

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

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

**Vol. LXX No. 45 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

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

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

Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

## Bill 220—The Environmental Rights Act

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 220, The Environmental Rights Act, be now read a first time.

**Madam Speaker:** I would indicate that the member will have to redo that, as the seconder was not in their seat at the time, so.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I move, seconded by the honourable MLA for St. Boniface, that Bill 220, The Environmental Rights Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Altemeyer:** It gives me great pleasure today to introduce Bill 220, The Environmental Rights Act, to the House. There are, very briefly, four main provisions to this legislation, all of which were inspired by Dr. David Suzuki and his national Blue Dot campaign, encouraging governments across the country to take this type of action.

The four main components of the bill are as follows: that government must consider the environmental impacts when it makes decisions, that information has to be provided to the public and that the public will have access to the courts in a couple of different ways to enforce decisions that government should make and that any employee raising an issue will be protected with a whistle-blower-like provision.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Committee reports?

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I wish to table the 2015-2016 adult-Manitoba Adult Literacy-Literacy Strategy and Adult Learning Centres, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Ministerial statements?

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## Rick Plaisier

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Arthur-Virden):** Madam Speaker, it is a great sadness and heavy hearts that we say farewell to a great Manitoban, Mr. Rick Plaisier. Rick leaves behind his wife, Marie, and his three sons, Kent, Shawn and Todd, and their families, including many grandchildren.

Rick spent most of his teaching career in the town of Virden and was principal of the Virden Junior High school.

Rick was committed to public service. He was incredibly dedicated to the Lions service club, community of Oak Lake and many local boards. Over the years, Rick was past councillor of the Town of Virden. At the time of his passing he was the reeve of the RM of Sifton. As the reeve, he sat on many committees, including the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and Souris watershed committee.

Rick had a 'pash' for politics; he knew politics inside and out. He was very connected provincially. Rick was a role model not only to myself but to many others that crossed paths in different political circles.

Rick served on my—as my campaign manager from the start of my political journey until his passing. I really enjoyed the days that we spent together travelling on the roads of Arthur-Virden's constituency. Even after I became the MLA for Arthur-Virden, Rick's wealth of knowledge and his ability to—the sounding board never failed to shed light or offer a different perspective on any issue. Rick's wisdom was always appreciated.

Rick is not only going to be missed in the Virden and Oak Lake areas, he is going to be missed throughout the province of Manitoba. With his large network, he was well known in every part of this province.

Success is not what is accomplished in your life; it's about what you inspire others to do. Rick's legacy will live on forever in his memories and experiences that he has left with many individuals, especially his family—his quest for improvement to his community.

Madam Speaker, Rick's widow Marie, family members and friends are here today in the public gallery. Let us stand and applaud Rick for his contribution to public service in the province of Manitoba.

Rick, my friend, you are going to be greatly missed.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Arthur-Virden.

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Madam Speaker, I wish to leave—give leave to have the names of guests here today to be included in Hansard.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave to include the names of the guests in Hansard? [Agreed]

*Family and friends of Rick Plaisier: Kathy Batho, Keith McEwan, Susan McEwan, Breanna Plaisier, Brendan Plaisier, Haylee Plaisier, Marie Plaisier, Mya Plaisier, Reed Plaisier, Shalen Plaisier, Todd Plaisier, Tristan Plaisier, Sandra Wallace*

#### **Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum**

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** Good afternoon. During the March constituency week, I was honoured and privileged to attend the 2017 anti-corruption and integrity forum on behalf of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, known as the CPA.

Fitting into the overall design of being in the public interest, this forum contained a number of presentations related to the public interest, and this forum contained a number of presentations that must be taken when looking at integrity into higher standards. It was of great interest to hear the opening remarks from the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic and the vice-president of Nigeria. While both—corruption exists in these countries; both spoke of measures taking place to mitigate the

opportunities while recognizing the need for further action.

The seriousness of this issue of corruption and integrity in the world closed out the opening remarks with a delivery of a two-page report to the secretary-general of the organization of economic co-operation and development who hosted the forum.

Madam Speaker, this forum raised some very real concerns with the huge cost of corruption by revealing the existence of inequality, exclusion and disillusionment. With approximately 1,300 people in attendance, there was a strong indication that there was a great interest in those countries with past experiences of corruption and loss of integrity.

Here in Canada, Madam Speaker, we are very fortunate to lead the world in legislation to mitigate corruption and increase integrity in both the public and private sectors. We must, however, always remain aware of the changes in our world and have the courage to stand up and make changes ourselves to ensure that integrity remains high among all of us.

In closing, Madam Speaker, the information gathered at the forum, whether through the sessional speakers or from best practices from my 'sellow'—fellow PCPA delegates, the Honourable Alando Terrelonge from Jamaica and the Honourable Sandra Nelson from Australia, it was all extremely valuable, and I want to thank the Clerk's office and the selection committee of the CPA for this great opportunity.

Thank you.

\* (13:40)

#### **ArtsJunktion**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Last night, during National Volunteer Week, individual volunteers, groups and community organizations were recognized and honoured at the 34th Annual Volunteer Awards. Those who won the awards were nominated based on their exceptional contributions to improve our communities and our province.

ArtsJunktion Manitoba, a community-based organization that collects used materials and redistributes them to artists, teachers and crafters, was one of the 30 deserving recipients this year. Located in my constituency, ArtsJunktion is dedicated to serving artists in the city and promoting environmental sustainability. They've not only given

budding artists a place to grow, but they've also kept hundreds of pounds of material out of landfills.

Every day, Manitobans of all ages are donating their time, skills and expertise, supporting amazing organizations and causes throughout the province. It's clear that Manitoba's reputation for generosity extends far beyond charitable donations. I'm proud to live in a province that consistently has one of the highest volunteerism rates in the country.

Congratulations to ArtsJunktion and to all nominees and recipients of last night's awards. Your dedication and hard work prove how easy it is to donate your time while doing something you love. Thank you for making Manitoba one of the best places in the world to live and raise a family.

Thank you.

#### **French Legion of Honour Medal Recipients**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** The Nazis were pushed out of Europe over 70 years ago, but the bravery of Canadians who fought on the continent during the Second World War hasn't been forgotten.

Three veterans from my constituency of Riding Mountain were recently awarded the French Legion of Honour medal, the highest national award that can be bestowed upon anyone by the government of France. Originally created by Napoleon Bonaparte as recognition of outstanding achievement made in service to the French Republic in either a civilian or military capacity, the five-armed cross and green wreath depicted on the medal has been bestowed to living Canadian veterans for the past five years in recognition of their efforts to help liberate France during the Second World War.

The Honorary Consul for France, Mr. Francis *[phonetic]* Burnichon, presented the medals to Mr. Robert Henderson, age 95, of Shoal Lake; Mr. Alex Abel, age 93, of Minnedosa; and Mr. Fred Oberg, age 100, also of Minnedosa, at events held in front of friends and family on Monday, March 13, 2017, in their respective communities. These three Canadian soldiers put their lives on the line in the fight to liberate France and brought honour back not only to Canada, but to their families and their Manitoba communities.

I am honoured today to stand before you and say how proud I am to have such constituents in my riding, and I would like to thank them for their contribution to ensure our freedom and congratulate

them for being recognized with such a prestigious award.

#### **Manitoba's Agriculture Sector**

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, one of the great things about my job is that I get to travel back and forth between Dauphin and Winnipeg quite often, and I'm constantly reminded about Manitoba's beauty and the cycles of rural life.

The trees are budding, things are drying up, the grass is greening, and farmers are getting equipment ready to tangle with Mother Nature for another year. A lot of cattle producers have just come off their calving season and it's great to see the cows and calves out enjoying the warm spring days.

Spring is a time of hope and optimism throughout the province, but especially so for our agricultural sector. Manitoba agriculture is a very diverse industry that contributes immeasurably to the quality of life enjoyed by most. Safe, affordable food is a pillar of our economy, and our producers proudly play a vital role in responsibly producing food.

Science and agriculture have made tremendous progress in meeting demands, and together, they have and will continue to improve on many sustainability challenges associated with the progresses and demands made by a changing and modern society.

It's important, Madam Speaker, that we understand Manitoba's food production systems and to show support and appreciation for its diversity and adaptability in not only serving Manitoba's needs, but the needs around the world.

Whether its grains, oilseeds, legumes, livestock, forages or vegetables, whether its intensive agriculture or not, no one system can meet the demand, and Manitoba's diverse producers and production systems coexist to do a great job of meeting the needs in a responsible way.

I want to thank our producers for doing what they do and wish them all a great and safe growing season.

Thank you.

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Health-Care Budget Government Plan**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Premier has caused chaos and confusion in our health system.

After promising to protect the jobs of our health workers, the Premier now says he doesn't know who will lose their job. The Premier promised to protect our health workers; now he is using heavy-handed legislation to impose a wage freeze, rather than respecting the right of workers to negotiate their contracts. The Premier promised he would protect our front-line services, but now is only focused on the bottom line.

The Premier won't listen to us, but will he listen to the thousands of patients, doctors and nurses who are telling the Premier to change course?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague, and she is wrong, though, in one aspect of what she asserts. She says that we're not listening, and that's wrong, because we are listening and we're hearing from the members opposite that we should fight to preserve the status quo, and the status quo is not good enough. The status quo has us ranked last among all Canadian provinces in giving Manitobans access to services. It has our people waiting longer in emergency rooms than any other Canadians are forced to wait.

The status quo is not good enough, Madam Speaker, so although we listened to the members opposite, we are also listening to the front-line workers throughout our health-care system who are telling us that it can be made to work far, far better.

**Ms. Marcelino:** If the Premier were at the steps today, he would hear the chant, care, not cuts, from the front-line workers.

Madam Speaker, patients, workers, nurses and doctors have all stood up to tell this government that it needs to focus on patient care, not just on the bottom line. Nurses and workers were just on the steps of the Legislature to tell this government that this Premier and this government are on the wrong track after causing chaos in their hospitals.

The Premier would have us believe he can improve patient care by cutting \$2 million from primary health care. If his real focus was on patient care, he would listen to front-line staff and he wouldn't cut \$2 million from primary health care.

Will the Premier do the right thing and cancel his plans and reconsider his proposals? Or is he so stubborn that he will only focus on the bottom line, no matter what anyone says?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, Madam Speaker, again, I would encourage the member not to be too strong in condemning efforts to make a system that is broken work better because she is putting herself and her party in a dangerous situation of advocating for the status quo.

And, Madam Speaker, the system is not serving the people of Manitoba at all well. Certainly that is what front-line workers have told us, again and again and again. Nurses have told us stories about patients suffering and waiting excessively long times for services. They have told us about friends and family members who have done the same. And they have told us that they want us to continue to trim at the top of the organization so we can fortify the front line. And that is exactly what we're focused on doing, in spite of the monumental inherited challenges that we face, which are undeniable.

Madam Speaker, the fiscal challenges are enormous, but we will do our best to face this challenge, where the previous government walked away.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** The Premier is rushing massive disruption to our health-care system because he is focused only on the bottom line. If this whole exercise were truly about patient care, he would cancel his plans and actually talk to the people who are delivering front-line care.

\* (13:50)

But he won't do that, Madam Speaker. He is rushing this hasty plan because he demands cuts right away. He is causing chaos in the health system because he demands cuts today and he's not listening to patients, workers, nurses and doctors who are telling this government to change course.

Why is the Premier only focused on the bottom line?

**Mr. Pallister:** What we are focused on is improving front-line services, Madam Speaker. We're focused on the front line.

What the members opposite were focused on, only they can answer, Madam Speaker. But what they did as a consequence of their lack of progress in reducing wait times was make wait times grow. And what they did as a consequence of their unwillingness or inability to make improvements to

the system of delivery of health care was create real hardship for real people.

Here's a letter from a person who should know, a registered nurse, who says: I want to communicate my support for consolidation of health-care services in order to promote efficiencies. I'm a registered nurse. I see waste in our system. It frustrates me. Manitobans need strong efficient health care in order to promote prosperity and productivity. When we become complacent in existing structures, we turn a blind eye to waste and poor outcomes.

That's exactly what the previous government did, Madam Speaker, turned a blind eye and created a system that hurt Manitobans. We'll heal that system.

### **Health-Care Budget Impact on Patient Care**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, hundreds of people gathered on the steps of this Legislature today to protest this government's short-sighted cuts to our health-care system, including a reckless plan to shut down three emergency rooms. Manitoba nurses and the families and the workers who support them led the rally, calling on the minister to stand up for front-line workers and the services they deliver.

This government claims they are talking to Manitobans, and yet they didn't even have the decency to show up on the front steps and come talk directly to those workers who are providing services.

Will the minister stop ignoring the families, the front-line workers who are hurt by his cuts and invest in our health-care system?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** First of all, we certainly appreciate and respect the right of all Manitobans to bring their views either to the Legislature or other places when they want their views heard. That is an important part of our democratic system.

The plan that the member classifies as reckless was actually a plan that was commissioned by his former leader, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger). It included a steering committee that involved many different people, including Sandi Mowat, the president of Manitoba nurses association.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Concordia, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Let us be clear here in this House today, Madam Speaker. It is this minister's and this Premier's (Mr. Pallister) decision alone to make these reckless cuts and these closures which will affect patient care, and they're doing it only because they don't care about patient care, only about the bottom line.

This was a cutthroat decision meant to meet only the Premier's impossible targets, and health-care experts are warning them that harm—the harm that this will impose on Manitoba's health care.

The head of the Manitoba Nurses Union warns that these cuts, combined with wage freezes, will hurt patient care. The Manitoba doctors association warns the same.

Why isn't the minister listening to doctors and nurses?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, the member for Concordia alleges that the former leader of the NDP, the member for St. Boniface, conspired to have a report, a commission, when they were in government to meet the targets of a future government that they wouldn't have known about. It seems a little ludicrous to allege such a thing. He indicates that there is concern. We certainly are willing—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order

**Mr. Goertzen:** —to listen to individuals who have concerns, Madam Speaker. I will recognize, though, that on that steering committee for the Peachey report was Sandi Mowat, president of the Manitoba Nurses Union, and Robert Cram, chief executive officer of Doctors Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, this minister continues to pick and choose pieces of the report that fit his narrative line only. As if these cuts across the board to WRHA and to wage—and the wage freezes aren't enough, the Health Minister is cutting a program to increase doctor retention in rural Manitoba. He brought a budget which failed to build any new PCHs, ignored home care and cut prevention programs. He cut the WRHA budget by millions; he opened the door to private care.

Families in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba are losing access to their front-line health care, yet the Health Minister calls it commitment to patient care. Well, now he's cutting millions from primary health care. The tens—sorry—the hundreds of people out on the steps would disagree. The only commitment this minister has is to the bottom line.

Why won't he put families first?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, the Peachey report which was commissioned by the former NDP government specifically had a mandate to be focused on patient care. The member asked that question in Estimates yesterday. I read him the mandate that was the focus of the Peachey report commissioned by the former leader, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger).

What I learned yesterday in Estimates, which I didn't know before until the member asked the question, is that was actually an untendered contract. The NDP specifically—specifically—selected Dr. Peachey because they thought he was the best person for the job. They hand-picked him for the report.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

#### **Rural and Northern Health Care Cut to Doctor Retention Program**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** The Health Minister closed three ERs in Winnipeg. Now he's dealt a blow to rural and northern health care. By cutting a program which encouraged doctors to work long term in isolated communities, this government has made it that much harder for families to access health care. He's announced the cut with no—with a—no ready program to replace it.

Why is the minister pulling doctors out of rural Manitoba without a plan to put them back in?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Madam Speaker, under the former government, under the NDP 19 emergency rooms closed in rural Manitoba. They maybe think that the program was working to attract doctors to ERs in rural Manitoba, but 19 ERs closed in rural communities under the former government's watch.

Now, maybe they consider that a record of success in terms of attracting doctors to work in rural

Manitoba. Clearly, the program wasn't working when they closed 19 ERs.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** The minister says rural doctors with families aren't concerned about money. This government has increased tuition fees for students, cut their tax credits and now they've cut grants to medical students.

These attacks mean graduates will have more debt and will need good jobs to pay that debt off. This government is attacking affordability for families.

So who is the minister kidding?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, as indicated in my previous answer, under the former government 19 emergency rooms closed over the last 16 years. Some of them have been closed for more than 10 years under the Selinger government where members opposite, who sit today, also have sat in that government. They didn't say anything about doctor recruitment at that time.

We know that we need to have a provincial plan to recruit doctors and to retain them. Money wasn't their chief concern in the majority of cases when it came to choosing a community to work in and the proof of that is that 19 emergency rooms closed under the Selinger government.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** The minister has pulled emergency doctors out of three Winnipeg hospitals without any investments to build capacity and now he's pulling doctors out of rural Manitoba without a plan to put more in.

This minister's cut—the minister's cut-first-plan-later approach is hurting our families.

Will he stop the cuts to rural doctors until he has a replacement program in place?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, there are, in fact, investments happening in emergency rooms in Winnipeg. The Grace Hospital is currently under construction, will be completed, we hope, next year, and that is certainly part of the plan.

\* (14:00)



But we know that money isn't the answer. The former government poured \$100 million into emergency rooms and wait lines—wait times in our emergencies just got worse. They got worse and worse every year.

But I do want to inform the member, since she's asking the question particularly about the North, we know that the family medicine program for doctors was actually working, and that's why we've kept it, Madam Speaker.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to going on with oral questions, I just would like to indicate that the young students that were in the gallery today, there were about 80 of them, and they're grade 3-4 students from Charleswood.

### Job Creation Government Plan

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** Yesterday during the Estimates process, I asked the Education Minister what his government's plan is to keep talented graduates in this province after graduation. He replied: good jobs.

Yes, good jobs are important. Yes, it's good; it's good; it's good, very good. Good jobs are important.

Yet this Premier (Mr. Pallister) has laid off 900 Hydro workers. He's cut programs to retain doctors in Manitoba. He's cut government jobs. Today, he's got hundreds of nurses on the steps of this Legislature worried about their careers.

So, what is this Premier's plan for good jobs?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** It's certainly nice to finally have a job on the economy from the members of the opposition.

Madam Speaker, we look at business optimism in Manitoba. It is the highest in Manitoba across any province in the country. We're going to harness that optimism and create more jobs in Manitoba.

I've met with the business sector this morning. They're very excited about the future of Manitoba. And, in partnership, we're going to grow the economy here in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I am optimistic, but not necessarily about this government.

Yesterday, we just got news that Great-West Life is cutting 1,500 positions, including hundreds right here in Winnipeg. These are good jobs being lost because of automation. It's happening at the same time that Bell MTS is carrying out reductions and the new tariff on the softwood industry threatens our producers, who export 99 per cent of their softwood products to the US.

So, while all this downsizing is happening in the private sector, this Premier is still carrying through cuts in education that would help create jobs for the knowledge economy.

So, again, what is this Premier's plan to create good jobs in Manitoba? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** I do appreciate the question, especially on the technology side.

We have a thriving industry in technology and innovation here in Manitoba, and I was able to participate in their event just this last week. They're very excited about the future and they're going to create jobs that are going to allow Manitobans to stay in Manitoba.

And I will say, Madam Speaker, since the beginning of this year, Manitobans have created 6,000 new jobs.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** We hear the same lines, but no answer, no plan.

There is a bigger and bigger difference between what this Premier said he would do in the last election and what he is actually doing now that he's in government. No one would have voted for hospital closures. No one would have voted for 900 Hydro workers to be laid off. No one would have voted for the job losses that we've seen recently.

Nowhere is the gap more evident between what the Premier said he would do and what he's actually doing when it comes to a lack of a concrete jobs plan.

Will the Premier tell the House today, specifically: What measures will he take to generate good, high-paying jobs here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, I appreciate a question from the member on something his party has expertise on: knowing what people won't vote for, Madam Speaker. What people won't vote for is higher taxes. The members opposite ran on a promise in the previous election. The party the member now seeks the leadership of has a legacy of promising that they won't raise taxes and then following up by raising them to record levels, in fact, more so than any other government in Canada, right on the heels of promising they wouldn't raise them.

If the member wants a little lesson on how to uncreate jobs, he can take a look at economics 101 textbooks and they'll talk about the importance of leaving money in the hands of the people who work for it.

Discretionary incomes go down when you raise taxes, Madam Speaker. We just tabled two consecutive budgets with tax reductions. That's how you create real jobs: you let the people who work hard for the money have the chance to create those jobs for you.

#### **Funding for Arts Program Sturgeon Heights Music Program**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Yesterday, students at Sturgeon Heights Collegiate and their parents were saddened and disappointed to hear their music program will be dramatically reduced this fall. Popular music teacher will be let go, and three performing groups, the wind ensemble, jazz combo and a jazz band, will cease to exist. The explanation given to parents and students is that this cut comes as a result of the provincial government's choice to underfund the school division.

Will the Minister of Education step in to ensure that this popular and successful program will not be slashed?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** Our government is—provided a record amount of funding for the K-to-12 system in this province of Manitoba. We are great fans of good education in this province, and we will continue to supply and encourage school divisions to work together to provide the services required so that students in Manitoba can have the best education possible.

Under the previous government our educational results went from No. 5 in Canada to No. 11.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Minto, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Swan:** Madam Speaker, we believe the arts are an important part of quality education.

The music program at Sturgeon Heights has a proud history going back decades to Silver Heights, which merged with Sturgeon. I took band at Silver Heights and so did the Premier's predecessor as PC leader. The music program at Sturgeon Heights is well known to the member for St. James (Mr. Johnston) as a former trustee; the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Fielding), who is a graduate of Silver Heights; as well as the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), whose constituency includes the school. Even the Finance Minister used to make his living teaching music in a public school.

Is there anyone in the PC caucus prepared to speak up and defend the music program at Sturgeon Heights?

**Mr. Wishart:** I can assure the member that members of our caucus speak up in favour of education all the time.

And our government is focused on making sure that Manitoba students have access to a good-quality education province-wide in the—and we were certainly proud to be part of record funding for the— for K-to-12 system in Manitoba.

If the member opposite was so worried about our Manitoba education system, why did they underfund construction programs for the last 10 years?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The honourable member for Minto, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Swan:** This government can control the spin in this building, but they can't control the concern in our communities.

