fruit with some of our stats.

To talk about the gap program, we allocated \$120 million. The member may realize that we are halfway throughout the year. We anticipate using that \$120 million. We know we're in a second wave.

To answer specifically the question, there has been close to 10,000 businesses that have been supported with close to 55–\$56 million allocated to businesses halfway throughout the year.

Mr. Wasyliw: Now, my understanding is that \$18 million was set aside for child care.

I'm wondering if you can give an update about how much has actually been spent and how many people have applied for that funding.

Mr. Fielding: Well, child care is an important aspect, especially when people are going back to work. We made the appropriate allocations and that was obviously done through things like the Chamber of Commerce where they're able to flow the money.

We've also tried to take more of a balanced approach than the NDP in allowing people to have a variety of sources in terms of child care: things like home-based child care, things like facility-base child care. We think that the pandemic, you know, has really enabled us to get more of a balanced approach to child care, unlike the NDP that took a one-size-fits-all, an ideological approach to child care.

We've created thousands of spaces for child care in the centre. We've had agreements with the federal government that have flown millions of dollars to child care and we think that's a very good step in the right direction.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw)—[interjection]—Order. Order.

Mr. Wasyliw: There was \$400 million set aside for a provincial protection plan.

I'm wondering if you can give us an update about how much has been spent and how much is outstanding?

Mr. Fielding: Well, we are halfway throughout the year so I can't tell you exactly what we're going to spend. I know that we've got a good amount of money. In fact, the Parliamentary Budget Office has suggested that Manitoba is second or third in the country in terms of our supports for COVID.

We're going into—and this isn't a, you know, kind of a partisan thing back and forth. We're clearly are into a second wave. We might need a lot of supports. That's there. And in terms of the budget appropriation, the billion dollars—and that's why it's so important that all members vote on this, that if we don't get this passed, the money will run out for those particular categories—the billion dollars, by November.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): To be clear, I wanted to ask the Finance Minister. He said many, many times over that the Parliamentary Budget Office is quoting those things but they—that—I understand that in the government's own documents, that the Parliamentary Budget Office admits this is an estimate.

Why are we relying on an estimate from the Parliamentary Budget Office instead of the government's own figures?

Mr. Fielding: Because the Parliamentary Budget Office is a third-party independent that can tell you—because we hear from opposition members that somehow we're not spending all the money. When the Parliamentary Budget Office evaluates what we've committed to it, they're suggesting that we're second or third.

So I can speak all day long. The members may or may not choose to believe that but when you have a credible source like the Parliamentary Budget Office that suggests the Manitoba supports are second or third in the country or if you have things like Stats Canada comes out that says our rebound from the closures, the lockdowns, are the best in the country, these are independent third-party sources that are non-questionable and so that's why we're referring this. It's a third party credible source.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for St. Boniface.

Sorry, your mic's not on. I couldn't hear.

Mr. Lamont: Check, check, one, test, one, two.

Yes, that—we had a—in April when we had a vote on these budget measures, the—at the same time that we were voting for a billion dollars—billion-dollar appropriation and \$5 billion in borrowing, we discovered later that ministers were sending out messages across the province demanding cuts of 10, 20 to 30 per cent.

So I just wanted to make sure that that isn't happening today, is it, that we're actually, that this is money that we're planning on spending, that the government isn't actually simultaneously sending out missives across the province demanding cuts?

Mr. Fielding: Well, it's not a right statement to say somehow that we've cut these expenditures. In fact, we had our Public Accounts that just came out recently that showed we're investing more than \$1.3 billion each and every year on things like health, education and social services.

I know in this House, earlier on, the NDP talked about some sort of health-care cuts. Well, if you look at a year-over-year basis, we're going to be investing more than \$303 million. I know one of the members over here somehow seems to think that his numbers are better than the Public Accounts or the Auditor General in relates to it.

But if somehow you want to challenge the fact that we spent over \$303 million more in health care and we're spending close to \$648 million more in health care each and every year than the NDP, I guess you can put that forward.

But I'm going to believe places like the Public Accounts documents, where we have to file this, and we have—obviously, the Auditor General has supported this, so there's two qualifications that have nothing to do with that particular expending authority.

And so you can believe the Public Accounts or you can believe the member from Concordia.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for St. Boniface. *[interjection]*

Order.

Mr. Lamont: Yes, I'd like to ask the Finance Minister: how much higher is our debt going to be, and how much longer is the deficit going to take to reduce to a balanced budget? Because of this government's choice to keep cutting revenues.

Mr. Fielding: Well, first of all, I'm not sure what the member is talking about, cutting revenues. Number 1, we get our corporate income taxes based on an estimate; there's a tax sharing agreement with Ottawa that gives us our estimates in terms of what expenditures.

That's also based on nine forecasting agencies and the bond-rating agencies, so the fact that the latest is telling us that we could lose upwards to \$1.5 million in revenues, that's—that is a figure that's put out by some credible organizations and agencies.