My time in the music program included many talented musicians who went on to pursue careers in music. There's Alice, who teaches music at Westwood; there's Jim, who went to Brandon University and a career as a jazz musician and professor; and there's George, whose keyboards you would hear if you ever listened to Lenny Kravitz.

And for everyone who went on to a career in music, there were many others who benefited from

the discipline, the teamwork and the development that comes from a successful music program.

How many more arts programs will be reduced or closed down due to this government's funding choices?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, many members of this House, including the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), who I know had an exciting musical career, and many others. I have, as well, enjoyed my time with music in school and since, and I agree with the member in his assertions about building skills and about the opportunities for not only a music education, but a liberal arts education. As an arts graduate myself as well, I think these are important aspects of how we give our young people the opportunity to grow and to learn.

And so—and I particularly appreciate his reference to teamwork and team building. It's something that I know can be put on display by a good government such as this one, and will.

\* (14:10)

As we support education and improving the quality of education, Madam Speaker, within the constraints of the real inherited deficit and debt situation that we've been given by the previous government, we'll do our utmost to make sure that the best quality education and the best possible results for our young people are achieved.

#### **Road-to-Recovery Plan Request to Release**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, this government ran on a campaign of openness and transparency, but they have failed to demonstrate this in their actions.

Manitobans deserve job security and assurance. They deserve to go home at the end of the day and have dinner with their families, not be consumed by the thought that this government could be pulling their job and their financial security out from under them.

Madam Speaker, my question is: At what point will this government start sharing the so-called road-to-recovery plan with us?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** It's great to respond to a question on the economy. Certainly, things are going nicely in our economy. We talk about 6,000 new jobs in Manitoba.

I know the Liberal caucus, they—at least one of the Liberal caucus agree with our Look North program and approach and, certainly, we've been out consulting with northern Manitobans in terms of an economic development strategy for Manitobans, and we're having very positive consultations with those northern communities and we look forward to bringing those results back to the Chamber.

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

#### **Emergency Room Closures Consultation with Front-Line Workers**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, history has shown that Conservatives like to change their minds and reverse their own decisions. We saw this during the Filmon era when ERs were slated to be closed down and the decision was reversed because people spoke out.

Madam Speaker, ERs are now, once again, being slated to close down, and once again—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** —Manitobans are speaking out.

My question for the Premier is: Will he take the time to consult with our front-line workers before proceeding?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, that's too good an opportunity to pass up, Madam Speaker.

Liberal flip-flops, where do I begin? Electoral reform—a—

**An Honourable Member:** CHT

**Mr. Pallister:** Yes, not raising the—what was that tax again?

**An Honourable Member:** Halving CHT.

**Mr. Pallister:** Right, and a lot of other things, Madam Speaker. We don't have enough time to get into all the Liberal flip-flops here. They even have three different positions on health-care reform in a three-person caucus.

Okay, Madam Speaker, we ran on a commitment, after a decade of debt, to focus on fixing the finances of the province and we are making progress in that direction.

We made a commitment, after a decade of decay in our social services, to repair them and we are focusing on doing exactly that.

And, Madam Speaker, after a decade of decline relative to other provinces, we made a commitment to work on repairing the rankings of this province in respect of our economic growth as well, and we're going to do each of these things with a focused plan that keeps our promises to Manitobans.

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

**Ms. Lamoureux:** You know, Madam Speaker, I wish that this Premier would take these concerns seriously.

Our Liberal caucus took the time to speak with some of the hundreds of front-line workers who rallied here at the Leg. today because they are concerned with this government's health-care decisions.

Will this government confirm today that our health-care workers do not need to worry about losing their jobs, about paying their bills and about putting food on their tables for their families due to the recent health-care announcements?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, Madam Speaker, I wonder, of the three Liberals who may have attended out front earlier on, which one spoke which position. Because the interim leader has said that she thinks the plan is great; the former leader said we should go, actually, half way; this member doesn't like it at all: three Liberals, three positions.

But the biggest position that that member should have been talking about on the front of the Legislature was the position of the federal government to reduce the CHT escalator from 6 per cent to 3 per cent. That is the greatest concern that health-care work should have. I hope she took a bullhorn and put that through it, Madam Speaker.

#### **Preliminary Hearing Reform Manitoba's Pilot Project**

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** Madam Speaker, after the Supreme Court's judgment on R v. Jordan, the crisis of delay in the criminal justice system has become even more acute. If 'sustantial' change doesn't happen we run the very real risk that criminals will go free. Many people are calling for reforms to procedures such as preliminary inquiries that can add tens of months of delay to criminal cases.

Can the Minister of Justice please update the Legislature on the benefits of what she proposed to her federal counterpart for a pilot project?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Manitoba's pilot—and I want to thank the member for that very, very good question—Manitoba's pilot project proposal to replace preliminary inquiries with an out-of-court discovery process has many benefits. It will mean shorter wait times for trial dates. It will reduce the number of inmates in jail waiting for their trials, numbers that skyrocketed under the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) when he was the minister of Justice. It will be less stressful for victims and their families.

In fact, Karen Wiebe, executive director of Manitoba Organization for Victim Assistance, said, and I quote: By eliminating preliminary hearings, one of those experiences of revictimization and trauma would also be eliminated.

Aboriginal justice commission said, and I quote: The initial purpose of the preliminary inquiry has virtually disappeared.

And the former Ontario ombudsman, André Marin, said—

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

#### **Health-Care Review Release of KPMG Report**

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** Yesterday I asked the Premier if he would have the courage to go out and talk with nurses that assembled on the steps of the Legislature, and he didn't show.

So I want to give him the benefit of the doubt. Certainly, he was—I'm assuming that he was looking for the KPMG value-for-money report that he took to Costa Rica with him.

So I want to ask him: Did he find that report? Did he bring it to the Legislature today?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, as we were trimming at the top of the very, very, very overfat top of the system of health care in our province, Madam Speaker, and protecting the front-line, nurses are writing me quite a bit.

Here's another nurse: We need to work together to promote efficiency. We need to eliminate hospital and health-care waste. We have a population with a great deal of health disparities, and if we fail to utilize all our health-care clinicians to maximum benefit, we risk having major health-care catastrophe in our future.

I'm not sure why, Madam Speaker, the members opposite choose to just foment fear in the nursing

profession and in others around the province, but they need to recognize that real nurses live to reduce fear. Real nurses have a career that is designed to give comfort and confidence to others. And real nurses aren't going to respond to the fomenting and the discontent and the amplification of fear tactics, because they see right through them and they see what they are: the desperate political acts of a desperate political rump.

**Madam Speaker:** I would ask the First Minister that if he's reading from a written document, is he able to provide copies of that document to the House. The rule is that if we are reading from private documents that they are to be tabled in the House.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. If the member's not reading from a particular letter, then nothing has to be tabled. The member is indicating he's reading from his notes.

Would the member indicate and clarify for the House, then?

**Mr. Pallister:** Yes, I just need clarification if I'm allowed to read from my notes or not.

**Madam Speaker:** The First Minister is indicating that he's reading from his actual notes.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, that was one of the oddest moments I've witnessed in my five years in the House, Madam Speaker. I can only assume that it was written in invisible ink over there because he's not sharing it with the people of Manitoba.

\* (14:20)

And, Madam Speaker, this is a Premier who looked Manitobans straight in the eye and he said, I'm going to release 97 per cent of the KPMG value-for-money audit.

Now, we know he took it to Costa Rica with it. We're not sure whether he read it. It might have been disappearing ink too.

But I want to ask him today: Will he table it in this House, and if he won't table it, Madam Speaker, what's he afraid of? What's he hiding?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Not the big bad wolf, Madam Speaker, nor the member for Fort Garry-Riverview

intimidates me or anyone else on this side of the House.

Let me read again, this time from a letter which I can table, if you like, Madam Speaker, since the members are curious. Perhaps they'd like to listen to a registered nurse of 40-years experience who shares with me that she travelled with her mother—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —who had fallen, who is 91 years old, Madam Speaker, who was in pain, who was bruised, and they waited and they waited and they waited. And nine hours later when it was time to do the required X-ray test to see if she'd broken her ribs she had to be restrained. She had to have a needle administered to sedate her. This was tremendously upsetting.

And this nurse goes on to say: I have been a nurse for almost 40 years. It drives me crazy to see this kind of backward approach to our emergency rooms. I get frustrated about listening to talks about studies with no positive actions. Thank you for acting.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Allum:** Madam Speaker, I'm having a hard time following the Premier here today. I'm asking about the value-for-money fiscal performance review that he looked Manitobans in the eye and he said 97 per cent of that report was going to be released publicly. We can barely get him to release a letter here in the House.

The people of Manitoba paid for this report: \$740,000 at a minimum, Madam Speaker.

Why doesn't he do the right thing? Why doesn't he come clean? Why doesn't he stop evading, stop dancing, stop skating, come clean, put that report on the table of this Legislature today?

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, we've shared more information with Manitobans and with the members opposite than any government in the history of Manitoba. We have put more information out. We have put summations—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** We have put summations of meetings. We have put minutes of meetings. We have put copies of presentations. We have given more information out, Madam Speaker, as a result of the

largest, most ambitious consultation prebudget in the history of the province of Manitoba. And the member knows that or should know that.

With a record of covering up that the members opposite had when they were in government it is pretty rich, Madam Speaker, to talk about openness and accountability. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

### **Health-Care Budget Impact on Front-Line Workers**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** We just heard from hundreds of nurses and other workers on the front steps of the Leg. who were telling this government that enough is enough. The Premier promised their jobs would be protected, now the Premier can't or won't say how many jobs will be cut. The Premier promised, as an old labour guy, that he would respect the work they do, and yet he used this deeply disrespectful, possibly unconstitutional legislation to attack their negotiation.

Will this Premier stop his campaign of disrespect?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, Madam Speaker, the member talks about enough and I wonder for him, what is enough. When is enough enough? Would 30 hours of waiting be enough in an ER for him? Would 40 hours of waiting be enough for him? We know that 10 hours wasn't enough for him because that was the average in some places in Manitoba and he decided that there should be no change. We should just continue on on the same path that we were going.

So maybe the member could answer, when would enough be enough for him before he would actually take action? 50 hours? 60 hours? How long should people wait, sir? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** The Premier says he's an old labour guy, but I don't know anyone who cares about workers who would attack workers while taking a 20 per cent pay raise for himself.

He won't say how many jobs will be cut. He's caused massive chaos in our hospitals. He plans to use legislation to get a wage freeze, but he'll sleep

fine on his plane to Costa Rica with his 20 per cent salary increase.

Workers and nurses were on the steps to tell this Premier that enough is enough.

When will this Premier stop his attack on working Manitobans?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, I don't mind the personal attacks. In fact, I welcome them from members opposite because they demonstrate a fear that they have for themselves that wasn't able to motivate them enough to act on behalf of the people of Manitoba. When they were in government they had the chance to take action to address the lengthy wait times that Manitobans endure. They failed to do so. Why did they do that, Madam Speaker? Because they, I guess, wanted to be on that side of the House lobbing personal attacks like that one and now they're going to be there for a long, long time.

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

### **PETITIONS**

#### **Concordia Hospital Emergency Room**

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government has announced the closures of three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in the city of Winnipeg, 'including'—including closing down the emergency room at Concordia Hospital.

(2) The closures come on the heels of closing of a quick—nearby QuickCare clinic, as well as cancelled plans for ACCESS centres and personal-care homes, such as Park Manor, that would have provided important services for families and seniors in the area.

(3) The closures have left families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg without any point of contact with front-line health-care services and will result in them having to travel 20 minutes or more to St. Boniface Hospital's emergency room for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will take place—sorry, these cuts will place a heavy burden on many seniors who live in northeast Winnipeg and visit the emergency room

frequently, especially those who are unable to drive or are low-income.

(5) The provincial government failed to consult with families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg regarding the closure of their emergency room or to consult with health officials and health-care workers at Concordia to discuss how this closure would impact patient care in advance of the announcement.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the decision to close Concordia Hospital's emergency room so that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality health-care services.

And this petition was signed by many Manitobans.

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

#### **Taxi Industry Regulation**

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system has—also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans,

many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including the withdrawal of Bill 30.

\* (14:30)

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

**Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislature, the background of which is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure that there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable rate—fare structure.

The taxi industry is—has regulations that have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some

areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this—the background to this petition is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing service like—services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

The taxi industry is regulated to ensure that both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

Provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction of this—to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

And this petition has been signed by many Manitobans.



### **Kelvin High School Gymnasium and Wellness Centre**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize how important it is to provide young people with quality learning spaces to succeed in school.

(2) Sport, recreation and the spaces to engage in them are critical to the health and welfare of all students.

(3) All forms of educational infrastructure, including gymnasiums and recreation centres in general, represent an incredible value-for-money investment, whereby the return is improved physical and psychological health and wellness.

(4) Kelvin High School is one of the largest high schools in the province, with over 1,200 students.

(5) Kelvin High School spent several years raising almost \$1.2 million towards the construction of a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

(6) Some Kelvin students currently have to pay to use outside facilities to obtain their mandatory physical education credit.

(7) The provincial government, in a regressive and short-sighted move, cancelled funding for the Kelvin gym and wellness centre for political reasons, despite the extensive community support, fund-raising and engagement.

(8) It is wasteful and disrespectful to the dedicated efforts of students, staff and the community in general to simply lay their goals aside without consultation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the lead—the need for excellent recreation facilities in all Manitoba schools, to reverse this regressive cut and to provide Kelvin High School with the funding necessary to complete a new gymnasium and wellness centre.

Madam Speaker, this petition was signed by Tyler Ward, Aidan Cory-Nokinstry, Darrienh, and many other Manitobans.

### **Taxi Industry Regulation**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

This petition was signed by many Manitobans.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The taxi industry in Winnipeg provides an important service to all Manitobans.

(2) The taxi industry is regulated to ensure there are both the provision of taxi service and a fair and affordable fare structure.

\* (14:40)

(3) Regulations have been put in place that has made Winnipeg a leader in protecting the safety of taxi drivers through the installation of shields and cameras.

(4) The regulated taxi system also has significant measures in place to protect passengers, including a stringent complaint system.

(5) The provincial government has moved to bring in legislation through Bill 30 that will transfer jurisdiction to the City of Winnipeg in order to bring in so-called ride-sharing services like Uber.

(6) There were no consultations with the taxi industry prior to the introduction of this bill.

(7) The introduction of this bill jeopardizes safety, taxi service, and also puts consumers at risk, as well as the livelihood of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings into the industry.

(8) The proposed legislation also puts the regulated framework at risk and could lead to issues such as what has been seen in other jurisdictions, including differential pricing, not providing service to some areas of the city, and significant risks in terms of taxi driver and passenger safety.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to deregulate the taxi industry, including withdrawing Bill 30.

Signed by many, many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Any further petitions? Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, this afternoon we would like to continue with Estimates.

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\* (14:50)

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

Does the honourable First Minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Just to welcome members of the committee to the committee and to say that we are excited to have advanced the budget that we have. We feel that we're addressing some of the major challenges that should be addressed, and we're excited to be on a road that we feel will lead us in the direction of recovery.

There are some challenges, no doubt, in the—a number of areas. Certainly, the previous administration knew that, as well, and was addressing in the—to the best of their abilities some of those challenges. We are cognizant of the dangers of continuing along the road to higher successive deficits.

We're also very cognizant of the dangers of moving in the direction of higher taxes. These things will—both of them, whether in the short, mid or long term will endanger our economic growth, will imperil our social services and will make it more difficult for us to, of course, leave a legacy of fairness to those who come after us. And so these are among the many aspects of the challenges that we must face and we are prepared to face as a new government.

I wanted to also offer on record our thanks for the service of the former member for Point Douglas who, since we had last met as a committee, had made the decision to leave politics, and thank him for his service to the people of Manitoba and wish him well on his new endeavours as he assumes responsibilities with the Business Council of Manitoba.

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

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

**An Honourable Member:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and everyone—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe I will learn next time.

And, also, the Premier, thank you, and to all my colleagues who are here. We will do away with an opening statement on our—on my part because we have many questions for the Premier. We'd like to proceed with the questions.

But one question before other questions: When will we receive, Premier, the Estimate books? Right now we're here without the Estimate books.

**Mr. Pallister:** When we get the staff people here, I'll be able to get a firm answer and share that with you, so that—I expect we're going to do that shortly, and then I'll be able to give you that information.

**An Honourable Member:** Okay.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the interim Leader of the Official Opposition for those remarks.

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

At this time, we invite the First Minister's staff, and staff from the official opposition, to join us at the table. Once they are seated, we will ask that the staff in attendance will be introduced.

Will the honourable First Minister please introduce your staff?

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Pallister:** First of all, this is Mr. Fred Meier, the acting Clerk of the Executive Council. And now Aurel Tess, who's the Provincial Comptroller; Richard Groen here, who is the assistant deputy minister of Finance, research division; Don Delisle—Don, who's stepped out—who was in that empty chair over there, who is the director of Capital Markets; Scott Wiebe, director of Treasury Operations; and James White.

And I—if I could, Mr. Chair,—just say I'm told that there isn't a separate, nor has there been, a

separate Estimates book for Executive Council, that it's just contained in the general—*[interjection]*

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Pallister:** —contained in the general Estimates document. So this was not the past practice—it isn't a change in practice. It's, apparently, the way it's been done.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I'd like to ask the interim Leader of the Official Opposition to introduce her staff if she has any here.

**An Honourable Member:** We have one here—oh, sorry.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The interim Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Okay, take two. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have a staff here, Mr. Mark Rosner, our caucus director and researcher.

Thank you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The floor is now open for questions.

**Ms. Marcelino:** We were unable to get out a response from the Premier during question period on this question. Maybe today we will obtain one. Will the Premier release the KPMG Fiscal Performance Review and the KPMG Health Sustainability and Innovation Review to the public in full in the House?

**Mr. Pallister:** No, that won't happen and it won't happen because there are a number of things that are not to be released because they are revealing of the company practices and methodologies that the KPMG used in the preparation of their report that are considered to be—I don't think I would be using the right word in saying copyrighted—but that are, if they were to get out, would be a very disadvantageous to the—their practice versus other competing companies. So, as far as the documents, I believe the members have received, and if they haven't we can—I can get them.

A great deal of information that has already gone out, summaries of the meetings that were held, copies of submissions that were received, I believe, also, even going so far as to getting emails with the, of course, the names, because we didn't—and we'll do this next time, I think, better—didn't get permission in advance from people who participated on the—through electronic means to release their names.

That's something I think we could do better next year or this fall, is to get—you know, I asked the member Flin Flon for feedback and he sent me an email. If I'm going to send it out with his name on it I should have asked him that at the start, and I think that's one thing we should do—we could do better in the fall so that it would give members of the opposition the opportunity to verify the person and they could actually talk to the people as well.

I think the more openness in these discussions that we can have, the better.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Fine. If the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is unable to release the full report, is the Premier able to share—we're not after the research methodology or how they came up with their conclusions. But we would like and the people of Manitoba would like to see the recommendations contained in that report. After all, the people of Manitoba paid for that report and the Premier promised 97 per cent of these reports would be made public.

So, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, we're asking the Premier if those recommendations and other pertinent information about the report's results of the questions asked or are the—what were in that report that would be of importance in making up policies or decisions by this government? We—the people of Manitoba, need to know that.

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate that. I thank the member, because up 'til now, the members have been asking for the reports, and I've been trying to explain that there's information in there that wouldn't be fair to the providers of the service, in my estimation, to release it.

But now she's asking something different, which is the actual—to leave out—she's saying it's okay to leave out the 'proprietary'—proprietary, I should be saying—information or the formatting, right? You know that's an interesting thing. We've released quite a bit, I think, already in terms of the information. I can get a list put together of the information that's been released and make sure that that got to members of the opposition, because we did put out a lot of information that was taken from the reports—as much as we thought we could—already.

So, to know if there was additional information that could go, as well, we'd have to review all the information that was sent out. I—and I hope the members will accept—and last year we did this and I thought it went pretty well—where I can't give you an answer that day, I endeavoured to get it—the

information—the next day. And I thought we had a pretty good working relationship with doing that. So, again, I hope you'll allow me to do that. I think it's—I find that's a more forthright way to deal with it than having you wait while I try to fish it out all the time. And I expect you may want to have further discussion than today, so that'll give us the opportunity to get back to you with more information at the next meeting if it's possible to.

**Ms. Marcelino:** We'd—those that are not—answers that are not available today, certainly we'd like to have it in the coming days.

For the record, we'd like to ask the Premier: How much did the Fiscal Performance Review cost in full?

**Mr. Pallister:** There's a couple of different aspects to that, and I just want to get—before I ask the staff to get numbers—for some clarity because there was a—if she's asking about KPMG report on health care, I'll just—I'll give her the list and then if that's the information she wants, I'll endeavour to get it for her. The KPMG report on health care, the KPMG Fiscal Performance Review.

There was also a—what did we call it, the team that looked at it with Janice MacKinnon, you know, the former NDP finance minister in Saskatchewan. What was that called? [*interjection*] That was also a fiscal performance review as well. It was done with the former head of the Winnipeg chamber, executive director of the Winnipeg chamber, David Angus, and committee members, former civil servants and so on were on that committee as well.

I should be able to get—yes—the members of the Advisory Panel—sorry—on Fiscal Performance, which was Janice MacKinnon was the co-chair; David Angus was the other co-chair; Michael Sykes is a retired Department of Agriculture agricultural representative from, I think, from—resides in Selkirk now; Ardith Sigurdson, who is a nurse and a co-owner of a farm in the Gimli area; Joanne Sullivan is a community activist, community volunteer, does a lot of work with Alzheimer's patients, with Alzheimer Society fundraising, things like that, who makes her home in Portage la Prairie.

We can get a summary. Would she like a summary cost breakdown of each of those?

**An Honourable Member:** Please.

**Mr. Pallister:** Very good. I'll undertake to get that for the member. And I don't think we'll have it today, but we can get it for a subsequent meeting.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Thank you, Mr. Premier and Mr. Chair. And, Mr. Premier, in addition to those mentioned reports and cost, kindly add the full cost of the Boston Consulting as well.

Next—that was not a question; that was a request. Now the question.

How much—or when did the Premier (Mr. Pallister) receive the final report of the Fiscal Performance Review?