In the Throne Speech, we identified the fact that we anticipate getting back into balance over an eight-year period, we think that's realistic and also the fact that we committed to that in the last election campaign and finished not two years earlier—actually, four years earlier—than anticipated, and the fact that we beat our projections on a yearly basis tells me that we can do it.

We make commitments, and we follow thorough with our commitments, and we do that while cutting taxes for Manitobans.

Mr. Lamont: This is my last question. And I would just like to say, I'm surprised that they—that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) doesn't realize that taxes generate revenue, but for the—I just, how much

higher is the deficit going to be this year than it ever was under the NDP?

Mr. Fielding: Well, No. 1, our revenue source is made up of a whole number of things: there's income tax, there's corporate taxes, there's PST, there's own-source revenues, there's money from things like greater business enterprises through the Crown corporations.

We're obviously losing in a variety of these areas. Our commitment is to get ourselves back into balance, so I don't know what the question beyond that is, but our commitment is to do that. We actually don't think that the revenue is the government's. We think it's actually the revenue of citizens of Manitoba, and that's why we've made it a priority to give more than \$700 million to the table—to the kitchen tables of Manitobans, because we think they've been taxed to the max by people like the NDP and also by the federal Liberals.

Mr. Chairperson: Any other further questions? If there's no other further questions, we'll go on to clause-by-clause again.

Clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes the business before the committee.

The committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

* (16:40)

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has been—considered Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), and reports that's—the same without amendments.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), that the report be—the committee be received.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk), seconded by the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli, that Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Is it—pardon me; I will start over. I spoke in error.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk), seconded by the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli, that the report of the Committee of the Whole be received. Agreed? *[Agreed]*

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 39—The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 39, The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On House business, is—I'm would—leave request.

Is there leave of the House to consider today, without notice, a motion on the Notice Paper, to reinstate Bill 43 from the last session?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to consider today, without notice, a motion on the Notice Paper to reinstate Bill 43 from the last session? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

GOVERNMENT MOTION

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank members of the House.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture, that notwithstanding any rule or practice of this House, Bill 43, The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act be reinstated during the Third Session of the 42nd Legislature at the stage it was at when the Second Session of the 42nd Legislature was prorogued.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Further, is there leave of the House to consider today the remaining stages of the reinstated Bill 43, including the presentation of the committee

report, concurrence and third reading and to not see the clock until the bill has received royal assent?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to consider today the remaining stages of the reinstated Bill 43, including the presentation of the committee report, concurrence and third reading and royal assent and not see the clock until it is completed? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

I would like to now recognize the honourable member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Human Resources Second Report

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): I wish to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

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

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

Meetings

Your Committee met on June 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 43) – The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de la fonction publique**

Committee Membership

- Ms. FONTAINE
- Ms. GORDON
- Hon. Mr. HELWER
- Mr. LINDSAY
- Mr. SMOOK
- Hon. Ms. SQUIRES

Your Committee elected Mr. SMOOK as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Ms. GORDON as the Vice-Chairperson.

As agreed to by the House on May 27, 2020, Rule 83(2) was waived for the June 16, 2020 meeting, reducing the membership to six Members (4 Government and 2 Official Opposition).

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- Ms. LAMOUREUX

Written Submissions

- Your Committee agreed to include in Hansard the following two written submissions on **Bill (No. 43) – The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de la fonction publique**

Dennis Ellement, *Ellement Consulting Group*
Kim Toews, *Private citizen*

Public Presentations

- Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 43) – The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de la fonction publique**

Vince Rody, *Private citizen*
Michelle Gawronsky, *President, Manitoba Government and General Employees Union*
Jody Gillis, *The Superannuation and Insurance Liaison Committee*

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 43) – The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de la fonction publique**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, without amendment.

Mr. Smook: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(Continued)

Bill 43–The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education): I move, seconded by the Minister of Central Services (Mr. Helwer), that Bill 43, The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Central Services): I'm pleased that we're at this stage of this bill. It's been a long process, and listening to people in committee was very illuminating. I want to assure the 55,000 members, I believe, of the civil service 'annuation' act that it is very sound and that we are following the advice of the actuaries in making sure that their pension will be there for many years to come.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further members speaking on debate? Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 43, The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act.

All those in—oh. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could we now prepare for royal assent on supplementary appropriation and Bill 43?

* (16:50)

Madam Speaker: The House will now prepare for royal assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Ray Gislason): Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Her Honour Janice C. Filmon, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

Madam Speaker: Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks Your Honour to accept the following bill:

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Monique Grenier):

Bill 39 – The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response); Loi de 2020 portant affectation supplémentaire de crédits (réponse à la COVID-19).

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): In Her Majesty's name, the Lieutenant Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to this bill.

Madam Speaker: Your Honour, at this sitting, the Legislative Assembly has passed a certain bill that I ask Your Honour to give assent to.

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Monique Grenier):

Bill 43 – The Civil Service Superannuation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la loi sur la pension de la fonction publique.