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Pallister:** I'll undertake all of them, but not the Boston Consulting. That would be for the Minister of Crowns—I think you're best to direct that to that minister, if that would be all right? *[interjection]* Yes. That—I think that information's been published and is out there anyway. If I recall it was—I think that was a focus of questioning by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), if I'm not mistaken, last year. So all that detail would be available to you.

Date—I don't recall off the top of my head. *[interjection]* Honestly, I don't remember the exact date and I don't want to guess. I can check back to my schedule and then I can give her that answer tomorrow as well.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I thank the Premier for being here today as well as members of his caucus and senior staff. I want to, of course, extend my congratulations to Mr. Meier on serving as the acting clerk. He—of course, standing on the shoulders of giants, as he well knows, but I know him to be a fabulous individual in his own right and will emerge as a giant in due course, and somebody else will stand on his shoulders some day, but I did want to extend my congratulations to him.

The Premier was gracious in talking about the former member for Point Douglas, and I appreciate his kind words with respect to him. However, we are still waiting on when he will call a by-election. Since we have some media here today and others, maybe he could tell us when that by-election might be.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I could tell him when it might be. Again, it'll be a lot sooner than it was before we changed the rules that the previous government had, because those rules allowed for a year to pass before a by-election could be called and that time was used

up before by-elections were called on more than one occasion.

So we've introduced, as the member knows, new legislative changes which require a by-election to be called within 180 days. I believe the date of resignation of the member was December the 8th—*[interjection]*—was it January, not December? January 9th—*[interjection]*—was it. So going 180 days from that point forward—I don't have a calendar on me, but I would say probably sooner than the middle of July there would be a by-election held. It would have to be held.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, I thank the Premier for that answer and for providing some context as well. Of course, we all remember that when the legislation—moving up the dates and how much time before you could call a legislation was passed—the government was in a big hurry to get by-elections called at that point, and now they seem to be a little bit slower in moving.

I'm wondering if he wouldn't agree that it would make sense to have it in June before Manitobans set off for holiday vacations *[inaudible]*

**Mr. Pallister:** Thanks to the member for that question.

I agree it would be—there are a lot of things that come into play with the timing of these things and what we don't want to do is—and, unfortunately, is what happened in the past—was we had a by-election called in Morris, the member will recall. It was January 30th, which was a tough time to have a by-election anywhere, and then there was also a by-election called for, I think that same day, in Arthur-Virden. I suppose there is no perfect time to have these, but January 30th would be, I think we'd all agree, a less than perfect time to have a by-election.

I remember—having been chosen to lead the party I now lead in July—that at that time a by-election was called for September—early September. It was the day after the September long weekend. There are a lot of disadvantages to a by-election the day after a long weekend as well. I don't know that there's a perfect time.

It's interesting. I was just at an event where they were chronicling the history in one riding—that I teased the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) as the worst represented riding in the province because it's only had three MLAs for the last 95 years, which is

really incredible when you think about it—three MLAs in 95 years.

But I was looking at the election dates—and I don't have the list in front of me—but the dates of election of D.L. Campbell who was the member from 1922 to early '60s, I think, when Harry Enns first came in about 1964 or '5. These men are too young to remember and obviously not political scientists—students—they don't know.

Anyway, I noticed that the elections there were frequently in July and August, which surprised me because I thought in a farm area, you know, with, you know, the busyness of that line of work, you wouldn't want to have an election in July or August.

But—so there's no perfect time, but I appreciate the member's, you know, concerns about making sure that the—I believe and I know he believes that this is an important career and that people in our province deserve to have an MLA represent them, and so this is part of the motivation behind making sure that by-elections were called within six months after resignation—or held—I shouldn't say called—held.

The last date that the writ could be issued is June 2nd, and the last election day possible would be July 4th, assuming a 33-day election period. And the writ has to be issued for at least 28 days but no more than 34 days, so that's the time frame that we're in. Sometime between now and then, there'll be a by-election and the people of Point Douglas will have a chance to replace the former member.

**Mr. Allum:** I thank the Premier (Mr. Pallister) for that history lesson, and, you know, we can debate whether the end of January is a good time to have a by-election or not. Could be a little bit chilly here in Manitoba, but most Manitobans, of course, are around at the—during January and at least available. When it's the summer months, you can appreciate that—I think you would appreciate that there are vacation plans and families do need to get away and re-energize and enjoy some family time together.

I want to change topics now and return to the topic that our interim leader had introduced. The Premier gave a bit of an explanation, but I wonder if he might just review it for us one more time, why he is unable to release the KPMG Fiscal Performance Review.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, let's go back a little further and consider why a review would be a good idea to do, and let's talk about that.

We have inherited a situation where the deficit—actual Public Accounts deficit that we inherited was approximately \$900 million. We inherited a situation where the projected deficit was less than half that. This was, of course, a bit of poisoned water to deal with—you know, a pretty challenging situation. When you see a deficit projection that is off by more than 100 per cent on the actual end number, you have to wonder at the veracity of the projections. That alone in many business operations would be a compelling reason to review your fiscal practices, but there are many other realities that had to be addressed as well.

\* (15:20)

Fiscal performance has clear ramifications for the ability of our Province to sustain its social programs to maintain and strengthen the capabilities that must be there for vulnerable people, whether—maybe seniors who need health care or maybe any of us at any given point in time, I suppose, as well as the social services we need to fund, the educational services, the child care opportunities. These are all funded by tax dollars, and they all depend for their sustainability on prudent fiscal management. So when one looks at the situation in Manitoba, realizes that our services had been in many comparative rankings lagging in the country in various categories and are—and our fiscal situation in terms of deficit list deteriorating, and had deteriorated significantly in combination with very significant tax hikes.

So you're seeing an ironic combination of two things: you're seeing revenues derived by the government going up markedly—significant increases in tax, significant increases in revenues to the government at the same time as you're seeing significant increases in deficit. That—this seems like a spending problem, and so merits attention. And this was the reason, obviously, in part, for taking a look at the fiscal situation of the province of Manitoba. And so that is, I think, by preamble, I guess, to the member, the compelling reason for doing this work.

Now, the member's question is in respect of getting copies of the report. My answer is referencing the need for the work to be done. I would also say that we need to remember that this was a multi-faceted exercise that he's referencing one part of. But I will repeat that the effort to reach out and include Manitobans was a genuine one, a very ambitious, tremendous amount of work was put into including Manitobans—giving Manitobans the opportunity to be included in their—the planning around their fiscal future.

And, in terms of the opportunity, also, for MLAs to be involved. I extended a genuine invitation to every MLA in the Legislative Assembly to be part of the process, and I was pleased that the members of the Ottawa-west caucus—or, I'm sorry, the Liberal caucus decided to participate in the process. But, at the same time, somewhat disappointed that most of the members of the opposition didn't avail themselves of that opportunity. But they could have been there and heard the presentations and chose not to, and now are asking questions about accessing the information they could have had if they'd been part of the process themselves. And that's too bad. I think it was a missed opportunity for them to demonstrate that they were actually interested in hearing from Manitobans, and they failed to demonstrate that they were interested in listening.

**Mr. Allum:** I asked the Premier (Mr. Pallister) why he was unable to release the KPMG Fiscal Performance Review, and then we got a history 'leshon.' And I think he knows I've read a lot of history in my life, and that was one of the more revisionist historical diatribes I've heard in a long time.

So I want to ask him, then, since he's unable to provide a coherent answer as to why he won't release the report: Can he confirm that he stated in the Legislature on June 6th, 2016 that 97 per cent of the Fiscal Performance Review would be made public. Did he make that statement?

**Mr. Pallister:** Let's take a look at the revenue and expenditures of the government.

In '16-17, we had revenues of 15 billion, 230 million dollars; and expenditures of 16 billion, two hundred and ninety-one; with a lapse adjustment of \$150 million, leaving a projected deficit of \$911 million.

Now, as a starting point, the actual deficit that we were promised we would be handed by the previous government was \$422 million. This, I should mention, was a figure which was arrived at by methods which only the previous government would be able to explain and has not yet explained, but they were promising the people of Manitoba throughout the election campaign 13 months ago that that was the actual deficit. In reality, the actual deficit was more than double that amount, \$846 million was the Public Accounts finishing number, but it goes more than that.

We have inherited as well from the previous administration great fiscal challenges, not only, unbelievably, the—these numbers, by the way, the member refers to revisionist history. He needs to maybe look at his adjectives a little bit. These are actual numbers out of the Public Accounts and the actual Public Accounts of the government. If he wishes to decry the work of civil servants, he can continue along that line. But these are the actual numbers out of the Public Accounts documents. So I would say any revisionism was the—was actually done by the previous government when they went out to the people of Manitoba and promised them that they were running a \$400-million deficit and it turned out it was over eight and a half. That's being fairly far off on your projections, I'd say.

But it gets worse than that. I mean, the deficits with the RHAs weren't something they mentioned or included, and we see significant deficits in the—each of the RHAs almost without exception: \$59 million worth of RHA deficits in 2015-16. That wasn't referenced in the government's \$400 million mythology when they projected their deficit would be at that level.

In addition, on the east-side road project they made—they signed more agreements in the last few weeks before the election than they'd signed in the previous six or seven years. The commitments under those community benefit agreements are in excess of \$200 million—\$200 million on top of the significant deficits they already had compiled.

So, you know, the other sad reality is, of course, there's a thing called the rainy day fund or the Fiscal Stabilization Account that is designed to be there for self-described rainy days. That was depleted by the previous government systematically, year after year, from 2009-10 fiscal, when \$57 million was taken out of that account, to the next year, 2010-11, when \$125 million was taken out of that account. I'll continue after—in my next response, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Allum:** That wasn't the question I asked at all, and this is Estimates and so I'm asking the Premier a very direct question and a very simple one: Did he state in the Legislature on June 6th, 2016, that 90-per-7 per cent of the Fiscal Performance Review would be made public?

**Mr. Pallister:** I've undertaken, in an answer to a previous question from the member's interim leader, to provide the additional information that she seeks, and so I will leave that on the record as it was on the record earlier despite the number of times the

member asks the question. But I would continue to say that the fiscal situation we were handed by the previous administration goes far beyond the doubling of a projected deficit in a single year, which is, by the way, Mr. Chair, the greatest missing-the-mark record of any government in Manitoba.

\* (15:30)

It goes far deeper than that because in—you see, in addition to this, in the budget each year from 2009-10 until their final year in office, not only did they increase taxes by record amounts, not only did they run deficits, but they ran deficits in spite of taking money out of the rainy day fund every year. To make their deficits look smaller, they took money out of a Fiscal Stabilization Account designed to protect Manitobans in times of dire need. And so, in 2012 and '13 fiscal year, their deficit was made to look like it was \$155 million less than it actually was, because the previous administration chose to take that amount out of the Fiscal Stabilization Account.

In 2013-14, transfers from that account were \$100 million. This left the balance in the account at \$275 million. By way of comparison, the balance in that account in 2008-9 fiscal, when Gary Doer left, was \$864 million. And just a few short years later, it had been depleted consecutively, year after year after year, to the point where, in 2014-15 fiscal year, the previous government took \$55 million out of it, which was a record low in that six-year period; just \$55 million was taken out of it and dropped the level in the Fiscal Stabilization Account down to \$220 million.

Then in the year before the election, while we now know that their deficit number that year wasn't as portrayed at \$422, it was actually \$846. It would have been \$105 million higher, except they raided the Fiscal Stabilization Account to make it look like it was lower.

So now what we have is a Fiscal Stabilization Account that's at its lowest level in 15 years. And climate change and other factors are real and need to be considered, and they make the possibilities of disastrous events in our province greater, not lesser. Whether it be excessive rain event or a potential forest fire or drought, the undeniable reality is that we're more vulnerable to the fiscal uncertainty presented by those kinds of events than we've been for a good, long time.

**Mr. Allum:** Let the record show for all assembled that the Premier of Manitoba was asked a direct question and he simply refused to answer.

He knows full well that on December 6–June 6, 2016, that he told the people of Manitoba—he looked them straight in the eyes and he said to them, 97 per cent of that Fiscal Performance Review would be made public. And now here we are in the Estimates process asking him a direct question about whether he stated that; he refuses to answer. We know he did.

So I want to ask him now: Why did he say last June that 97 per cent of that report would be made public, and why is he saying today and the last several weeks, that the report can't be released at all? What changed in that period of time?

**Mr. Pallister:** Our commitment to running a more open government than Manitobans have ever seen remains and will continue. And we will do everything we can to make sure that we improve the release of information practices of the government that I lead.

We know the record of the previous administration, which is one of secrecy and is one of not making information available, not even insofar as going out and scrumming with reporters at times, offering up spokespeople rather than ministers of the government.

We recognize the previous administration also used the FIPPA legislation to protect itself as opposed to protect the best interests of Manitobans in terms of accessing information. We know, for example, that when they paid generous severance payments to former friends to leave, they did not make that information public, covered it up—covered it up—for well over a year and a half. Seven hundred thousand-plus dollars was taken from Manitoba taxpayers and given to former friends of the previous government so they could work somewhere else.

We know, also, the record of the previous administration on tendering. We know that they failed to disclose untendered contracts repeatedly—repeatedly covered them up. We know that there was a requirement under The Financial Administration Act to make this information available, requirement in law, was supposed to be made available in the Legislative Library down the hall on a computer terminal there. And so with great interest and anticipation, hard-working staff went through the untendered contracts to see what they could learn.



What they learned was that there were a number posted. What they didn't see were a number that weren't. Later, of course, it was—it came to light that the previous administration had actually entered into repeated contracts of an untendered nature that were not disclosed, that were covered up in some cases for over five years totalling well in excess of \$10 million. Just alone the contracts which Steve Ashton signed for Tiger Dam—not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, not six, not seven, not eight, but nine contracts all untendered, all nondisclosed, all hidden from public view, none placed on the computer in the Legislative Library as per The Financial Administration Act. That's the record of the previous administration. So we'll do our very, very best to correct that. We're learning as we go. I've already shared with members—some of the members of the opposition as well as with the media that there are practices that we need to adopt in future to make sure that more information goes out, not less. I'm committed to that.

But one thing for sure, if there's a problem we'll admit it and address it, but the member opposite was quoted in the Hansard records as not even being able to admit that a deficit was a problem. He called slaying the deficit not a challenge, but a myth. He said that it was a myth. He decried the work of credit rating agencies, as influential as they may be. I guess the member doesn't see any value in their work. He said they are private firms. I guess he meant that to be an insult of some kind. He said that the people who run them are committed to ideologies, neoliberalism—this is what he said in the record of Hansard to the House on April 19th of this year. Those are strange comments, Mr. Chair, because what they do is they reveal an absolute lack of understanding of basic financial management practices, and the reality of two credit rating downgrades—not one but two—under the previous government is tens of millions of dollars that goes not to health care but to happy moneylenders someplace else. So whether he likes moneylenders or not isn't the issue. If he is questioning the influence they have on how much we pay to borrow money, he needs to enter into some additional research so he understands that the record of the previous administration was one which put our—not just our credit rating at risk, but put our fiscal stability and circumstances in a very vulnerable position.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, that's really interesting, Mr. Chair, that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) can remember what I said, but he can't remember what he himself says in

the House or in the Legislature: that 97 per cent of the public—of the Fiscal Performance Review would be made public. And we're trying to get him to explain this dramatic change of heart he had from June 6th, 2016, when he told Manitobans, looked them straight in the eye, said without any hesitation and any doubt, that 97 per cent of the Fiscal Performance Review would be made public, and now here we are, seven, eight months later—actually, we've been asking for it since June—since January of this year. And we asked in February and we asked in March and we asked again in April, and it looks like we're going to be asking again for—in May, if he would live up to the—his word that he gave to the people of Manitoba when he looked them in the eye and he told them he would release this report.

\* (15:40)

So we're trying to get a straight answer from him, Mr. Chair, and you'll forgive me for repeating the same questions, but I have to know. The people of Manitoba paid for this report, after all, so we're asking on their behalf: What changed between June 6th, 2016, when he declared that 97 per cent of that report would be made public, and today? What's changed?

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate the new-found interest the member has in value for money and proper spending practices even though he calls doubling the projected deficit a non-existent crisis and two credit rating downgrades a non-existent crisis, even though he refuses to recognize the reality of the problem that he and his colleagues created with their dysfunctional and rebellious government. I really appreciate his interest in value for money.

Let's talk about value for money for a second. Here's an article with some information that I think the member would be interested in knowing about. The previous government increased the salaries just in the run-up to the last election of a number of their political staff by an average of 22 per cent. And they paid in salaries and payouts to 52 political staff members between the time of their rebellion—their family feud—until approximately a year later, they paid nearly \$3 million out in salaries and payouts.

Of those larger salaries that were paid out at that time—in the midst, remember, Mr. Chair, of a leadership crisis and a leadership contest. Not to mention the use of offices populated by paid staff to work for leadership candidates here in this building—it doesn't demonstrate a respect for value for money in any way, shape, or form.

There were severance payments paid out, covered up, to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. The—these dollars could have been spent on health care. They could have been used to reduce taxes or reduce the actual amount of the deficit as opposed to the amount it grew to and became. But those dollars weren't used for any of those purposes; they were used to pay political staff. They were used to pay severance to former political staff.

So just between this—December of 2014, October of 2015, there were 33 new political staff hired, there were 12 salary increases at an average of 22 per cent, there were seven staff who received severance payments. Total cost of those things to tax payers was \$2,859,874. Salary range of staff was between \$37,000 low and \$135,000 high. The average salary: sixty-seven—\$67,000 total. Additional salaries was over \$2 million. And I repeat, that was in approximately a 10-month period.

As far as promotions, number of staff receiving raises was 12. The range of percentage increases in the salaries was three per cent up to 60 per cent. Average salary increase was 22 per cent. Total additional salary: \$182,000.

In terms of severance, the number of staff receiving severance was seven. Global amount: \$670,000.

So I appreciate the member referencing getting value for money. I agree that's important and that's a really important consideration—one that was neglected by the previous administration.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, Mr. Chair, I can appreciate that we can't force the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this province—top political figure in this province to answer a direct question, but I can tell you how disappointed I am, and Manitobans are, that he refuses to answer a direct question. The first time we asked for this report through Freedom of Information request, we were told by his Finance Department that this information was subject to Cabinet confidentiality—nothing in there about any proprietary interests of the contractor of KPMG.

The Cabinet confidentiality excuse or whatever it might have been is now out the window, and now, some time ago, he pivoted to some kind of proprietary interest that KPMG has in the Fiscal Performance Review, and then in the last few days, it's about—it's been about protecting those Manitobans who may or may not have come to his budget consultations which, by the way, I attended,

which, by the way, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) who's at the table attended, which, by the way, our interim leader attended.

But what we have are three different explanations for why he is going back on his word to the people of Manitoba to release 97 per cent of that report.

So can he tell us which of those explanations are true so that the people of Manitoba understand precisely why the Premier of Manitoba has said one thing to them but is clearly—quite clearly—doing another?

**Mr. Pallister:** They're all perfectly true and they're all reasons, but what I'm committed to is having better results, so, as I've said, there are things that I want us to undertake in the future that we didn't do right this time. For example, as I said before, we didn't get advance permission from people who participated—thousands of people, actually. Thousands of front-line civil servants participated in the health-care review and submitted ideas. There was a great amount of information submitted, and I think we've learned through the process that we need to do a better job of getting assurance in advance that we can release the information that they've given us.

That was one example of what the member's asking. She's asking for us to release information which we could, in future—and will—but we didn't choose the proper processes, I'm told, and get a proper assurance from people in advance, and it's not right to disrespect their confidentiality either.

But, again, I would say to the member who's chosen to adopt a rather accusatory tone here, that he needs to look a little bit more honestly at his own government's record, I think, just to be fair, in the interest of fairness, because there was never before, in 17 years of NDP government, this level of effort made to actually reach out to not hundreds of Manitobans, and not with preconstructed agendas and going out and trying to elicit responses. We saw the way the previous government did consultations—predetermined outcomes and conclusions which weren't drawn from input genuinely provided by Manitobans.

I could, for example, say, well, you know, the prebudget consultation prior to the 2012 budget was done over a very short period and one could argue, well, it was following the election and so there wasn't a lot of time, and I accept that. That's a fair point. But there was no evidence of real consultation

at that time, and then a budget came down which broadened the PST. Who was consulted about that? Who told—who in Manitoba told the administration right after they promised they wouldn't raise taxes, who told them to raise taxes? Where's the documents? Where's the evidence?

\* (15:50)

Where is the openness, or was there a complete departure from the actual election campaign, from the actual mandate that was requested, within weeks? I would say there was. And yet Manitobans with that budget, spring of '12, were yet again, for, I believe, the fourth or fifth time, with this previous administration, were hit with a broadening of the PST so that it included their home insurance. So all of a sudden, boom, they got a 7 per cent increase in the cost of insuring their—farmer on their buildings, homeowner on their home, if they're renting an apartment, on their tenant's insurance or—boom. Same person who came to their door of their apartment a few months before promised they wouldn't raise their taxes, then went out, did a prebudget consultation, and then came out with a budget that jacked up the taxes on the apartment's insurance.

Any evidence that anybody told them they should do that? Anybody come forward and say, yes, absolutely, want to pay some more taxes on my benefits at work? Looking to pay more for taxes on my beer and wine? Really like to get dinged on the taxes on my cottage? These—there's no evidence of any of that because there wasn't a real consultation done. No consultation done, no reason for anybody to ask for any documents.

Well, we did a real consultation. We heard from thousands and thousands of Manitobans, and the member's complaining because we didn't put out information, enough information for him. Put up more information than any previous government in the history of the province of Manitoba; it's not enough for him. I agree; not enough for me either. I'd like to have more information out too. And next year we'll put more information out.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, it's hard to take the Premier (Mr. Pallister) seriously on that particular commitment because in June 2016, he told us that 97 per cent of this report would be made public. Here we are several months later, he's refusing not only to table that report, he's refusing to give us a proper and appropriate explanation, and now he's added yet another new explanation, which is, well, wait 'til next

year. Well, this is rich. This is not the kind of openness—openness and transparency that this Premier was so big on prior to the last election but now has turned a complete 180 and hides information. He's evasive in his answers. He won't provide the documentation, and, in fact, he's confusing the matter.

So let me ask him, then: Did KPMG do the budget consultations? Is that why they were hired?

**Mr. Pallister:** I think the member's revealing his own new level of confusion here. Let me explain to him about—*[interjection]* Sorry, the member must want to speak. Member wants to speak, he should speak.

**Mr. Allum:** Please do explain—please do explain—to the media that—here that reports to the public. Please do explain to the opposition. Please do explain to the four new members of your own government that are sitting here, having to listen to the fact that you went out and talked about 'openciness' and transparency. You not only—he not only will not provide the information, Mr. Chair, he won't provide a proper explanation for it. We've had now three different answers, and today he's introduced a whole other confusing factor by suggesting that KPMG organized it, the budget consultations, on behalf of the government.

So I'm asking him: Is that what he's saying? Did KPMG organize and—the budget consultations on behalf of the government, or didn't they?

**Mr. Pallister:** I'd like to answer the member, but if he interrupts me again, I'll give him a chance to launch into a further diatribe.

Of course not. We consulted with Manitobans. We began that process on September 28th. We continued it 'til December 1st of 2016. This was the most expansive and innovative consultation process ever undertaken. We set up an interactive website. And, by the way, I invited the member to participate, as I invited his colleagues to participate—and his new-found interest in these consultations is appreciated—but he refused to participate. In fact, he boycotted the process entirely. He boycotted the process, Madam Speaker—or Mr. Chair.

We set up an interactive website. We had community consultations throughout the province. We asked for and received written submissions. The results of all the prebudget consultations were released online publicly. We also released thousands of anonymous—that were submitted anonymously—

submissions from Manitobans. We were the first province in Canada to develop a citizen budget tool, which many used. Almost 1,000 Manitobans actually went and used that tool to try to work through and understand the process of preparing a provincial budget. This is an exercise that was a useful exercise for any member of the Legislature, any person, to see the kinds of trade-offs, the kinds of decisions that have to be made.

Members, apparently—according to the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum)—he doesn't think balancing the books matters and he doesn't think deficits are dangerous, so he wouldn't bother, I suppose, to do this exercise because to him it would be irrelevant, but to most common-sense people in our province balancing their books is something they have to do. They consider it very relevant and they understand that sending on growing deficits year after year to our future is not a smart thing to do. The member doesn't understand that, obviously.

But the fact remains that in less than 10 weeks we had—just on the prebudget consultation process itself, I'm not talking about the health-care consultations that we did. We had about 18,000 interactions with Manitobans. Now, that's an ambitious and genuine mechanism for letting Manitobans have a chance to have their voice heard, and that's what we did.

And I would mention also that within our civil service we had many, many of our civil servants participate as well. This is important. This is—people who work in our public service deserve to be heard. Many of them have told us this is the first time they were asked or that they were encouraged to really participate in a meaningful way, and I'm proud of the fact that we did.

So, in summary, I would say, you know, if the member's concerns extend to actual, genuine interaction with the people of Manitoba, then he would want to compliment our government for actually undertaking an exercise that did genuinely reach out and give people the chance to be part of a worthwhile process.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Before I recognize the member for Fort Garry-Riverview, I'd like to remind him here that the rules here—if you wish to speak, you can put up your arm. When somebody else has the floor, I would appreciate it if you would withhold your comments until you do have the floor.

**Mr. Allum:** I think we're bordering on new information previously unheard by the public of Manitoba. So I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Pallister) directly—I'd like a yes or a no answer to this, if he wouldn't mind, just this one time: Did KPMG actually produce a report?

**Mr. Pallister:** I'm not sure where the member thinks he's going with his facetious remarks, Mr. Chair. I really don't know, and frankly I don't care.

I want to put on the record, though, that the prebudget and post-budget campaigns of each of the governments, the previous government and our own, were exercises that were undertaken which used taxpayers' resources. And I would emphasize here that we were responsible in every respect in the way in which we went about this exercise.

For example, the total cost of our exercise, which engaged significantly more Manitobans than any previous exercise that the previous government undertook—let's take a look at the differences in terms of the actual costs. First of all, let's go to the total cost. The total cost of our exercise was \$61,446. It was comprised of research costs and some media and the cost of production of documents that people could review and then add comment to.

\* (16:00)

The supposed prebudget consultation of 2015 done by the previous government didn't cost \$61,446; it cost \$340,534. It engaged a tiny fraction of the number of Manitobans that we engaged and it resulted in a budget which jacked up taxes. In 2013, the cost of the previous government's so-called prebudget consultation was \$235,675, which included media investment of \$160,000 and resulted in an increase in taxes to Manitobans and no evidence that anybody asked for that in the prebudget consultation. In 2012—in 2013, by the way, when the government was spending the \$235,000, they also jacked up the PST that year.

In 2012 they spent over \$200,000 again—promotional budget was \$153,000. Again, that's the year they raised the—broadened the PST to include benefits for working men and women at their place of business. They increased the cost to own a car; they jacked up the costs for beer, wine; they jacked up the cost for a person to get their hair done, you know.

So they invested three, four, five times as much in so-called prebudget consultation which resulted in Manitobans paying far more than these costs

because they ended up paying—for example, in 2012, Manitobans were hit for over \$200 million of new taxes as a result of this so-called prebudget consultation. The prebudget consultation in '13 saw taxes rise on Manitobans over \$300 million in that year alone. So this is what prebudget consultation was done by the previous government.

We engaged in an ambitious, very, very, very cost-effective, highly engaged-in process which produced a budget—which the member has yet to ask about—that reflected what we heard from Manitobans.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, I—Mr. Chair, it's difficult to continue on when we can't get a straight answer to a direct question and he—the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) been asked for the past hour by the—our interim Leader, the member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) and by myself on behalf of our constituents and the people of Manitoba, several direct questions. And he's been unable to provide a direct answer on any of them. So I'm going to ask again: Did KPMG actually produce a report?

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate serious questions that are serious from serious members, but I think that when the member wants to come here and joke and fool around he does a disservice to his own constituents, his party, and everyone else.

The reality of the situation, since we came to government—since the member refuses to talk about the budget, I'll talk about the budget. I understood that's what the Estimates process was at least in part to do. The record of the previous administration in terms of actually hitting its budget targets is something that I think we need to talk about. It speaks to credibility.

We have—I believe, and I'll—I've asked my staff to come up with the actual dollar figures, but I believe I am not wrong in making the observation that in each year between 1999 and 2016 year end, the previous administration managed to under-achieve. In other words, in every year but one, they ran deficits which were higher than they projected. This granddaddy of all missed targets, of course, was the 2016 Public Accounts, which, as I referenced earlier, showed that they missed by well over 100 per cent their projected deficit targets.

In each year, consistently, they said they would do things which they did not do. Now, there's a plus minus. We all get that. It's a budget. You're trying to make a guesstimate the best you can. We hope that

it's an honourable, honest prediction. We hope that it would bear some reflection to the actual outcome, because if it's off every single year, people start to not pay attention anymore. And that's what was happening under the previous administration, people hear the budget and go, well, yawn, that doesn't really matter because it's not going to be anywhere near what they do at the end of the year anyway. So why are we even paying attention to this thing.

So we came out with our first budget. We inherited a fair bit of poison water. I talked about some of those things before. But there are a lot more than that. Let's talk about FleetNet—well, we'll talk about FleetNet later, all right? The government was told seven years ago they needed to replace the emergency communication system because it was outdated—to be kind. Did they? No. Year after year they didn't.

This is the communication system for people who fight fires. They aren't out there fooling around like the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), they're trying to fight fires—or they're ambulance attendants, or they're front-line health-care workers, and they're trying to communicate with each other and trying to protect themselves and trying to protect other people in the process of doing their work. And they need to be able to communicate in those circumstances and the way they communicate is a system called FleetNet.

It's this FleetNet system the previous government was told was going the way of the dodo bird and they had to act, and did they act? No, they didn't act. Year after year after year they were told and they didn't act. The president of the Manitoba government employee's union told me that she herself personally told the premier who told ministers of government the system needs to be replaced. No, didn't act.

So what happened? Well, they started to have system breakdowns and they started to have times when they couldn't communicate with each other, and that's dangerous. There were situations that were fires. There were fires in the southeast of Manitoba, for example—the Chair's district where people couldn't communicate with one another. That's dangerous, and it would be wrong to suggest that there would be many higher priorities than having front-line emergency personnel be able to communicate with each other during an emergency.

But the previous government didn't fix the system and the people charged with keeping it

repaired had to buy parts on eBay, and the cost to replace that system could well be half a billion dollars. And that got handed up to us.

And now the member talks about not being open enough. Well, Madam Speaker—or Mr. Chair, I'm sorry—we're interested in being open. So what did we do? We predicted that we would—in our first year would run a deficit of 872—

**Mr. Chairperson:** I have to interrupt First Minister, you're time is—

**Mr. Pallister:** Oh, okay, sorry.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, Mr. Chair, no one is wasting more of the people of Manitoba's time than he is today. So I want to ask him a two-parter here and see if he can keep up.

Did KPMG do any work separate and apart from the budget consultation? That's question A; and question B is, did KPMG actually produce a report?

**Mr. Pallister:** KPMG was—won a tender that's—a tender is where you shop with other people's money. Maybe the member needs to look it up, because his government didn't manage to do it very often, especially when they were buying flood equipment from party donors and pals.

Anyway, KPMG produced two reports, the Fiscal Performance Review, the health system sustainability innovation review.

I want to talk about credibility for a second.

The previous administration ran into serious trouble year after year after year keeping its word on many, many things. But let's just talk about the global fiscal projections that the previous administration made. They budgeted, for example, in 2003-04 for a—they said they'd run a surplus, \$58 million. At the end of the year they ran a deficit of \$133 million. So they were off by \$191 million—\$191 million off.

\* (16:10)

By way of comparison, last year we ran a projection that we would run a deficit of \$872 million, and we actually—I'm sorry, we ran a deficit of 872, which was actually \$39 million better than the budgeted deficit of 911 million. We were off too. We actually did better than we said we'd do. When did the previous administration do better than they said they'd do? Well, let's look at the numbers.

In 2010-11—I'm sorry, in 2009-10, which was the first year of the Selinger government—leave Gary Doer out of this—they projected that they would run an \$88-million deficit. They didn't. They ran a \$501-million deficit. Off by \$413 million.

Let's go to 2011-12 just in the interests of a high tax increase year. Okay? In that year, they projected a deficit of \$513 million. They ran a deficit of \$910 million. They were off by \$397 million.

In '12-13 and '13-14, again, with significant tax hikes, they still, in spite of the hundreds of millions of dollars of additional revenue flowing into their coffers, plus increases in health transfers of 6 per cent over the previous year, they managed to run deficits which were not only excessively high, but much higher than they predicted they'd run; \$185 million higher in '12-13, \$147 million in '13-14. In '14-15, they predicted that they would run a deficit of \$324 million, and they ran a deficit of \$635 million. This is off by \$311 million.

And I know all this is irrelevant to the member who says deficits don't matter, but it isn't irrelevant to the people of Manitoba because they and their kids have to pay all that money back, and they have to service the interest on that stuff too. So, while the member says there's not a problem, his much-maligned credit rating agencies don't agree, and certainly most common-sense Manitobans don't agree either.

In the year before the election—the year of the election, in '15-16—2015-16, again, they predicted they would run a deficit of \$441 million. It was \$865 million.

What is—what does all this mean? It just means, frankly, that there was a pattern of behaviour of predicting optimistically the deficits that they ran would be much, much lower than they actually were. And so, in terms of the member referencing keeping word, I have billions of dollars of evidence that the previous government couldn't keep its word.

**Mr. Allum:** So, in that five-minute answer, in the first 12 seconds, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) seemed to confirm that KPMG did both a fiscal review and a review of health.

Can he tell us: Will he be making either of those reports public?

**Mr. Pallister:** Let's talk about making things public. Let's talk about this for a second because it is an example. It's an example of a practice the previous

government engaged in, time after time after time, that, frankly, I am dedicated to making sure we learn from and do not repeat.

So we know that the previous government liked to give out untendered contracts, and we know they also liked to not disclose that they were giving out untendered contracts. And so I asked the question of the previous administration—and in Estimates of the previous premier—perhaps you could tell me what kind of evaluation did you do on these Tiger Dams. I mean, you bought a lot of them. You spent millions of dollars buying them. You didn't think there was anybody else that was going to give you a bid, I guess, because you just bought them all from the one company; never shopped—never comparison-shopped—almost un-Manitoban, really. I mean, Manitobans are known to be pretty smart shoppers, but, hey, you took a 10, 12 million or whatever, seven, eight, nine different times. And you kept buying them from the same person all the time, every single time, and, you know, it's just curious: Did they work?

And I got a report back—I got a report back from the previous government that today talks about its concerns about openness and transparency. This is what their report looks like, Mr. Chair, and for Hansard, I'm describing blacked-out pages with not a word left that you could read. And there's another page right there, and you can see. You could spend quite a bit of time trying to read this report, but, frankly, you wouldn't get a lot out of it. Now, hey, maybe it's sort of like reading the NDP budget; there's not a lot of point because it isn't going to be the way they said anyway. But there's the third page and, see, it's the same. I mean, you could—maybe they just photocopied the one page time after time after time and gave me 78 copies of it. I don't know; you can't tell. There's nothing left—nothing for you to read.

Attached is a technical and factual assessment of the Tiger Dam flood tubes. Well, what good does it do you when there's nothing in here except the title page? That's the kind of thing that I think irritates—the member keeps referring to members of the media. I think that really angers members of the media. It's not just them I'm concerned about. Those—the people paid for all these Tiger Dams. They'd kind of like to know that somebody was thinking of them when they went out and spent the 10 million, 12, 14 million dollars buying them that maybe they want to make sure they work before they went and bought a bunch more.

So they have an analysis done after they bought the first couple. I just forget how many million they spent before they went to the trouble of doing the analysis. But then that analysis was supposed to determine if they worked, and then they went out and bought a bunch more after they did this analysis. Now, you have to ask yourself, seriously, if they did this analysis and the analysis showed that the Tiger Dams were really good, why they covered up. And if the analysis showed, well, that they didn't work, why'd they buy more?

One way or the other I think it's a fair and reasonable example of the type of practices engaged in by the previous government which undeniably they continued to engage in. Long after they were told by the Auditor General of the Province that they should not, they continued to.

Now, the member was there inside the Cabinet room, and I'm not asking him to reveal Cabinet secrets, but it's pretty well known that there was a little bit of conflict with the previous administration, and there were some people who didn't get along well with other people within the organization. I don't know if this was part of the reason. Maybe the member would like to go on record and elaborate on what it was that caused that historic rebellion. Maybe it was that some people in Cabinet want to get value for money. I'd hope at least a couple of them and maybe him—maybe he would like to go on record saying he cares deeply about getting value for money today, and if he does, I'd like him to say that if he genuinely does. But if he says nothing about it, I guess we'll have to assume he had the same attitude as the people that produced that blacked-out report and kept going to their party donors and friends and spending taxpayers' money willy-nilly.

**Mr. Allum:** So we're trying to get an answer from the Premier here today on the—why he has refused to provide the people of Manitoba with the KPMG Fiscal Performance Review which the people of Manitoba, I think he would agree, paid for and which he, himself, has said 97 per cent of that report would be made public. And then in the interim, the government, including the Premier (Mr. Pallister), has given three—now, today, four separate, different excuses as to why that report can't be made public.

Now, we're asking for it for two reasons: one, we want to know and see what's in the report, what's recommended in the report, how it relates to the budget and how it relates to this Estimates process. That's connecting the dots for the Premier for one

reason why we want to see it. The other reason we want to see it is because Manitobans deserve to know if they got value for money for the \$740,000, at a minimum, that it cost.

\* (16:20)

We know, for example, that the Boston Consulting Group which the Premier (Mr. Pallister) referenced earlier was costed at a minimum of 4.2, 4.3 million dollars. It was untendered. And, at the committee that he referred to earlier, which I was at and he wasn't, it was his appointed chair of the board that said, quite clearly, that the reason that he tendered—gave that contract untendered to Boston Consulting Group was because the—he knew him. They were pals of his. Buddies. That's not sufficient explanation.

So what we're asking today is will the Premier do the right thing once and for all, release these reports, let Manitobans see what's in them and also let them judge whether they got value for the tax dollars that were spent on it. He seems not interested in either question. I would like him just once during this Estimates process to give a straight answer, a direct answer to a straight question and a direct question.

**Mr. Pallister:** I thank the member for the question, especially his interest in value for money, because I do strongly believe that our government will be known for its concerns about that very topic, about the ability to make sure that we shop intelligently with the money we take from taxpayers. Because we recognize the work that goes into the day for a working person and the life of a retiree and we recognize that it's not easy to save money, in particular when the challenges of day-to-day life add up.

You know, the ever-escalating taxes of the previous administration foisted on people made it harder and harder for people to save for their retirement or for their midterm goals, for educational savings, for paying down their mortgage, any number of different things. Those are real challenges that people face. And I recognize that—and I hope the member recognizes, too, that changing practices and improving practices is important, and that's our goal. We want to make sure that we do a better job of making information available, not just in the previous administration—we don't want to set the bar that low—we want to be the most open government in Canada. That's our goal, and that's what we'll pursue.

But, you know, I don't have to go back that far to give the member another example of not respecting the openness that he now claims he wants to advance. And it was the case of Christine Melnick. Christine Melnick was accused of organizing a protest rally—nothing wrong with that, I suppose, but using civil servants to do it is wrong. And that was, I guess, the nature of the accusation, as the member remembers, and I know it was part of a very divisive discussion within the caucus.

The member, certainly, for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) would remember this. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) was not yet elected and thank goodness didn't have to be part of that discussion. But that would have been a very difficult time within the government caucus, because of course, having a minister deny being behind a plan to have civil servants organize a protest rally and then later admit that she was part of organizing it—that's tough. That's a tough deal. But then she went further and she said, well, the Premier's office knew about it. She said the Premier's office was aware of it. Well, she wasn't kicked out of Cabinet for organizing a protest rally and getting civil servants involved in a partisan exercise. That didn't matter. But, when she blamed the premier, then—then—[interjection]—yes—so when she covered it up, she was fine. But when she told the truth, she got punished. That's what happened.

And then she got excommunicated by her colleagues, and I think some of them weren't very happy about it. I think that was probably a pretty tough time in the old caucus room on that one. And they've faced some tough times recently, as well, in respect of these divisive dysfunctional things. They're no fun for anybody, and I'm not holier-than-thou on this. I was part of a caucus that was—I'm part of the—I'm a Progressive Conservative. I'm not a member of any organized political party sometimes. In the history of that party, there've been lots of divisions and lots of divisive times. It's not a fun time, and I mean that sincerely. And I know that it was tough on the members.

But let's not pretend that the members had any interest in openness in that point in time, because they didn't, because Manitoba's Ombudsman did a report on this very issue I cite and concluded that there was no plausible explanation as to why a revealing government document—one which contradicted the official government position at the time, which proved that the Premier's Office knew about this, was fully informed of it. There was no



plausible explanation as to why that was withheld from the media, why it was withheld from the official opposition.

Now, the member speaks about openness, and I agree; openness should be pursued. But let's not come at this from the position that the previous member appears to be taking that somehow in any way shape or form the previous administration put on display any real examples of openness when it was dealing with information that should have belonged to the public and should have been released, because it sure did not put that behaviour on display.

**Mr. Allum:** In the interest of openness and transparency, can the Premier (Mr. Pallister) tell us if the two members of their fiscal performance panel, Janice MacKinnon and Dave Angus, have they seen the KPMG report?

**Mr. Pallister:** I don't think the member is getting it, you know.

The freedom of information requests that were filed by us as official opposition were not answered in this case and in numerous other cases. The argument was made—the member speaks about excuses—the argument was made that these were Cabinet secrecy. Emails that were sent which clearly demonstrate that the premier was aware of the minister's direct and personal involvement in organizing a partisan protest rally were withheld when they should have been released. They were filed by The Canadian Press; they were filed by other media outlets. Many civil servants were involved in the exchange of information, and the civil servants were not wrong to be involved in the exchange of information. Where the wrongdoing lies is in the failure to release the emails when they are requested, because they were not, nor should they have—they were not under the category of advice to Cabinet, which is a legitimate reason, I think, to consider. And we have not asked questions of the members, nor did I in opposition, of the previous premier about matters pertaining to his Cabinet discussions because I respect that those are pieces of information that should remain confidential to that group. The member's a former Cabinet minister and he—I hope he would agree with me that those are categories of information that it is reasonable to believe should be guarded and should be closely kept as Cabinet secrecy should be respected.

But when it comes to failing to disclose emails that clearly make the case that political involvement

was there and aware—awareness at the highest levels of the previous administration was there of that political involvement—covering that up, that wasn't right or fair, and the Ombudsman said so: no plausible explanation. Dozens of documents released, consistently left out were the emails that would have demonstrated clearly—and they existed—consistently left out were the emails that would have demonstrated that Christine Melnick gave the order to have partisan activities undertaken by civil servants. Now, the Ombudsman report says there was one email that outlined her involvement that should have been included in the freedom of information responses, but was not included. That is the unmistakable record of the previous administration. The Ombudsman's report said there is no plausible explanation as to how this record was missed during the search. The record was in the email accounts of six staff, including the assistant deputy minister, the department's access and privacy co-ordinator, and the person responsible for conducting the search for records. The report also states the missing email was made the same week and dealt with the same issue as many other documents that were released, as I recall, within minutes. Other emails were sent on either side of the ones that weren't released. It is unclear, says the Ombudsman, as to how the email in question would not have been located, particularly given the fact that other emails from the same time period with the same subject matter were located.

\* (16:30)

That's the record of the previous administration when it comes to openness and transparency. It is not an enviable record, and we will do our very, very best to make sure that we demonstrate our belief in, and our behaviour will demonstrate this, our understanding that the more information and involvement we can get from Manitobans, the more information we can get from them, the more information we can get out to them—and, in this, I include the members opposite—the better.

**Mr. Allum:** So the Premier of this province looks Manitobans in the eye right in this Legislature and he says 97 per cent of these reports would be made public. Then he says the first, when we file the freedom-of-information request, he—the first answer is Cabinet confidentiality. A little while later, he comes up with a new excuse that says it's about the proprietary methodology of KPMG. Then he makes up a new excuse a few days ago about protecting the confidentiality of those who participated in the

prebudget consultation, but we can't make a connection between the prebudget consultation and the KPMG report. Premier (Mr. Pallister) seems to think they're the same thing. We've asked, are they separate or are they different? He doesn't seem to know or he refuses to answer.