Clerk: In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour assents to this bill.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader—oh, pardon me.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, could you canvass the House to see if it is the will of members to call it 5 p.m.?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call it 5 p.m. [Agreed]

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

CONTENTS

Matter of Privilege		Bill 6–The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act	
Fontaine	139	Cullen	143
Goertzen	140		
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Bill 9–The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act	
Bill 14–The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020		Cullen	143
Goertzen	140	Bill 21–The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) and Related Amendments Act	
Bill 32–The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act (Government Advertising)		Cullen	144
Goertzen	141	Bill 24–The Legal Profession Amendment Act	
Bill 10–The Regional Health Authorities Amendment Act (Health System Governance and Accountability)		Cullen	144
Friesen	141	Bill 26–The Human Rights Code Amendment Act	
Bill 12–The Crown Land Dispositions Act (Various Acts Amended)		Cullen	144
Helwer	141	Bill 27–The Administrative Tribunal Jurisdiction Act	
Bill 36–The Public Health Amendment Act (Food Safety and Other Amendments)		Cullen	144
Pedersen	141	Bill 31–The Horse Racing Regulatory Modernization Act (Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act and Pari-Mutuel Levy Act Amended)	
Bill 7–The Planning Amendment Act		Cullen	144
Squires	142	Bill 15–The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Claim Dispute Tribunal)	
Bill 19–The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2)		Wharton	145
Squires	142	Bill 8–The Pension Benefits Amendment Act	
Bill 25–The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act		Fielding	145
Squires	142	Bill 11–The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act	
Bill 29–The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020		Fielding	145
Squires	142	Bill 16–The Labour Relations Amendment Act	
Bill 38–The Building and Electrical Permitting Improvement Act (Various Acts Amended and Permit Dispute Resolution Act Enacted)		Fielding	145
Squires	143	Bill 18–The Workers Compensation Amendment Act	
Bill 5–The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Cannabis Social Responsibility Fee)		Fielding	146
Cullen	143	Bill 22–The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act	
		Fielding	146

Bill 30–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act		Oral Questions	
Fielding	146	COVID-19 Pandemic	
Bill 35–The Public Utilities Ratepayer Protection and Regulatory Reform Act (Various Acts Amended)		Kinew	151
Fielding	146	Pallister	151
Bill 33–The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act		COVID-19 Spread Prevention	
Eichler	147	Kinew	152
Bill 34–The University College of the North Amendment Act		Pallister	152
Eichler	147	COVID-19 Testing	
Bill 13–The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Act		Kinew	152
Schuler	147	Pallister	152
Bill 17–The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act		Manitoba Hydro Telecom	
Schuler	147	Kinew	153
Bill 20–The Vehicle Technology Testing Act (Various Acts Amended)		Pallister	153
Schuler	148	Manitoba Hydro-Bell MTS Contract	
Bill 23–The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Control of Traffic by Flag Persons)		Sala	154
Schuler	148	Pallister	154
Bill 28–The Water Resources Administration Amendment Act		Parkview Place Personal-Care Home	
Schuler	148	Asagwara	156
Bill 200–The Scrap Metal Sales Accountability Act		Friesen	156
Lamont	149	Drinking Water Monitoring	
Tabling of Reports		Naylor	157
Driedger	149	Guillemard	157
Members' Statements		Concordia Hospital	
Spruce Products Sawmill Fire Response		Sandhu	158
Wowchuk	149	Friesen	158
Bishop Grandin Greenway		Economic Recovery	
Moses	149	Lamont	159
Collège Béliveau Barracudas		Pallister	159
Gordon	150	Flu Shot Availability	
North End Women's Centre		Lamont	159
B. Smith	150	Pallister	159
Shola Agboola		Personal-Care Homes	
A. Smith	151	Gerrard	160
		Friesen	160
		Speaker's Ruling	
		Driedger	160
		Petitions	
		Dauphin Correctional Centre	
		Maloway	161

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Committee of Supply

Supplementary Supply

Wasyliw	162
Fielding	162
Gerrard	163

Committee Report

Piwniuk	164
---------	-----

Concurrence Motion

Goertzen	164
----------	-----

Supplementary Supply Motion

Fielding	164
----------	-----

Introduction of Bills

Bill 39–The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)	
Fielding	164

Second Readings

Bill 39–The Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)	
Fielding	164

Questions

Wasyliw	165
Fielding	165
Gerrard	166

Committee of the Whole

Bill 39–The Supplementary Appropriation Act,
2020 (COVID-19 Response)

Wasyliw	169
Fielding	169
Lamont	173

Committee Report

Piwniuk	174
---------	-----

Concurrence and Third Readings

Bill 39–The Supplementary Appropriation Act,
2020 (COVID-19 Response)

Fielding	175
----------	-----

Government Motion

Goertzen	175
----------	-----

Committee Reports

Standing Committee on Human Resources
Second Report

Smook	175
-------	-----

Concurrence and Third Readings

(Continued)

Bill 43–The Civil Service Superannuation
Amendment Act

Goertzen	176
Helwer	176

Royal Assent

Bill 39 – The Supplementary Appropriation Act,
2020 (COVID-19 Response)

	176
--	-----

Bill 43 – The Civil Service Superannuation
Amendment Act

	177
--	-----

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

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