I just ask him right now: Did his members of his advisory panel—Dave Angus, Janice MacKinnon—do they have copies of that report?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well see, this is good. Now the member's getting on to something here really important. See, when you consult as much as we did in so many different categories with so many different people, there end up being a lot of different categories of information. We actually did three consultative exercises. The previous administration failed to do any—any real ones, just phony ones. Theirs cost a lot more, granted, but they didn't result in anything except tax hikes nobody asked for at the end of the day.

That was how they did their prebudget consultations. That was the outcome of their prebudget consultations, year after year after year: higher taxes nobody asked for and deficits that were almost double in many cases—or more than double—what they projected they would run.

Now, this is not a record of credibility, not a record of integrity. What we have done is we've gone out and met with thousands of Manitobans. We invited the members to be part of it, but they said, no, they didn't want to be part of it. Now they want to be part of it—later, months later. No, didn't want to be part of it when we were doing it. Well, that would involve work, and they didn't want to do the work. They didn't want to be part of the work. They decided to let other people do the work. Now they want to complain because they didn't get the information.

Well, you know, it's an interesting thing. We had an advisory panel on fiscal performance, okay? We had the KPMG reports on health care. We had the KPMG analysis of getting value for money from government. We involved thousands of Manitobans in the exercise. There's a wide array of information, much of it already in the hands of the member if he would take the time to read it. But, no.

So let's talk about the Tiger Dams. You want to talk about openness? Let's talk about Tiger Dams. Let's see how good you were at openness—Mr. Chair, through you—on openness. We know, from the

Ombudsman's reports on floodfighting equipment, how the previous government handled information. For example, on page 12 of that report, in this original commitment: In this case, because the decision to commit funding for equipment prior to obtaining Treasury Board approval was a ministerial and political decision and not an administrative one, it is not within our jurisdiction to comment on this matter. Okay.

So what we know then from the Ombudsman is the Ombudsman can't look at it because these millions of dollars were spent politically. See? Politically. But the member talks about openness; he talks about accountability, but yet the decisions was a political one—political one to buy these tiger tubes.

Page 13, the report says we were told that the minister subsequently directed MIT—Manitoba infrastructure, yes—to prepare a Treasury Board submission that recommended purchasing \$5 million of Tiger Dams through an untendered contract. Okay, so now we know it was political, and we also know that the minister directed his department to prepare a submission that recommended that this political purchase be made—a \$5-million purchase.

Now, we're not talking about \$5-million estimate that you're going to go out and check with all the different suppliers of 'flood-fighting' equipment; that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about a \$5-million purchase from a pal, untendered. That's what we're talking about here, okay?

So page 15—and this is just in the interest for background. The member may have forgotten all this; he may not have learned from it because he doesn't care about deficits. He says they're a myth; he says that bond rating agencies are a conspiracy of neo-liberal political thinkers, so he probably doesn't care about any of this. But I think a lot of Manitobans do.

It says, on page 15: "the justification for proposing a sole-source, untendered contract, given that there was more than one supplier the department has used in the past for this kind of equipment, and no compelling reason provided for not" tendering.

Okay, well, now, that's even better. So it was a political purchase. The department was directed to make the purchase. They were told not to shop around. There were other suppliers, and even when the minister was doing this, he didn't produce a single reason why he wouldn't go to tender.

So somebody was sitting on Treasury Board with him and didn't ask any of those tough, tough questions. Somebody was sitting at the Cabinet table with him and didn't bother to sniff out why all these contracts were going to this guy's pal. Somebody was sitting right there in the room with him and never once bothered to ask, hey, how come you're spending millions of dollars without tender for that guy you spend so much time in his restaurant with?

Now, I think, maybe when the member's making accusations about openness, he should sniff around a little bit with his own background and ask himself how seriously he took the responsibility of looking after taxpayers' money when he was sitting in Cabinet, because I don't see any evidence of that.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I have to intervene, honourable members. The First Minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Allum:** Mr. Chair, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) seems to be getting overly excited. We know that during the last major flood in Manitoba, he took off to Costa Rica rather than hanging around to stand with the people of Manitoba, so I want to turn to Costa Rica in relation to the Fiscal Performance Review.

Did you take—did he take the Fiscal Performance Review with him to Costa Rica?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, now the member's onto an issue that he and his colleagues like to raise, so let's talk about it.

I wasn't away during the spring floods. I wasn't away. I was at every flood site before the premier or any NDP member showed up there. I make a habit of going. The difference between me and the previous government is I don't haul around a film crew with me when I go. That's the difference.

I just finished this spring visiting over 30 rural municipalities without much hoopla, I admit, but I've never been a fan of going around during a flood or a fire and showing off. I've watched the previous administration trumpet their involvement in floodfighting by standing, on a regular basis, on the Hoop and Holler corner by—not far from my former house—and talk about how much they cared about the people of Manitoba just in the run-up to the previous election, actually.

This kind of showmanship has always been abhorrent to me, and so, when the member makes the assertion, it is a false one.

Now, I was out of the country in July when a flash flood hit Virden. I went to Lacombe, Alberta, for a wedding. My cousin's boy was getting married, and then I continued to Costa Rica with my wife. Flash floods do occur and a flash flood occurred in July and I was away, and I would have liked to have been here, but I was not. However, five of my colleagues were there within 24 hours. I was in touch with my office on a daily basis, aware of the situation.

And so the false assertion that I was away during spring floods should not be repeated by the member, and if he's interested in the facts, he won't repeat it. That was when I was away and, you know, the member's concerned about my work ethic. That's good. I'm public property, but I have a record in my life of working pretty hard and effectively, and I'll continue to pursue that record in this job.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, Mr. Chair, the reason we ask is because the KPMG report, such as it was—because we don't know what's in it; we don't know if it was the cover page or what it was exactly—was prominently displayed on this—on the Premier's desk as he took off for Costa Rica last January to try to demonstrate to Manitobans that he wasn't just vacationing, that he was doing some work. But he has a track record of saying one thing and then us finding out later that it was something else.

So I just wanted to get on record: Did he take the KPMG report with him to Costa Rica? That's question 1, and then 1(b) is this: Does he normally take proprietary information owned by somebody else to a foreign country? Is that his standard?

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, you know, first of all, we commissioned a report to do a fiscal performance review because we inherited a hell of a mess, right? Now, the previous government never commissioned such a report. So, of course, they could travel willy-nilly wherever they want without reports like that because they were never, ever the beneficiaries of any significant analysis or work to try to get out of the mess that they created. Evidently, we understand why now: because the member's said that he doesn't care about deficits and he thinks that bond rating agencies are part of some neo-liberal conspiracy. So why would the previous NDP government ever, ever invest in looking at the fiscal performance of our province or reviewing it? They never did.

So now he asks me, did I read a report? Of course, I read the report. Yes, yes, I found it useful,

and it was produced for Cabinet. And the member says, well, you know, that's just an excuse. Well, actually—actually—it isn't an excuse. Actually, it's a fact. It's advice to Cabinet which is pretty well understood throughout the history of parliamentary democracies, is a pretty darned good reason—*[interjection]*—why you would want to make sure, especially—and the member says proprietary information. Sure you got to protect proprietary information; that's just common sense. Why would you break the trust of the people who you hope will help you in the future?

Now, the members opposite, the members of the NDP, didn't really ask for anybody to help them when they needed help, and that's, you know, darn it. I admire that in, you know, young kids when they try to move forward with their life and be independent; we've all—some of us have had experience raising kids. I admire that behaviour in children when they take on tasks, they pursue them, they try to do their best and, you know, they may fail. But when you're an adult and you're elected to represent other people and their best interests and you're spending hundreds of millions of their dollars, year after year after year, more than you're bringing in, while you're jacking up their taxes, you would think, just maybe, when you have not one, but two, downgrades in your credit rating, and when your health-care services are ranked 10th out of 10 and your educational outcomes of your students are dead last and families are waiting, thousands of children need care, whether because of poverty or because of child care, and the waits are growing longer, you'd think at some point, that somebody in the previous administration would ask for some help, because it was clear it wasn't coming from within. All that was coming from within was antagonistic internal rebellion, personal dysfunction, attacks from Cabinet ministers on their own leaders and on each other; that's all that was happening.

So now the member chooses to attack me for leading a report, which we commissioned, which we believe will lead to improvements in the financial situation of our province. I welcome the attacks.

**Mr. Allum:** This is the Estimates process, and in Estimates we ask questions of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or Crown ministers on matters of public interest. We've been trying to get a straight answer from him today on why he promised, committed, looked Manitobans straight in the eye in June 2016 and said 97 per cent of the report would be made public. And today he's given three different answers and, depending on what time it is, it's a new one.

First it was Cabinet confidentiality. Then it was proprietary interests. Then it's protecting the names of Manitobans who may or may not have participated in his bogus public consultations.

It's not a multiple choice here where we go to D and it's all of the above. He says he read it. People of Manitoba want to be able to read it to know if it was—what was in it, to know if they got value for the money and whether it informed the actual budget that came out. And on each question he stonewalled. He hasn't answered. He's refused to answer. *[interjection]* And I can hear the member from Brandon West chirping across the table at me, and I'm not sure why that is, just as the member from Emerson was just doing it a second ago. I'm not sure why that is. You cautioned me, Mr. Chair; maybe you want to caution these two members as well.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I cautioned you after your second event, and I will caution them when I get the—when I get back to it, which I am doing right now. But I don't appreciate you challenging the Chair, because you, on the second event, when I did.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, I wasn't challenging the Chair. I was asking a question of whether you might want to caution the members across the table in the same way that you cautioned me, because we're trying to get a straight answer out of a Premier who quite simply refuses to give the people of Manitoba a straight answer.

You looked them in the eye, sir, and you said 97 per cent of that report would be made public. That's why we're having this conversation today. We've tried to say what's changed; you won't—he won't answer. We've tried to say which answer is it. You give a bunch of answers and you go—he goes back and forth all over the place, and then he goes on some diatribe that belongs more to the history books than it is relevant to today.

The fact of the matter is, the Premier doesn't seem to want to be open. The Premier doesn't want to see—seem to be transparent. He merely wants to state the words, but he won't actually walk the walk. And that's a disservice to the people of Manitoba.

He told them he was going to be better, Mr. Chair. He's not better, he's much, much worse.

So I want to ask him right now. Make it simple for the people of Manitoba today because I'm going to go to my constituents and I'm going to post the Q and A we've had today where you—the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) been giving direct answers and he has

not answered one question forthrightly or with any kind of substance of interest to the people of Manitoba.

So as we—our time draws near today, will he tell us in a yes or no answer, just for once, is he going to release either of the KPMG reports either on fiscal performance review or on the Health audit. Is he going to release these reports to the people of Manitoba, yes or no?

**Mr. Pallister:** A couple of things—couple of things. First of all, the member has recited into the record three very legitimate reasons that we have given him as to why certain aspects of the information are protected. The proprietary issue is one; the lack of preclearance from confidentiality guarantees is the other, but they apply to different aspects of the information. And so the member—I don't think the member is as thick as he's putting on. I don't think he really doesn't understand. I think he does understand. I hope he does understand that these are very legitimate reasons why certain different parts of hundreds of—thousands of pages of information cannot be released.

I have undertaken to make sure that we do everything we can to eliminate those reasons—or whenever they're not legitimate, you know, sometimes they are, as we mentioned. The proprietary issue I think the member knows that his previous government did not release information on numerous occasions due to proprietary concerns, and I have not criticized his predecessor in any way shape or form for not releasing that information, because I respect the fact that those are legitimate reasons.

The member threatens to put information out to his riding. Look, that's his right to do, but I would encourage him not to put out information such as he did in the previous months prior to the last election that tries to frighten civil servants and their children again. He sent out mass mailers telling everybody that would listen in his riding that they should be afraid to lose their job, you know, nurses and teachers should be afraid.

This is the kind of behaviour that demeans our career as public servants. Frankly, it is not defensible in any way, shape or form. The member knew darn well when he sent out the information that it was bogus information.

Now, he talks about our consultation process being bogus. He used the word bogus. Bogus. Now,

I've already put on the record what I think of the previous government's tendencies towards spending a lot of money promoting that they were doing prebudget consultations and then not doing them. And then when they did them at all, not listening to what they heard.

But our process I will defend, and I will defend it again by saying to the member we did consult with thousands of Manitobans. We did listen and we produced a budget, which he has yet to ask me about, which was a result of that listening. That is nothing but a very honest deliberative democracy exercise and we engage in it sincerely and we're acting on the advice we heard.

Now, you know, the member wishes to threaten by saying he'll put out information in his riding. Again, I just encourage him not to lower himself to the level he stooped to about a year and a half ago when he, again, tried to put fear in the mailboxes of families that work hard in their careers.

Not the way to behave. Disrespectful behaviour I think, insulting the intelligence of many of his own constituents who communicated to us that they felt insulted by it. Children read these mailers. I certainly did when they came to our home. As a young boy, I read the things that came in our mailbox. I didn't open my parents' letters, but I did read the things that were sent whether—of the nature of some of the things the member is talking about sending. And if—as the child of a teacher in a home where that income from that job meant everything to us, to receive something that said my mother was going to be fired, that would've shaken me up pretty badly, and my brother and sister too.

\* (16:50)

So I ask the member to consider that. I ask him to consider the real feelings of other people in respect of his conduct. It would be, I think, an emboldening thing for him to do. And I think it would be helpful to his—to restoring in some small way the reputation that he has so eroded with his previous behaviour.

**Mr. Allum:** You know, there were hundreds upon hundreds of nurses on the steps of the Legislature today. I didn't put them there. They came of their own free accord because they are very afraid of the disruption that the Premier is going to cause in the health-care system. And they're equally afraid for their very jobs. That's why they were there.

We know already that he's ordered that 900 people be laid off at Hydro—though he said he wasn't going to interfere with Hydro—but he ordered those jobs to be lost. He's also arbitrarily said 15 per cent of the workforce of other Crown corporations also should lose their jobs. So if he wants to talk about threatening jobs, yes, he's doing it, all right. And I'm—our fear is that he's going to actually carry out his threat and people are going to lose those jobs. But we'll talk about jobs some other time.

What we're trying to do today is simply get a straight answer from the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of Manitoba on a straight question about the KPMG financial review. And he's refusing to give a straight answer.

If, in fact, it was all three answers when we filed our FIPPA request, it was only one of the answers that it had to do with Cabinet confidentiality; then he pivoted to a different answer altogether about proprietary interests; then he pivoted to another answer altogether about protecting the names of people who participated in his public consultations. He's not being straight with the people of Manitoba. And he's very much in danger of becoming a one-term premier because he's not honest with Manitobans about the very report that he himself has commissioned.

So I want to say to him if there's a proprietary matter related to KPMG, will he at least release the contract so that we can see that the contract between the government of Manitoba and KPMG, in fact, prohibits any release of that report.

**Mr. Pallister:** Okay, first of all, just a few falsehoods that the member—or erroneous statements the member made that need to be clarified here.

First of all, in respect of the politicization of Manitoba Hydro, we know the previous government's record on that. The member knows it too. And the member knows that in the old days that the politicians might have—in his political organization—ordered Hydro to do things, certainly. Like, for example, build a bipole line halfway around the province instead of down the east side as the experts told them to do. That was a political manipulation of Manitoba Hydro.

But that was the old days. We're respecting the management at Hydro's decisions to try to rectify the massive debt hole that the previous administration dug for them with its overexpansion of Manitoba

Hydro. We are respecting the fact that they have challenges and they have to face up to them.

The member put on the record false information, misinformation, maybe out of confusion—I doubt it, Mr. Chair; unfortunately, it continues to happen—of 15 per cent layoffs. The 15 per cent he refers to is a management trim at the top of the core of government and of Crown corporations. The previous administration expanded the size of the organizations at the top. They added literally dozens and dozens and dozens of positions at the top of the organization. Certainly front-line workers told us again and again they felt suppressed and not listened to by these management structures, and so the 15 per cent the member refers to is a trim of management positions at the top of the organization.

On the issue of nurses being afraid, no doubt, change is a frightening thing. And I respect the fact that people in any walk of life who deal with fear generated by change have a challenging circumstance to face. And Nelson Mandela once said that courage is not the absence of fear; courage is the willingness to seek progress in the face of fear. The member has chosen to focus on the fear, not on the progress. The member has chosen to endeavour, as he has in the past sadly—I referenced that earlier—to activate the fear, to inflame the fears of people, to make them afraid. He seems to think it would benefit him somehow. I don't think so; I don't think it benefits anyone.

There are changes that are necessary. Nurses have told us that; front-line workers have told us that. The statistics tell us that. Canadian Institute of Health Information says we have the longest wait times for many surgical procedures, diagnosis, and emergency care in the country of Canada. We've been told that, and the previous administration knew that and failed to act to rectify that—to address it.

Now they did throw money at it; there's no doubt of that. In fact, hundreds of millions of dollars was allegedly taken and thrown into supposed wait-line reduction which didn't occur. So they know how to spend, they knew how to spend without effect—without positive outcome. But the fact remains that—and I accept it—that change can make people afraid. Absolutely.

What the member is missing, though, is the fear of not changing. And I don't think he has fully considered—I don't believe he has fully given consideration to the 600,000 hours Manitobans spent last year waiting in emergency rooms for care, or the

inflamed–inflated numbers of people who walked away after hours of waiting and didn't get the care that they had sought. I don't think he's considering those things.

I think it's unfortunate, but I think he is looking to inflame the fears of people who are understandably concerned. Not as the WRHA has already said publicly, they believe there will be very minimal, if any, consequences in terms of people. I think the quote was from Milton Sussman—who the member knows as former clerk of the Executive Council of the Province of Manitoba, for heaven's sakes, under the previous administration—has said that if people want to work, they'll be work for them. That's not the issue.

The issue is, of course, any change can create fear, and the member attempts to create more with his comments, his misrepresentations, his fabrications, and his constant attempts to make people less satisfied, content, and secure in their lives.

**Mr. Allum:** Well Mr. Chair, what the people of Manitoba fear is going back to the 1990s when the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was then a Cabinet minister in the former Filmon government which—1,000 nurses were laid off, 700 teachers lost their jobs. And already we're seeing people beginning to lose their jobs. And we know, in addition to that, that as the government begins to walk backwards on project commitments, many, many more jobs are going to be lost in the future.

And so we've been asking today if the Premier would provide us with the KPMG financial, fiscal audit—value-for-money audit—so that we can see if it's KPMG who recommended that there be significant layoffs, or if this is the Finance Minister's doing, or if this is the Premier's doing.

Unfortunately he's stonewalled today, Mr. Chair. He hasn't provided a straight answer to straight questions. He's done everything but. In fact, he's contorted himself into a political pretzel trying not to answer questions that are reasonable and that the people of Manitoba deserve to know.

So I'm going to give him one last chance today to do the right thing and do right by the people of Manitoba and make a firm commitment to live up to his word that he made in June 2016 that 97 per cent of the report would be made public.

Will he do that today? Will he tell the people of Manitoba straight in the 'yar' that he'll love–live–

straight in the eye, will he live up to his word that he made, his pledge, his commitment, his promise that he made in December—or in June 2016 that he would release 97 per cent of this report? Will he do that for us today?

Will he come clean with the people of Manitoba, because otherwise we have reasons to suspect that this—that maybe the report wasn't written? Or maybe we—maybe they paid for it and got less out of it, or maybe they changed from draft one to draft five. You see, the trouble is that we are unable to rely on the Premier's word.

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

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

\* (14:50)

**Madam Chairperson (Colleen Mayer):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** I just wonder if the minister would like to invite any staff forward.

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I'd like to invite my staff to come forward and join me. You'll get better answers.

**Mr. Kinew:** Just a brief follow-up to what we were discussing at the end of yesterday, was a program which will provide \$6,000 for employee training for various companies to do, I guess, professional-development work.

Just wondering if the minister could tell the committee which other companies are a part of this program right now.

**Mr. Wishart:** We do have a number of programs, some of them are quite small, but the large ones that we currently have contracts with moving forward: Canada Goose, Price Industries and Loewen Windows are three that we currently have major agreements with. This is a fairly widely used program and one that we think works particularly well to get folks back into the work place and get the training needs.

It's really driven a lot—their training needs completed—driven a lot by industry, so there's—we know that there is a job—a good job at the end of it.

**Mr. Kinew:** Can the minister tell the committee how many new schools will be built for the K-to-12 system in 2017-2018?

**Mr. Wishart:** The only school that will be officially opening during that fiscal year will be Sage Creek.

**Mr. Kinew:** And which schools are currently in development, or in the pipeline to be built?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question.

Our department is working on a long-term capital plan—it's actually a 10-year plan. However, because that's not through the approval process, we can't actually share that at this point in time. In the immediate future here, we are working on construction of two schools. One is K to 8; it will be in Winkler. And another one will be in the Hanover School Division, and it is a high school.

**Mr. Kinew:** Can the minister share with the committee what the numbers of students are in those divisions that require the construction of the new schools?

\*(15:00)

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question.

In the case of Garden Valley, which includes the city of Winkler, we need approximately—or, we have approximately 500 students in portables in that school division. There are actually 50 portables in use right now in that school division. The most, percentage-wise, of any school division in the province. There are actually kids in those schools there, that are now going into the high school, that have never gone to school in anything but a portable, ever, and are—very limited access to recreational facilities, including a vastly undersized gym. And in the case of the one K-to-4 school, I believe it is, they've had to take a portable and convert it to a washroom facility so that we had adequate washroom facilities.

So it is definitely overcrowded in a major way. Case of Niverville—sorry, in the Hanover School Division rather, we have 49 portables in use in that school division right now. We need approximately 325 additional seats—additional spaces by 2019, so it is very crowded.

It is a—kind of a complex, evolving process here, because we have to keep track of any new

developments that are planned to occur during that time, because they actually respond more quickly, in many ways, than we can. They can put up—as the member certainly has witnessed in some of the new developments around Winnipeg—they can build houses pretty quickly once the subdivision approval process has gone forward. And in some of these communities, there are multiple subdivisions already at play. So, it depends very much in terms of dynamics, so we're always monitoring the number of new developments that are taking place.

The old days when you got limited number of houses in new developments and so the growth was more steady, it was a little easier. Now new developments tend to come in, and because of the building capacity in the community now, you might see an increase of 100 or 200 houses in the course of a single year. That puts some very rapid changes in terms of dynamics on the communities, and so it is a very challenging process to determine not only where you need them now, but where you will need them in the future. And so, we're always monitoring what's going on in terms of that.

That said, we are trying to develop a 10-year plan to give more predictability to the school divisions as to what's going to happen and when it might happen. That too will be subject to the change in—ongoing in terms of the community development. So, it'll probably be evolving a little bit, and we will certainly be constantly monitoring those numbers to make sure that we are where we need to be with an additional capacity.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, would I be accurate in calling these Niverville and Garden Valley schools? Can I—is that what they're called in terms of the—or, what are the names for these schools, I guess, is a better question to ask.

**Mr. Wishart:** That would be up to the school divisions, of course, in terms of the naming, so that's why I refer to school divisions. Yes, it's—Hanover and Garden Valley are the two school divisions in question.

**Mr. Kinew:** How is the Province going to pay for the schools in Hanover and Garden Valley?

**Mr. Wishart:** As we're still in the process of going through the funding—acquiring funding for these two schools, it's absolutely impossible to say definitively how they were done. It—or, how they will be done, because it's not completed yet. But we are attempting to use the traditional bid-and-build process, so the



traditional funding model will be what we're planning on.

**Mr. Kinew:** Will public-private partnerships be used to fund the construction of these two schools?

**Mr. Wishart:** As the member knows, under the current existing legislation it would be a long and involved process to use any type of P3 funding model, so currently the answer to that question would be no.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, what role does the—or, what role would public-private partnerships play in this 10-year capital plan that's being developed by the department?

**Mr. Wishart:** In terms of our 10-year capital plan, it is still in development. How it would be funded—funded depends on a lot of variables including whether or not legislation changes within the province of Manitoba, and the member knows the current status of that as well as I.

We are certainly not against exploring alternative funding models. We have said that publicly before and we will continue to do that. We think that there is no reason not to at least take a look at this. We're not really tied with ideology on—in regards to that. We are prepared to look at good funding mechanisms of all types and certainly that would be one of the options we would be considering.

**Mr. Kinew:** What criteria will the minister use to evaluate what's the funding model—P3 or otherwise—that's in the best interest of the public school system to use for construction of these schools?

**Mr. Wishart:** I think we would probably be using the same basis that any government would that was trying to represent the best interests of their tax payers and, to some degree in this case, the ratepayers, too, of the school divisions in question.

So it would be value-for-money, whether or not the type of build would meet the needs of the community in terms of education process, so whether it meets the needs of the students and whether it meets the needs of the school division. So these are, you know, sort of general 30,000-foot reviews and that's the principal criteria.

The member is certainly asking a lot of speculative questions here. Until legislation is passed, it is just that, speculation.

**Mr. Kinew:** In other jurisdictions that have used, you know, public-private partnerships to construct schools there's been some unanticipated, I guess, repercussions of using the funding models. Nova Scotia, they had an Auditor General's report delivered into the practice.

I was wondering what best practices the department has drawn. I'm assuming they've reviewed that AG report from Nova Scotia and others. So I'd like to know what best practices—things to look out for, if you will—things to do, things not to do—have been drawn by the department from that sort of environmental review.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and I thank the member for the question, he made reference to the Nova Scotia example and we've certainly reviewed some of the information and some of the examples that were done in Nova Scotia.

I tend to look on the Nova Scotia example—which is roughly 20 years old now, I think, in terms of when it was initiated—as an early version, or an early generation of P3s. We've certainly seen a number of other provinces, in fact, all—pretty much all other provinces have one form or the other used P3s, whether it's for schools or whether it's for other types of initiative. And we, as Canadians, have learned a great deal about how to use this financial tool that's available.

\*(15:10)

Certainly, there's some very good examples, both in Ontario and west of us in Saskatchewan, where they are just completing construction of 18 schools under different formats and different lots of P3s during that time. We would certainly want to learn best practices. I think it would be responsible of us as a government, and I think that's what Manitoba taxpayers would expect of us, that we would have a long, hard look, but they are used frequently in other provinces and have been very successful.

But there are certainly things to be learned from looking at some of the earlier versions that had some issues, and I think there is a warning to be had in that.

Whatever we move forward with here in Manitoba, we would certainly be not doing due diligence if we didn't learn from these and didn't try and put in place best practices here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Kinew:** Does the minister think that Saskatchewan's education system is a good one to emulate?

**Mr. Wishart:** For clarity's sake, because that's a pretty broad question, are we talking about educational results, or are we talking about construction of facilities?

**Mr. Kinew:** We're proceeding in a global manner, so it's a global question.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, as I have only limited time left to answer the question, in terms of their construction process, they've certainly learned a few things as well. We have had some discussions with them to see what their evaluations were on how the P3s worked for them, as would be appropriate. I will certainly prepare to look at what they have done.

In terms of their educational results, their results are very much in the same range as ours, depending on what category you look at and what age group. We would hope that we can do better than that, and I think, frankly, I owe it to Manitoba's students to try and do our best.

As the member knows, our teachers are amongst the best paid in the country. They're well trained. There is certainly no constraints in regards to our ability to—and, in that regard, to improve the results for our students in Manitoba, and so we're quite prepared to work with both the educational system in terms of the school divisions and the teachers to try and get better results for Manitobans, and I think that's, frankly, what Manitoba parents are expecting from us and we will attempt to do that.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, delving into some specifics about the public-private partnerships used in schools. So, in Nova Scotia, I think there was one instance where a private company was contracted to do the build but also the operation in the school, and then this private company turned around and rehired the division that the school was located in to deliver the operations for the new school that was built. It seems odd to me to have, you know, a situation where a provincial government contracts out to a private company just to charge a small profit margin on essentially having the division itself deliver the operations for the school. It's a situation that seems odd. You know, I'm not sure how that was allowed to happen.

Can the minister commit that that sort of scenario wouldn't happen in Manitoba if they are to pursue via public-private partnerships?

**Mr. Wishart:** Madam Chair, as we don't know what the final models would look like here, and Manitoba has legislation that's still pending, but the example that the member brought forward as to what occurred quite a few years ago in Nova Scotia is an odd one. It is certainly outside of the normal realm of what happens when jurisdictions use public-private partnerships, so it is certainly not in the mainstream, but we haven't done a call for proposals or anything like that, so it would be purely speculative to answer any questions in regard to how they would be structured. We would be looking to learn from all jurisdictions across Canada as to how best to structure these things.

Certainly, it's an ongoing learning process. We are looking for to get the best value for dollars spent for Manitoba taxpayers, and we're also looking to get the best facilities in terms of meeting the needs of the students now and into the future because when you invest in schools—we have many schools in Manitoba now that are 100 years plus in age, so we certainly have to think well down the road as to what—to meeting the needs now and into the future. These older schools, certainly, are high-maintenance situations here in Manitoba. Something that we struggle, frankly, to keep up with the needs. Reviewing the other day the replacements of—for heating systems in one, and the heating system had been there 67 years, well beyond its useable life expectancy. So we have some issues in terms of maintaining the schools that we have existing now.

So we are certainly looking to build for the long term with new schools, and we want them to be ones that are cost-effective now and into the future, and meet the needs of students now and into the future.

**Mr. Kinew:** But why not rule it out, Madam Chair? Why not rule out a situation whereby a private company is paid money to just contract operational school services back to a school division?  
*[interjection]*

**Madam Chairperson:** Honourable Minister.

**Mr. Wishart:** Sorry, Madam Chair.

We're not a government that is prone to ruling out things simply because of a philosophical point of view. We are prepared to look at value for money. I suspect the member might well be right that that would not be one of the—certainly, the best choices, but to rule it out without even looking at the numbers is irresponsible for any politician to do.

I think it's—it behooves them to pay attention to the fact that they are here spending tax payers' dollars and trying to get the best results for those tax payers' dollars. It would be unlikely in mind that that would be the best value, but I cannot predict the future, and I don't see how anyone else could. We certainly would want to look at what would be the best pace.

That said, certainly the early versions that were used in Nova Scotia clearly had some issues. There's been an Auditor General inquiry into it. I've looking at the results of that Auditor General's report. I'm certainly aware that there are issues in how P3s are done. But, you know, things change in terms of financial tools. There are financial tools available now that we never dreamed of 20 years ago. So we certainly—and we're talking about schools that have life expectancies, at minimum, of 30 years. And much longer, as we just reviewed.

So we need to pay attention to how things are structured and to make sure that we can try and see it, as accurately as possible, down the road 30 years to make sure that we're going to get a good facility now and into the future.

**Mr. Kinew:** One of the other issues that was identified in the Nova Scotia report was a relatively large percentage of the program dollars were spent on interest costs. Like, I think it was nearly half of the overall amount was spent paying interest.

We know that the government can borrow money more cheaply than can private companies, so what steps will the government take to ensure that there is good value for money with respect to interest costs when public-private partnerships are used for school construction?

**Mr. Wishart:** I may remind the member that, certainly, we're looking at interest rates in a different period of time—where they were not record low as they are now.

But you certainly have to take that as part of the consideration, as part of the value-for-money process, which you're having to pay or what the—effectively is being charged to you in the case of private companies providing P3 construction. You can figure out what the effective rate is.

Certainly, there—the example from Nova Scotia is far from a shining example of how to do P3s. As I said, it was an early generation. It's probably not very appropriate to use as an example of where the industry currently is at. But, you know, certainly

there was some lessons to be learned from those early versions. I'd just like to point out to the member that, in Canada, we've actually had over 200 P3 projects completed since that time. So a lot of things have been learned.

But, if you want—you certainly don't want to ignore what happened in those earlier examples, and to learn from them. And I would hope that the industry itself has learned a great deal. And, certainly, governments have had the opportunity to learn.

\* (15:20)

One of the side benefits of being pretty much the last province to move on P3s is that we certainly have the opportunity to learn from what happened in other provinces, and I think that behooves us to try and do that. And, you know, they're only—most of them are quite happy to share their experiences and their examples with us. All we have to do is pick up the phone or send an email or sometimes even personal contact with the other jurisdictions and they're quite happy to share their good and bad experiences with you. And you learn a great deal that way.

**Mr. Kinew:** One of the other concerns from other parts of the country is when, you know, the private player in these partnerships walks away before the end of the term or when the company folds.

So what steps will be taken by the government to, I guess, protect taxpayers from some of these private market forces that may come into play during the lifetime of an agreement governing one of these schools?

**Mr. Wishart:** And this, too, is something that, as the member points out, has happened in some other jurisdictions. Every time something like this occurs, then, of course, then the resulting next generation of contracts put in place for these types of enterprise or type of constructions usually has that type of escape clause or consideration built into them.

The contracts that are used now in P3s are quite substantial in size and length. In the course, they show, I think, the benefit of having learned many lessons, some of them the hard way, from previous constructions across Canada. There are escape clauses in current contracts that are often used related to P3s and in terms of groups that if the contractor or the construction company doesn't perform as required—that's not substantially different than any construction contract. Those usually occur

in that, as well, because there is always a risk at any point in time that the company that you're dealing with may become insolvent. You have to protect yourself against those risks. You do that in either in the bid process, or whether or not P3s, you would have to do some of the same types of thing.

The biggest problem, of course, with P3s is it's over a substantially longer period of time, so you have to try and anticipate all of the what-ifs or may-happens that occur. And, as I said, one of the things you do learn as a government that's relatively late to the scene in terms of looking at P3s is what happened in other jurisdictions, and you have the opportunity to go to school on their misfortunes—and if I might use an education example—go to school on their misfortunes and learn what might have happened and make sure you protect yourself. And not only you as a government, but as taxpayers of Manitoba, you want to be sure that we put things in place to make sure that the taxpayers are protected, as well.

**Mr. Kinew:** And in terms of protecting the workers and the public, can the minister commit that the same sort of health and safety standards that would be in place on a, you know, more traditional sort of direct financing of a school, that those same health and safety standards would be in place through one of these P3 arrangements?

**Mr. Wishart:** As the member knows, any construction site in Manitoba is subject to the same Workplace Safety and Health regulations. It doesn't matter the nature of the construction, whether it would be P3 or whether it would be regular build-and-bid process, the same types of safety regulations would be in place.

**Mr. Kinew:** So that's a yes.

**Mr. Wishart:** That's a statement that says that any construction site in Manitoba would be covered in the same regulations.

**Mr. Kinew:** There have been situations in other jurisdictions where some of the health and safety standards in the workplace, like, during the construction process, were not being lived up to, were not being enforced and also, I think, some of the background checks were not taking place. So what is the plan to ensure that those standards are adhered to by the subcontractors and by the private partners in these organizations?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and the member's referring to some of the problems that arose in the Nova Scotia

example, because it was certainly touched on in the Auditor General's report down there. And they themselves have corrected, in their own jurisdiction, some of the safety checks that needed to be in place. At that point in time, if you looked at the regulations here in Manitoba, we were actually fairly similar situation, even on a bid-and-build process. That's 20 years ago. The standards now are quite different, and the safety checks in terms of protection of children now would be the same. Whether they were a P3 construction site or whether it was a traditional bid-and-build process for the school, they would be exactly identical.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, with respect to these two schools that are to be built in the near future in Winkler and in Niverville, are these the two divisions or regions within a division with the highest need based on, you know, population need for seats?

**Mr. Wishart:** Not sure I understood the question. *[interjection]*

**Madam Chairperson:** Sorry.

Honourable member for Fort Rouge.

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, so, when you look at just the question of need in terms of which students are busing the most students or have the most schools that are overcapacity, are these two schools in Winkler and Niverville the areas or divisions which have the highest need in the province?

**Mr. Wishart:** You know, it doesn't come back to just one factor. Busing usually is indicative of additional space within a school division in another location. That is not the sole factor, by any stretch, that we use in terms of estimating where we need the schools. In the case of Garden Valley School Division—and I touched on the number of portables that are unused in that division—there is simply no other space anywhere in the division or any neighbouring divisions available. So that would make them a very high priority.

We often have situations where some school divisions work very well and try and maximize the use of their available capacity in the whole school division before they come to us and say, we must have additional classroom capacity in one form or the other. Whether we do it by portables or whether you do it by builds, depends on projections now and into the future because we do get temporary surges, bubbles, as some describe, where you have to move portables in but you know that three years down the road, those numbers will probably go backwards as

that group of students works their way through the system to other jurisdictions or other facilities.

\* (15:30)

So we're looking at all of these things together, but the two that we have identified, we feel are the highest needs in the province at this moment. There are 37 school divisions in the province. Every one of them has a No. 1 priority. We simply have to take their recommendations, and we do recheck the numbers, of course. But we look at what they're telling us and what we—our assessment of the situation it is—is, and we try and plan to be sure that we have adequate facilities in place when the time arises because there is, of course, a lag in terms of the building process. And we—as I said, we're always doing assessments as to new developments because that has become a bigger and bigger factor simply because of the size of the new developments that take place. It's one thing when you talk about an additional 50 houses; it's another thing to talk about an additional 500 houses. And those are the scale of some divisions or some developments these days. So we have to take all of those things into account.

In answer, really, to the member's question, with the combination of things we look at, and busing is part of it, but capacity available to them is also a very big part of that. Those are the two that we have identified as highest needs at this point in time.

**Mr. Kinew:** What's the target construction date and open date for these two schools?

**Mr. Wishart:** I'm afraid I really can't give the member an answer to that question. These sorts of things have to go through the Treasury Board process and it is not completed yet.

**Mr. Kinew:** That is quite a process, from what I understand.

So, and I—you know—can the minister tell us whether these—construction would begin within this mandate of government?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well—and I thank the member for the question. I mean, we are certainly endeavouring to—as a government—to catch up on this.

You—the member's heard me talk about the investment or the shortfalls in investment in terms of the education infrastructure over the last 10 years. We were 10th in the country, so we know we have a problem. We are trying to catch up. We certainly are trying very hard to be proactive and creative and to work for—in the best interests of Manitoba taxpayers

and Manitoba ratepayers, at the same time meet the needs of students in the K-to-12 system that we're talking about right now.

We don't know all of the timeline answers. It would be great to have a crystal ball that can tell you that now and into the future. It simply doesn't exist. We are trying to move forward in a timely a manner as possible, but until it goes through the appropriate funding process, I can't give the member any definitive dates.

**Mr. Kinew:** Can the minister tell us, after these two which he's identified as the highest needs in the province at this moment, what are the next highest priority areas? Like, if he could just provide an insight into perhaps the next two or three high-priority schools.

**Mr. Wishart:** I can tell the member that we are reviewing the situation across the entire province.

I'm—we work very closely with the school divisions, and I am a great believer that the school divisions and their elected representatives and trustees deserve the respect of being notified of projects before anyone else that—especially that they have been put forward on their behalf.

So I really can't identify for the member anything that has not yet been approved on a speculative basis before anyone else would be notified.

**Mr. Kinew:** The question was not to identify projects which are slated for construction. The question is: Which divisions have the highest need for more school construction?

**Mr. Wishart:** I think probably the best indicator for the member in terms of high needs—and remember, this is only one element in the factor—is the number of portables that are in use in the various school divisions.

I mentioned Hanover having 52 in use, Garden Valley at 49, Seven Oaks at 46, Pembina Trails at 33, Winnipeg one at 32, Frontier at 32—and, of course, it's a bit of an anomaly, because it's much more spread out across Manitoba—DSFM at 29, Seine River at 20, and when you go down from there, there is very few school divisions without at least 10 or a dozen portables in play.

And as I say—indicated to the member, we use the portables as a tool in the process. We certainly work very closely with the school divisions in terms of their needs, even for portables, and try and use

that as a tool to balance the short- and long-term needs of the school division. But as I think you can see from the numbers across the province, we have around about 500 portables—*[interjection]*—460, as I'm corrected. Four-sixty in use, which is I think, a record number. Yes, a record number of portables in use right now.

So I think the member can probably understand what we're saying about the mounting pressure across the province in terms of additional classroom capacity. We are endeavouring to catch up for what has occurred in the last 10 years, and we will do our best to get Manitoba taxpayers and Manitoba ratepayers the best value for their dollar as part of that process. But we depend very much on the school divisions in terms of working together with—to meet their immediate needs and long-term needs as closely as we can.

We can't get by without them, and they can't get by without us. It's a very reciprocal arrangement.

**Mr. Kinew:** I notice Brandon School Division doesn't figure highly into that list of portables in use, and the minister identifies that as a important criteria to evaluate which school divisions need a new school. Does the minister then feel that Brandon School Division's request for a new school in south-side Brandon is not high priority right now?

**Mr. Wishart:** That's certainly now what I'm saying. What I read to the member was the number of portables that were in use in the various school divisions. I also did, in a previous question, refer to the fact that is simply one factor.

We look at—of course, busing was part of it as the member had identified, but we also look at criteria, not the least of which is the planned developments, and the growth in the school divisions, and the rates of growth in terms of new developments. So no, that is not a list of where the No. 1 or the No. 15 priorities are.

We are working very diligently to put together a long-term plan that we can't—that is not completed at this point in time, but we are in consultations with the different school divisions to make sure that we reflect their needs now and into the future.

You know, Brandon School Division has been able to show very significant rates of growth, and that is good. And we're probably closer to being current there in terms of rates of growth and the needs than we are in some other school divisions

where we have gotten quite far behind in terms of matching rates of growth with the needs.

Pretty hard to tell that student in Garden Valley, that has had nine years in the K-to-8 system and who's now going into a high school for the very first time, that he didn't have a need during that period of time when he had nothing available to him but portables, an inadequate gym capacity, low ceiling, small space, that was often used as a classroom during that period of time. I know I talked to students there that will have access to a gym for the very first time when they get into high school.

**Mr. Kinew:** Will the government build a new school in south-side Brandon during this mandate?

**Mr. Wishart:** Yes—that's not in answer to your question by the way, the yes.

Really what we're talking about here is—are you—you're asking me to speculate on the approval process before it's even been put to either legislative change or to Treasury Board, and I cannot answer that question.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Kinew:** It's my understanding that the plans for the Brandon south-side school were already well developed and the process was underway, so I'm wondering what is the delay in terms of getting approval for a school in Brandon—new school in Brandon.

**Mr. Wishart:** I can honestly share with the member there that though there certainly has been efforts put into planning not only a site but a building itself, there was never ever any financial approval process put in place for Brandon or a number of other promises that were made, and that is the criteria that we go by. Promises don't mean anything unless there's dollars to go with them.

**Mr. Kinew:** Is the Waterford Green School for Winnipeg School Division a priority for this minister?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and thank you member for the question, he knows that I list Winnipeg one as one that has quite a few portables in place, so clearly that's a high priority, and the member also knows that there's lots of development occurring in that region. Those are two big criteria that we look at, but there, again, as approval process in terms of finances isn't in place, I cannot answer the member's question.

**Mr. Kinew:** And I noticed Seven Oaks is high, also encompassing that northwest Winnipeg area. What is the ask with respect to a new school there? Is that like a K to 8 or is that a high school that is needed to meet the seat capacity?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and thank the member for the question, thank you, Madam Chairman.

We work very closely with the school divisions as to how to make the best use of the capacity in a place like that, where multiple school divisions touch on the boundary. It would be a consultation between school divisions as well, and there have been instances in the past where schools have been swapped, where K-to-8s become high schools and vice versa. Those are all parts of the factors in that.

We are attempting to make—get maximum benefit out of—and use of the capacity that exists in Manitoba. I know there are a number of school divisions that are really very good in terms of adjusting their own catchment areas for different schools to make sure that that happens. There are also some school divisions that we think, frankly, could do a little better in that regard. I would say that Seven Oaks has certainly been a very good example of one that has changed their catchment areas to make maximum use of their capacity, so that is certainly an area that we know that has limited additional capacity, but we cannot make any announcements today, I can tell you that.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, having to transport students within a division can be a significant cost incurred by the divisions and, you know, given the fact that this year's operating grant was increased less than the rate of inflation, it becomes even more significant in terms of the pressure that it puts on the division's purse. So Winnipeg School Division, I'm told, spends approximately 800K on some of the transportation costs within that northwest Winnipeg region.

How importantly does that sort of operating versus capital cost figure into the minister's decision making when it comes into new school builds.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and I thank the member for the question. I am certainly aware that the costs of transporting students in the school divisions is not cheap. We certainly depend very much on the school divisions in terms of making sure that they make the best choices in regards to that. It's just one of the factors. The member's talking about a \$800,000-plus bus bill, a transportation bill; relative to some of the

rural school divisions, that's a drop in the bucket. *[interjection]* I'm not done, if I might.

However, it is always the choice of the school divisions. It is also not significant when you compare that to the cost of an additional school which would be in the excess of \$30 million.

**Mr. Kinew:** Can the minister compare the amortization cost per year of a new school and contrast that with the transportation cost?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I thank the member for the question.

I would remind him—I mean, he can do the amortization cost on a \$30-million school. That's sort of a ball-park number that we use for schools, usually about 400 students and that. He can compare that, but that \$800,000-plus bill that he's talking about doesn't just apply to moving students to one school. It's over the entire school division. So it might be 10 kids to this school and 12 kids to that school. You're not going to be able to do without that, no matter what happens. So it's not a very fair comparison, I would say, in terms of saying, well, you can reduce my operating costs by \$800,000 if you build another school. That simply would never happen.

**Mr. Kinew:** So can the minister do the math for me and share the amortization cost of a \$30-million new school construction?

**Mr. Wishart:** We are in the process of doing the math on it for the member.

**Mr. Kinew:** Thank you kindly.

So I'm wondering if the minister can update the committee on the status of the Kelvin gym. I understand there's been some meetings that have taken place there. What's the current status in terms of funding the new gym at Kelvin High School?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I can tell the member, of course—and I believe I did already share with at least one of his colleagues—the fact that we have had meetings with the Kelvin school group. We are in discussions with them. We have made no decisions nor have they, but we are examining options that might work for both them and for us, but no final decision has been made. So I can say we're talking, but no final decisions have been made.

**Mr. Kinew:** So there's been a significant amount of money that was fundraised privately which would, I guess, transform a new gym into an active living

centre essentially. What steps will the government take to help the community group that has raised this money so that there's not a lost value there for them?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, we certainly had a very productive meeting with the friends-of group regarding the Kelvin gym. I'd certainly encourage them. I'm not one to discourage parents or fund-raisers in the community from being involved in their local school and their local school division. I think it's a very necessary part of having a good education system anywhere in Manitoba that we have local engagement, local involvement. So we are continuing to have discussions.

They are also continuing to have discussions with the school division, because, of course, the school division is a major player in this decision-making process as well. And I think the member should probably go back to the school division and ask them where the Kelvin gym is on their priority list.

**Mr. Kinew:** I know the minister knows the answer to that question, so can he tell me where the Kelvin gym is on the Winnipeg School Division priority list?

**Mr. Wishart:** I think, actually, the member should go back and get that directly from the school division itself. I know what they gave us in terms of priorities earlier in the year, and I think that they've had some time to think about their priorities as well. So, if he wants an accurate and up-to-date answer, it's probably one he should take to the Winnipeg School Division. I'm sure he has some good contacts there. I can supply him—yes, I can supply him with some if he needs them.

**Mr. Kinew:** Thank you.

Will the minister build a new Kelvin gym during this government's mandate?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thought I made it clear when I answered an earlier question that we are in discussions and no decision had been made.

**Mr. Kinew:** And there is the project at Dakota Collegiate. I believe it's called Louis Riel School Division sports complex. Will the government be funding that construction project?

\* (15:50)

**Mr. Wishart:** And I thank the member for the question.

We did actually the very same thing with the friends of the Dakota field group. We met with them. We've had some discussions with them. I know that, in that case, they're going back and examining some of their priorities in terms of what is most important to them in terms of that particular project. No final decision has been made in regards to that process, either. But we are moving forward with them in discussion as well.

As I said earlier, I very strongly believe that we should listen to and encourage all local groups in terms of their engagement and their desire to be connected to the education system. I think it's very important that we have a strong connection between the education system and parents and other members of the community. I think it reflects very well on the community. It makes a stronger community. So we encourage that whenever possible, and we are working productively with that group and expect to meet with them as we do with the Kelvin group again in the not-too-distant future.

**Mr. Kinew:** Will the minister come to a final decision about this project by this summer construction season?

**Mr. Wishart:** At this point in time, no final decision has been made. Putting outside timelines on it would not really prove anything when the decision hasn't been made. So I can't really answer that question.

**Mr. Kinew:** In many instances, a non-answer is an answer by other means.

With this project slated to proceed this summer construction season, does the minister appreciate that saying there is no final decision at this time is essentially saying no to this funding?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question.

I would not actually accept that as a premise that he's putting—as being put forward by the member. We are meeting with them and the point of when construction would take place is, yes, I recognize a factor of when decisions are made. But that alone would not prevail on absolute construction deadlines.

We certainly know and work with the group. We're aware of the fact that they have some time constraints that they're under, and we certainly recognize that and are attempting to work with them. But no, I wouldn't agree with his statement that not making a decision at this moment would mean that the decision is made de facto.



**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Last year at Estimates we had a discussion about Tec Voc High School and the new wing that had been promised for the welding and the aerospace sector. We did some good discussions and I appreciate the minister even give me a call in the summer to talk about that.

There are no shovels in the ground yet, and I understand there's been some ongoing discussions. Could the minister provide a status update on what's going on with the project at Tec Voc school so that I can report to people in the community that truly want this great project to go ahead?

**Mr. Wishart:** We would need a moment to get the latest if you are patient.

Well, thank you, the member for his patience.

We are actually in the process right now of working with the school division and some of the engineers in terms of making sure we can actually do what we need to do, in that, as the member probably realized, that this is a kind of a cutting-edge vocational facility. I guess there has been some question about whether or not some of the equipment that we want to put into this cutting-edge vocational facility can actually be run in those set of circumstances, so that is a technical question that is currently trying to be resolved.

In the meantime, of course, there are some improvements being made in the Tec Voc High School situation where some piping is actually being replaced this particular construction season. That stuff's actually been waiting since 2008, so we are pleased to be able to do that, and, hopefully, we can resolve the issue of vocational hardware, if you want to put it that way, and suitability in that particular case, as soon as possible.

I think the member—and I'm pretty sure he supports the fact that we are trying to bring new generation vocational training into the high school facilities. As such, we are learning as we go because we're doing some new things and—but that in the long term will be of great benefit to not only that vocational facility but it'll be a good precedent for other examples across Manitoba.

One of the goals our government has is to get better engagement in the vocational system into the high school system. It's one of the reasons we actually changed the whole structure of the department and put trades and training in close association with the K-to-12 and the post-secondary system. And we've already seen some really good

synergies develop out of that. This would be another one. But it is one that is going through, I would say, a few growing pains, but we anticipate good results.

**Mr. Swan:** I thank the minister for that. And, indeed, we do want it to be a cutting-edge facility.

While you were gathering information from your department, the member for St. James (Mr. Johnston) and I were busy talking about the positive impact of the aerospace program, the fact that large Manitoba aerospace companies like Boeing, StandardAero, Magellan really look to Tec Voc as a source for trained workers who can actually step right out of the school and onto the shop floor in those companies.

Is—has there been any change in the proposed size of the other welding and aerospace wing?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and I thank the member for the question. I know he's very much on side with our desire to make these vocational facilities cutting edge. I think that they're very important in terms of our desire to work—to strengthen our aerospace industry. This and Sisler High School are—is another one where we do some work that leads directly into the aerospace industry, and they're absolutely great fits and they get people into really good jobs much more quickly than would otherwise be the case.

And you're absolutely right, they come out of the school and they can walk right onto the shop floor. They have the skills. They have the same equipment to work with. And that's one of the reasons we're running into some challenges in the Tec Voc case, because of the new generation of equipment that we'd like to get installed there.

In terms of his question about the actual square footage, there will be some slight changes. It's more around redesign to accommodate the equipment than it is about cutting back in any way. It's just a question of making sure that the equipment that's being brought forward can fit in the physical facilities that are there as well as possible. But there is no significant change in the size of the facility. I understand there's minor changes.

**Mr. Swan:** I thank the minister for that.

And I'll be speaking at a few junior high schools in the next couple of months and attending grads for grade 6 students and grade 9 students. And, as the member knows, my father was an aircraft mechanic, so I'm always looking to promote kids going into what I think is a very exciting career in Manitoba.

\* (16:00)

Can the minister just put on the record now: What is the then hoped time frame to begin construction at Tec Voc, and what is the expected time frame for that work to be concluded?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well we are still working with the school division and in the approval process in terms of actual construction dates, so I can't really give you an absolute number, and that it is in the '17-18 construction plans. So we're certainly working to do that.

The member made reference, of course, to the desire to work with the aerospace industry, and we're absolutely on-side with that in terms of how can we best make connections to that. I would share with the member that one of the reasons we were quite adamant that we needed very solid confirmation from our federal government on the Factory of the Future—National Research Council initiative was because we, too, want to tie into the training capacity. It isn't just about new technology, it's about new training opportunities that we see coming out of that.

I know that other provinces that are destined for factory of the futures actually are in the construction phase, and we seem to be getting fairly far off of that at one point in time. We feel much more confident now that there's plans in place to move forward, and we will be looking—as I made reference to the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) the other day—we need to know what to train people for and, in the future, that will be something that we incorporate in our plans with post-secondaries, and even in the vocational system.

Now, and into the future, is our ability to make use of that new training facility as that comes online, as well. So we're certainly working closely with the school division. We anticipate, you know, we'll have plans in place to move forward very soon. But, because of some of the changes in terms of engineering, there has been some slight delay in—actual construction.

**Mr. Swan:** I thank the minister for that.

Now, several months ago, at a public accounts committee meeting, I had a good discussion with the deputy minister about the community schools program, which has been around now for some time. West End schools like John M. King School and Wellington School in the Minto constituency benefit from community schools. Sister MacNamara School, which is close by, also has that program.

Can the minister just confirm that there are no changes in how the community schools program will work in fiscal year 2017-2018 or, if there are changes, if he could just explain what those will be?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question. There are really no substantive changes in the community school program for this year.

And, while I have the floor, I would update the member for Fort Rouge on the amortized costs of the school: 20-year debt on \$30 million at an assumed interest rate of 3.625, interest costs would be \$12,695,547 and no cents.

**Mr. Swan:** Earlier today I raised a question in question period about an announcement that was made at Sturgeon Heights Collegiate just yesterday.

We understand that the very popular and longstanding music program is going to be dramatically reduced in the next school year. I understand that a teacher is being let go and some of the performing groups will no longer exist. I wasn't at that being announced, but the explanation I understand was given to parents and students was that the cut was as the result of the funding announcement for St. James school division for the upcoming year.

I'm wondering if the Minister of Education would be prepared to meet with the parents and students in the Sturgeon Creek community and hear what they have to say and then perhaps give his explanation to them.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and I thank the member for the question. I endeavour to be open and accessible as much as possible with parents and teachers in the school division and the school divisions themselves.

But, as the member knows, the decision on what programs to continue or discontinue and what teachers to hire and which teachers not to hire are wholly within the school division. I would suggest that it would be far more productive for the parents that are concerned, and I share their concern in terms of loss of a long—obviously a long-held and very successful music program, to sit down with the school board and have that discussion first, because the actual authority remains with them.

You know—the member knows that that school division raised their education tax levy 6.7 per cent, so they certainly—and they're also coming off—not absolutely sure, but I believe they're coming off an increase in assessments. It was certainly general

across the province. In fact, for some school divisions, it was record jumps, but I can't remember the number specific for that school division, whether theirs went up or not in a major way.

Certainly, I would remain open to that, but I think it would be far more productive for them to first sit down and have that discussion with the school division. It is within their authority and they are elected representatives of that community, and I think they have a responsibility to have that discussion with the parents at some point in time. So that's where I would certainly encourage the member to direct his concern and have the parents do that first.

**Mr. Swan:** I will pass that on to the parents.

I mean the minister talks about St. James school division having to impose a 6.7 per cent increase for this year, yet also face cuts to programming. It is a school board that I think has never been known for wasting money or overspending on programming. I just want the minister to know that I expect what the division is going to say is that they felt they had no choice but to do this, given the funding announcement which was well under the—even the rate of inflation, to keep providing the same things.

So I do know that this is a school division that has been careful, but I will pass on the minister's comments to concerned parents and students, and it's my hope that a very successful program—and I mentioned some of the luminaries. I was not the best player in the band, nor anywhere close to it, nor was Mr. McFadyen, but it is a program with a proud history, and Arts Education Manitoba is very, very important, not just for students who want to pursue a career in the arts, but for all other students who gain from the discipline kids learn, from the teamwork, where, if you miss an accidental, the whole team is going to pay for it. I'm hoping the minister will be an advocate for continued arts programs in our schools.

**Mr. Wishart:** And I thank the member for the comments. I certainly appreciate the fact that not everyone needs to end up in a music group or have a stellar musical career to benefit from arts education that includes music, so certainly I would encourage the school division to look at what their options are. I would certainly concur with the member's statement that that school division has, in the past, demonstrated a very well-managed, moderate rate of growth in terms of costs addition, but I think the member also understands that we are—as a

government, have inherited a situation that has some fiscal challenges as well.

\* (16:10)

And I won't bear on it too much, but, I mean, it would be very easy for me to say had the previous government done the same sort of thing, we might not be sitting where we are right now.

**Mr. Kinew:** What's the dollar value of the operating grant provided to the University of Manitoba this year?

**Mr. Wishart:** The University of Manitoba, \$351.2 million.

**Mr. Kinew:** And what is the change, either in dollar value or percentage, from last fiscal year?

**Mr. Wishart:** The—was no change from the previous year.

**Mr. Kinew:** So even though, you know, inflation continues, the operating grant for the University of Manitoba is the same this year as it was last year, correct?

**Mr. Wishart:** That is correct. If you want to do comparisons across the country, you will find a number of provinces where cuts in excess of 3 and a half per cent were placed on post-secondary institutions. However, we maintained the existing funding.

**Mr. Kinew:** What is the dollar value of the operating grant provided to the University of Winnipeg for this year?

**Mr. Wishart:** The dollar value of the grant to the University of Winnipeg was \$63.9 million.

**Mr. Kinew:** And what's the change, either in percentage or dollar value, from last fiscal year?

**Mr. Wishart:** The change in terms of percentage was zero.

**Mr. Kinew:** And just as point of clarification—you know, I'm anticipating the answer to this question, but just to clarify: There was, I think, a one-time bump of \$1 million provided to the University of Winnipeg in the past. Is that now considered part of this operating grant, and you know, this—am I correct to assume that the number \$63.9 million provided by the minister does include that past one-time bump in funding?

**Mr. Wishart:** In '15-16 the bump was \$1 million. Last year, we increased it to 1.5, and it is part of the baseline funding now.

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, what is the dollar value of the operating grant to Brandon University?

**Mr. Wishart:** The dollar value of the grant for Brandon University was \$38.4 million.

**Mr. Kinew:** And the change from last year?

**Mr. Wishart:** The change from last year was the same as the other two universities, zero.

**Mr. Kinew:** Maybe I'll just ask as a set of questions to smooth things along—or speed things along, rather.

Can the minister tell the committee what the dollar value of the operating grants are for University College of the North, Université de Saint-Boniface, Assiniboine Community College and Red River College, as well as the change this fiscal to last fiscal?

**Mr. Wishart:** It'll take a moment.

*Mrs. Sarah Guillemard, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

\* (16:20)

Thank the member for the question.

Université de Saint-Boniface, \$17.3 million was their grant, and there was no change from last year to this year; ACC, the grant was \$30.3 million, and there was no change from last year to this year; University College of the North is \$32.7 million, and there was a slight decrease because of programs that were discontinued of \$1.03 million there; and Red River is \$107.7 million, and there was a slight change there because of a program that was discontinued as well of \$320,000.

**Mr. Kinew:** My pen moves a little bit more slowly than the minister spoke, so I'm just asking for clarification. So he said \$1.03 million decrease on UCN operating grant and 320K decrease on Red River operating grant.

Is that correct?

**Mr. Wishart:** That is correct.

**Mr. Kinew:** So in—okay, another point of clarification. In the Estimates book, it breaks out École technique et professionnelle as a separate name. I'm just wondering, can the minister confirm that that would fall under the operating grant of Université de Saint-Boniface or would that receive a

separate envelope of funding? One—and this is on page 108.

**Mr. Wishart:** That would all be part of the same allocation.

**Mr. Kinew:** So the Estimates book, same page, also lists contributions to CMU, Providence university college—Booth University College, Steinbach Bible College.

Could the minister tell the committee what the dollar value of those contributions are and whether there's been any change since last fiscal year?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, we will provide a number; I can tell you there was no change.

**An Honourable Member:** No change.

**Mr. Wishart:** Yes, but we'll give you a number.

I thank the member for the question.

The funding for CMU was \$4.4 million. For Providence, it is \$1.2 million. For Booth, it is \$369,000, and for Steinbach Bible College, it is \$230,000.

**Mr. Kinew:** And just to confirm, so there is no change in those values over last year?

**Mr. Wishart:** That is correct.

**Mr. Kinew:** So the Estimates book shows an increase of about, I think, \$2 million, roughly, in grants and transfer payments. So having seen a bunch of zeroes and then a few reductions, could the minister explain where the increase came from?

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank the member for the question.

Any change is due to principal and interest changes, and all of that is related to either current capital projects or previously existing capital projects. So it's strictly principal and interest changes that have occurred.

**Mr. Kinew:** In a time of, you know, continuing inflation, why didn't the department increase funding for post-secondary institutions this year?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question. I think he knows the answer to the question. We're a government that is attempting to get finances back on track in the province.

We have showed some restraint, focusing on—in some areas, education, as I think the member will probably note from the budget and from the details in the Estimates book, came away with a fairly high

priority in terms of increased capital and increased operating. But we are a government that is attempting to get finances in this province back on track. It is not a sustainable solution to continue spending more than you have coming in and leaving deficits that many of these same students will be expected to pay at some point in the future.

So that is the reason we're showing some restraint now to try and turn this around and to get our finances in this province back in a situation that will let these same students benefit in the future, and we will certainly be reviewing on a regular basis as we do, as part of our normal operations, where our priorities in terms of the dollars spent are.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Kinew:** Without an increase to the operating grant and an increase on tuition for post, and an increase—or a decrease, rather, to the tuition rebate, the burden is being borne by students now.

So why does the minister feel that that's an appropriate policy measure?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and as the member knows, and I know he knows the answer to this but continues to misstate it, the rebate was never available to students. You had to be a graduate to achieve on that and you know that from the tax returns that I'm sure you've completed yourself.

In terms of focusing on the students in terms of providing assistance, we very clearly got a message from Manitobans and from students themselves, and I can provide him with some quotes from CSF if he would like, that they would much prefer their support at the front end, that's why we have made significant changes in both the Bursary Program and also in the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative. I'm fairly pleased with the co-operation that we've been able to get from private industry to step up and provide additional dollars in response to the additional dollars that we, of a government, have put in this area.

And the changes we made in how that money would be delivered that changed the amount of money that's available through Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary from \$1.5 million a year in terms of money direct to students to \$20 million a year. And I am continually surprised that the member seems to think that that's a step backwards.

I have certainly heard from a number of students that they're much happier with this upfront approach

and we will continue to pursue that. We certainly think it's important that low-income students, in particular, have access to post-secondary education, which is why we've changed our Bursary Program to align it nicely with the changes that have been made with—from the federal perspective to make sure that low-income students have access to additional dollars. A combination between our program and the federal program to make sure that bursaries can be up—have up to \$5,000 per student can be put in place, and that is a significant amount of support upfront.

We are focusing on those that have a need in the program, and we have received a lot of comments. Yes, we've received a lot of calls around the rebate. We have also received an awful lot of comments saying we did the right thing by doing away with it. So, I'm not entirely convinced at all that we have put an additional burden on students. I think we're putting the money upfront where they asked.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, the minister stated quite emphatically there that the tax rebate money was not available to any students. Is that accurate?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question.

I said that the rebate was only available when you graduate, and that is absolutely accurate. The advance is available while you're still a student, that's a different program, as the member knows. And that program has been changed to the Bursary Program to accommodate upfront. So we continue to make sure that we're there to help students that are in need.

**Mr. Kinew:** And so can the minister explain to the committee how having recent graduates pay \$2,500 more a year in taxes is not increasing the burden on them as they complete their post-secondary educations?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and I thank the member for the question, but he continues to say that they are students. To be eligible for the rebate, you must graduate. Were we clear on that?

**Mr. Kinew:** Of course, there are graduate students who would receive the rebate as they begin masters or doctorate programs. These are also, you know, people who are paying off their students loans which are debts accumulated during the course of their study that they would apply the tuition rebate towards defraying the cost of.

So, again, can the minister explain to this committee how withdrawing that rebate and forcing

them to pay \$2,500 more per year is not increasing the burden?

**Mr. Wishart:** Could I ask the member to clarify when he says—who is them?

**Mr. Kinew:** Students, graduate students, young people receiving the rebate, all Manitobans who will now be paying \$2,000 more in year one, \$2,500 more—potentially—years after that, based on the changes to the rebate program.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well thank you very much to the member, and suddenly he's worried about the tax burden on Manitobans. It would seem that he clearly wasn't speaking up or wasn't present at the time of the PST increase when the government he wants to lead was—*[interjection]*—the government you want to lead was in power.

However, if you want to look at what that program—the rebate program was supposedly designed for, it was supposed to be an attraction or help retain Manitoba students. And during that period of time that that program existed—and we have some numbers on that somewhere. It's right here, I think. During that period of time when that program existed, which would be 2007 to 2016, we went from a net provincial migration—out-migration of 3,449 to a net provincial out-migration of 6,659. So I guess if you were to look at the effectiveness of that particular policy instrument, which is what it was, one would have to assume that it wasn't particularly effective.

Additional information, which you have to get by going to Finance to ask, who was applying for it and looking at the income distributions show that the majority of people that were claiming that were extremely high-income individuals. So I guess you can decide whether you were interested in providing support to people that are at the low end of the income or whether you were interested in providing support for those at the high end of the income curve. You have to make that particular choice yourself.

We looked at the amount of dollars in the program and the effectiveness in terms of what it was supposed to do, and whether it was working at what it was supposed to do, and made a decision. We changed our focus from after graduation to prior to graduation at the request—at students' requests—so we provided additional dollars to students up front.

The member can continue to lobby on behalf of the graduates if he so wishes, and I guess Manitobans will have to make that call at the next

election as to whether they think that's the right or the wrong way to go.

**Mr. Kinew:** There's a short remark made about the provincial sales tax there, and I encourage the minister to speak to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) on the subject of whether or not I registered any opposition to that particular policy move. I am sure he wouldn't want to run contrary to any information that the Premier shared during last year's Estimates process.

But setting that aside, can the minister tell this committee, during that period that he spoke about the interprovincial numbers, how many people applied for the tuition rebate program in each of those years.

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I thank the member for the question, but I'm afraid I'll have to refer him to the Department of Finance's Estimates for that type of information.

**Mr. Kinew:** Can the minister take it as a matter under advisement?

**Mr. Wishart:** The member has the option to take it to Finance, which has not completed its Estimates, and ask the question there, and that would be the appropriate process.

**Mr. Kinew:** So is that a hard no, as we say?

**Mr. Wishart:** I can tell you that is the answer we would have gotten from any of your previous—of the previous ministers. I do not have access to that information. It is appropriate to ask the Department of Finance for that type of information, and I would recommend to the member that he do that.

**Mr. Kinew:** What directives did the department give to the University of Manitoba during the faculty strike?

**Mr. Wishart:** The answer to that question would be none.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Kinew:** No direction then. What direction has the Department of Education given to the University of Manitoba with respect to their negotiations with the U of M Faculty Association that are taking place right now?

**Mr. Wishart:** We do not give direction to the university directly, so the answer is none.

**Mr. Kinew:** So the minister provides no direction to the university with respect to policy, programs, funding, other intergovernmental relations?

**Mr. Wishart:** On the issues that the member's brought forward in terms of policy and programs, we do provide advice. You asked specifically about compensation. We do not specifically provide them with any direction on the issue of compensation.

**Mr. Kinew:** And is the same true of executive and president salaries at the university?

**Mr. Wishart:** The member, from his past experience at universities, knows that the university themselves, through the senate process, actually set those, so the answer would be no, we don't send them any direction.

**Mr. Kinew:** And what has been communicated to the University of Manitoba with respect of some of the government's other legislative agenda, the wage freeze?

**Mr. Wishart:** On the issue of the wage freeze and public-sector compensation, it comes out of Finance, so the member should take that question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) in his Estimates process.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, for clarification, what comes out of the Department of Finance—the legislation itself or the dollar amounts, which the minister has already provided for this committee?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and I think the member needs to appreciate the difference here. We do supply the grant, and that is something that does come out of our department, but in terms of a mandate for public-sector compensation, that comes out of the Department of Finance. Those are two different things.

**Mr. Kinew:** So the faculty associations at the universities, the unions representing workers at the universities, will fall under this public-sector wage freeze?

**Mr. Wishart:** The answer to that question is yes.

**Mr. Kinew:** So what did the minister or the department communicate to the post-secondary institutions in advance of the wage freeze legislation coming forward?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, as I just explained to the member, that bit of information comes out of Finance. I think that's a question you should probably direct to Finance.

**Mr. Kinew:** So is it fair to say then that there was no consultation with the post-secondaries prior to this wage freeze legislation coming forward?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well I guess in terms of the member asking, did we consult with them; as it wasn't our jurisdiction, the answer would be no.

If the member is asking, did Finance consult with them; he should direct that question to Finance.

**Mr. Kinew:** Does the minister know whether or not the Department of Finance consulted with post-secondary institutions before bringing the wage freeze legislation forward?

**Mr. Wishart:** I think that's a question that the member needs to take to Finance. I am not privy to every meeting that they may have had over any period of time. I know that there was consultations made on the—by the Department of Finance, but I do not know who every person that they met with was.

**Mr. Kinew:** So how does the minister feel that he's able to make a proper judgment on the level of operating grant funding required for a post-secondary institution if he's not privy to the conversations with respect to the compensation side of those institutions? *[interjection]*

**Madam Chairperson:** Honourable minister.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and sorry for jumping the gun, there.

Of course, as the member knows, all of that is future decisions. So we are subject, of course, to changes that are negotiated that we are part of financing on, but as none of that has been resolved, it's impossible for me to speculate on what the impacts might be for us.

**Mr. Kinew:** And which capital projects at post-secondaries in Manitoba will be funded this year?

**Mr. Wishart:** The projects that have been announced to date are University of Manitoba Smartpark Innovation Hub and the Stan Pauley Engineering Building improvements. Another project would be Red River College's MotiveLab. University College of the North's modernized science labs are another capital project. And we also had a project at the Canadian Mennonite University Centre for Environmental and Economic Resilience. Those are the ones that are currently announced.

**Mr. Kinew:** Will the ACC North Hill redevelopment project be funded?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well we are in discussion with ACC on their capital needs. They've—been a number of projects, some of which have evolved. And the member may well also be aware that the Brandon

University has acquired some property in the city centre and is now engaged in discussions with ACC on what, jointly, they can do with that project.

\* (16:50)

So we will certainly continue to have discussions with them on their capital needs which, at the moment, appear to be evolving.

**Mr. Kinew:** So the University of Winnipeg had a proposal to fund a showcase for green energy on their campus.

Can the minister tell us the status of that project? Whether it would be funded or?

**Mr. Wishart:** I assume that we're talking about the Leatherdale Hall project and, if that is so, that's—was environment related. It was also a—showplace related. It is one that we are still in discussions with the University of Winnipeg in regards to.

It has changed from its original proposal, so we are having a look and in discussions with the University of Winnipeg on the current model.

**Mr. Kinew:** What is the timeline for that project moving forward?

**Mr. Wishart:** As to timelines moving forward, I could not put specific timelines around that at the moment because we're still in discussions with them on that.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, previously, we had debated a bill in the Legislature that would have allowed for kids in the care of Child and Family Services to remain as resident pupils of divisions even if they are moved out of the division in their placement, the idea being to follow up on recommendations from a report which had numerous suggestions to improve educational outcomes for kids in care. This being one of them. Just the rationale being that improving—well, allowing kids in care to stay in the same school would increase stability, would increase their educational outcomes.

So can the minister tell us, you know, at the time he stated his reason for not supporting that bill was that he believed that such changes could be accomplished under The Protecting Children Act, which was passed last session. So does he still feel that is the case, and can he update us on the progress made to date on that file?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question, and the member's referring to, I think, the protecting children's act that was passed in the first session. I

still believe that, and, in fact, we are working with families and with the school division superintendents to put in place a process to make sure that that is happening and will continue to happen in the future.

It's to no one's benefit—in fact, it's very much to the student's benefit, the child's benefit, if we can keep track of these children in the system. The previous government had a—and the agencies that served them in the Child and Family Services system—had a tendency to let children sit until the six-month temporary orders had expired and they had a placement—or, at least, a longer term temporary order. That six months very often turned into a child not being in the education system. That was not a very productive process, and, as the member knows, the results in terms of children in the CFS system and their success rate in the education system was under 39 per cent, if I remember correctly. It was certainly very poor, and that is not something that we want to perpetuate. We are working very vigorously with the superintendents and the school system to make sure that those kids are now back in the education system as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Kinew:** So it's my understanding that The Protecting Children Act can't override The Public Schools Act unless there's consequential amendments made under that protecting children legislation—consequential amendments to The Public Schools Act.

Is that correct?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I guess we're going to have to disagree on that because we've had legal experts look at it as well, and they assure us that we have legislation in place that will cover that need and we're quite happy to act on that, so I disagree with what the member's putting forward in terms of that The Protecting Children Act can't do the job. We believe it can and we certainly intend to make it do that.

**Mr. Kinew:** So, what has the minister done today to advance it?

**Mr. Wishart:** Quite a bit has been accomplished—I'm just getting the latest update. We are, of course, jointly responsible with Families in regards to this, so we have been working closely with the Department of Families to make sure that we are aware of every child's placement. Had the discussion already with school officials to make sure that we have their co-operation in terms of making this happen at the school level, and we've had agreement



from them, 100 per cent compliance agreement. They're quite happy to work with us on that, so we will be in a position, I think—well, some of it's already starting to happen, but by the end—position by the new school year to track every student and make sure that they get back into the school system as quickly as possible and in the school that makes them the most—makes the most sense for them to be back in.

I know the member had expressed some concern about children being moved from school to school because of the CFS system. We certainly won't encourage that, but when—there'll be some cases where simply they're moved too far. There'll be no other way to do it, but where it's possible, they'll be transported to the appropriate school so that they can finish their school year there.

It's very much to Manitoba's benefit, to the child's benefit, to all—to the benefit of all of us to make sure that these children that are in the CFS system have the best access to education we can 'achiese' for them. We're also looking at ways we can help the graduates of the CFS system get better vocational training, if that's what they so choose to do. The extensions of care that existed under the previous government didn't always yield very good results. They were, at least partly, in place to help with post-secondary education or after grade-12 education or vocational training. We are looking at better solutions in regards to that as well.

**Mr. Kinew:** Is the minister aware of any changes to the extensions of care that are coming?

**Mr. Wishart:** No, I'm not. We're looking at additions to that.

**Mr. Kinew:** And what resources—returning to the transportation question and, you know, continuity of learning for kids in care—what resources are being applied to help facilitate that?

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I thank the member for the question.

That was part of the discussion we had with the school superintendents, school officials. We are working within the current allotment that they will have, and they've agreed to work to make that work.

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, and I'm just mindful of the clock, so perhaps I would just put a few words on the record to the effect that I think that, you know, not just continuity of learning but improving educational outcomes for all kids in care is certainly an important

goal and, you know, hopefully, as we continue in this committee, we can talk more about some of the other recommendations that have been made and some of the other policies that can be put in place to help make sure that the maximum amount of kids in care graduate and proceed on to post-secondary and then good careers after that.

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

## HEALTH, SENIORS AND ACTIVE LIVING

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living.

At this time we invite ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

Could the minister and the critic please introduce their staff in attendance.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Yes, I have Dan Skwarchuk here; as well, today, is Deputy Minister Karen Herd; and Milton Sussman from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Minister.

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Today, I once again have Emily Coutts, our research co-ordinator with the opposition caucus.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you. A previous agreement questioning the department will proceed with a global manner but consideration will be that the topics would be related so that the ministers can have their staff—appropriate staff on for the day.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Mr. Chair, this afternoon I'd like to ask some questions about the KPMG report and I may veer into other subjects, but that will be where—at least where I'm going to start.

So my first question is the minister committed in June that he would release all of the KPMG Health Sustainability and Innovation Review to the people of Manitoba except for material that would be withheld for proprietary or legal issues.

Has the minister changed his position since that time?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member for the question. Certainly, one of the things that we thought would be valuable when we came to government was to take a look at things that hadn't maybe been looked at for a long time, so we commissioned, in the Health Department, although there was a parallel process within the core of government outside of Health, a report by KPMG to look at the health system in particular, mostly in terms of how it's aligned and the proper alignment of a health-care system. Sort of, if you were—not starting over, but if you had the opportunity to sort of set up a system from a less-developed place than it is now, how would you align it.

And so we believed, after a tendered process, KPMG won the award and began their work in terms of looking at innovation and alignment of the health-care system. I think that I've indicated publicly the issues around proprietary information and the release of information that can form advice to Cabinet, but I've also said that my expectation is that we are going to implement the vast majority of things that were recommended within the KPMG report, and as those things are implemented the member can certainly ask questions about whether or not they were recommended under KPMG and then through that process my expectation is that the vast majority of recommendations by KPMG will become public.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, if the minister has every intention to let the public know at some point in the future what is in the KPMG report, will he just now, today, in full, release the report so that Manitobans can see what was in the report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I think that, ultimately, Manitobans will have the opportunity to see a vast majority of the report. They'll see it through actions of the government. This is somewhat parallel to the discussion we were having on the Peachey report in terms of government is actually taking action on reports. We commissioned the report with the expectation that we would take action upon it. We will take action on it and members, of course, will—not just members of this House, but members of the public, will judge us based upon those actions as one would expect in the democratic system that we live in.

And I'm understanding of that and certainly prepared to answer questions about those actions and

to provide the rationale of government for the actions that are taken, whether they are recommended through the KPMG report, whether they're recommended through Peachey, whether they're recommended by many other individuals in the public who write or call or have participated in the various forms of feedback that the government has established for them to do that.

Of course, we can't act on every suggestion that every Manitoban might have, but it is valuable to take those suggestions in along with the reports, and my expectation is that we will be acting on most of them.

And so Manitobans will indeed get value for their money, because they'll see that those recommendations are put into action.

**Mr. Wiebe:** How much did the KPMG report cost government in total?

**Mr. Goertzen:** My understanding from officials is that the KPMG report, which was tendered to the public and was delivered both on budget and on time, was \$749,000 even, I believe.

**Mr. Wiebe:** When did the minister first receive—sorry, let me try that again.

When did the minister receive the first phase of the report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Just for clarity, for my sake, I think he's referring to phase 1 of the two-phase report, not a draft of a first phase.

**An Honourable Member:** Phase 1.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Thank you.

My understanding is that the department received phase 1 of the KPMG report on January 17th of this year. I would have been briefed on it, I'm sure, shortly after—not long after, although we don't have the exact date of the briefing. But it would have been relatively shortly after the department received it on January 17th.

**Mr. Wiebe:** When did the minister receive phase 2 of the report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** The Department of Health received the final version of phase 2 of the KPMG report on March 31st, which would have been the time allocated by the tender. So it was delivered on time and there was no additional budgetary cost.

**Mr. Wiebe:** When did the minister receive the final, complete report?

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Goertzen:** Look, I'll give my best answer here, which I know the member will probably say isn't always the case in question period, but the department received the second phase, phase 2 of the KPMG report, on March 31st. So that would have completed the work of KPMG, because they had produced the first phase previously. So that would have been the final work—their final report. As a minister, I saw it—I don't know the exact day, but it was about 10 days later or so—a little over a week later.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Why was the minister previously confident that he would be able to release most of the report? Was that based on advice from staff?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I mean, I always believe that we would act on the report, if not fully, then substantially. You know, member might ask and the members of the public might ask, well, you hadn't seen the report at the point. How would you know that you would act on the advice provided? And that's certainly a fair question.

And I'm sure that in any report that is provided there's give and take on different pieces of recommendation, but my view has been—and it's the same view that I took with the NDP-commissioned Peachey report—is that when experts are hired and they take a deep dive, so to speak—a deep analysis on something that you've asked them for—and that would be true for Health or other things—that you do that with the expectation that you're going to act on the things that you've asked for advice from.

So my expectation was, as the minister, that we would be acting on the vast majority of the things that KPMG would be reporting upon. Having now seen the report, I think that that is still true, and by that way, the public will be made aware of the things that were contained in the report.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So when did the minister then learn that the entire report would be proprietary to KPMG? Was that before or after he had his department prepare the RFP for publication?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I mean, I think in any report that's provided to the government, there are issues of proprietary matters. You know, some companies specialize in work and they use systems by which that work is created that is often unique and specific to that company. And so companies will maintain a level of expectation that the work that is directly specific to some of the things that they do as private

enterprises won't fall into the public domain. That's one type of a proprietary information.

There are often personal reflections in reports from individuals who provide advice within reports, and they have an expectation of privacy when they're providing that information. So I think there's always been an understanding that some information is proprietary to a report, but there's other things as well that come into play. There are some matters that are considered advice to Cabinet. The member will know that that's not just true under the current government. That was true under the former government as well. Matters that become advice to Cabinet are traditionally not always released.

So there's sort of at least three. I'm sure there are some that I'm missing specifics in terms of how proprietary information comes to be in reports that are provided to government.

But, again, my expectation, both previous—prior to seeing the report and now having seen and read KPMG in its entirety, that the vast majority of the report will be accepted, will be implemented. And by virtue of that, the public will not only see the information, they'll see it in action and they'll have value for money by virtue of the fact that there'll be changes in the health-care system that we believe in the short- and long-term will better the health-care system and do the things that we would have hoped to when the report was tendered.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Can the minister maybe just be a little more specific? Can he cite the specific clause of the contract awarded to KPMG that makes the document proprietary?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Just to go back a little bit in the interests of being entirely transparent, the member asked when I received phase 2 of the KPMG report. I told him I thought I received it within a week or so or 10 days of the department receiving it on March 31st. I was slightly amiss in my days. The days fly by fast in the Department of Health. They say days go quickly when you're having fun, and that is certainly no more true than in the Department of Health. And I received the report on April 13th.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Can the minister cite the specific clause of the contract awarded to KPMG that makes the document proprietary?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, you know, this is, I know, an important issue for the member. And, when reports are tendered by the government, we know that there are companies that often use models and methods

that are particular to their company, and they will, whether through contract or otherwise, have an expectation of privacy on their matters in terms of how they go about coming to their analysis and coming to their conclusion, and so that is certainly important that we respect that when it comes to companies who are doing work with the government.

More generally, we also know that there are interviews and expectations of privacy when individuals provide information in a report that is particular to that individual or that they feel needs to have confidentiality maintained around it, so those two things are certainly important.

But, more broadly, we know that certain things are considered to be advice to Cabinet. That is not unusual to this government. That is true of the former government and was true of governments—or is true of governments across Canada.

But, again, I mean, I think what the member's really asking is whether or not there is good value for money when it comes to this report and whether the public would be able to see that the money that was expended is put into action. And I would say that he wouldn't have to wait too long, that, certainly, there are recommendations through KPMG that will come forward publicly, be used publicly, and I'm happy to speak about that if he'd like.

But, you know, it's interesting because this is somewhat in a contrast to the discussion we had around the Peachey report where the member, not only in yesterday's Estimates but earlier on today in question period, indicated that we should not be acting upon the Peachey report, that we should be setting aside those recommendations. So it feels like somewhat of a contradiction where, in some ways, the member is saying, well, you know, you need to release every word of a report because that would show that action is being taken on what the public paid for, but on the other hand, he stands up and demands us not to take action on a report that his own government commissioned, and so I would find that to be strange and unusual. But I've learnt that many strange and unusual things happen in this Chamber.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Has the KPMG report been shared with the WRHA, with senior staff or leadership in the WRHA? Have they seen the KPMG report?

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Goertzen:** Not unlike the Peachey report, where there was a steering committee that was established

when it came to the formation of the report—and we spoke about that yesterday, about the various people who were on the steering committee for the Peachey report, including—the RHAs all had representation on that steering committee, the president of the Manitoba Nurses Union was representative on the Peachey report steering committee, the executive director of Doctors Manitoba also was on the steering committee for the NDP-commissioned Peachey report.

There was also a steering committee for the KPMG report so that there could be advice provided and input given to KPMG on Manitoba-specific issues. So there were senior members of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority who were a part of that steering committee.

So, in short, yes, they would have been privy to the report.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I'm sure the minister is going to do this anyway, but who was on the steering committee for the KPMG report, and did they get to see the final report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** My understanding is that the senior management from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority who would have been represented on the steering committee would be limited to Milton Sussman.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So is that the complete list of the members of the steering committee?

**Mr. Goertzen:** And just—correction—also senior management with the WRHA, Lanette Siragusa, who is the senior manager for surgery for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, is also on the steering committee.

**Mr. Wiebe:** And is that the complete list of everyone who was on the steering committee?

**Mr. Goertzen:** My understanding is, in addition to the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, there would have also been representation from rural regional health authorities. There would have been representation from the Ministry of Health and from government as well.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So maybe the minister can provide the names of all of those people that were on the steering committee, and while he's at it, maybe all of the people—he may have done this yesterday; if he did, maybe he can just make that clear—all of the members of the steering committee on—of the Peachey report as well.

**Mr. Goertzen:** All right, so the steering committee for the preach–Peachey report, not preachy report, would include Karen Herd, who chaired the exercise; she's the deputy minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living; Beth Beaupré, who is the assistant deputy minister of the Health Workforce Secretariat; Jean Cox, who is the assistant deputy minister, Regional Policy and Programs; Bernadette Preun, who is the assistant deputy minister, Provincial Policy and Programs; Marcia Thomson, assistant deputy minister of seniors and active health–Seniors and Active Living; Avis Gray, the assistant deputy minister of the Public Health and Primary Health Care; Dan Skwarchuk, who is the assistant deputy minister of Administration and Finance and the chief financial officer; Dr. Michael Rutledge, who is the chief provincial–or at the time was the chief provincial public health officer; Milton Sussman, the chief executive officer of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority; Ron Van Denakker, the chief executive officer of Interlake–Eastern Regional Health Authority; Helga Bryant, the chief executive officer of Northern Regional Health Authority; Kathy McPhail, the chief executive officer of Southern Health–Santé Sud; Penny Gilson, the chief executive officer, Prairie Mountain Health; Jim Slater, the chief executive officer of Diagnostic Services Manitoba; Dr. Sri Navaratnam, the chief executive officer of CancerCare Manitoba; Ben Fry, the chief executive officer of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba; Robert Cram, who's the chief executive officer of Doctors Manitoba; Dr. Brian Postl, the dean of College of Medicine, University of Manitoba; Sandi Mowat, the president of the Manitoba Nurses Union; Ardell Cochrane, the director of Health, First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba; Sheila Carter, the director of Health and Wellness Department, Manitoba Metis Federation; Rachel Dutton, the executive director of the Manitoba Inuit Association; Bob Moroz, the president of Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals; Pam Smith, the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, from Health Canada; and Dr. Brock Wright, the senior vice-president of the Clinical Services and Chief Medical Officer; and, of course, Dr. David Peachey, from Health Intelligence Incorporated.

**Mr. Wiebe:** And I believe my first part of that question was the complete list of the steering committee for the KPMG report.

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Goertzen:** So my understanding is that the advisory committee for the KPMG sustainability and innovation review for the health KPMG report would have contained–or, had membership of Dan Skwarchuk–I got to write down phonetic–the CFO and ADM for Manitoba Health, who served as the chair; Dr. Shaun Gauthier, who is the chief medical officer for Prairie Mountain Health regional health authority; Karen Herd–the aforementioned Karen Herd, the Deputy Minister of Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living; Jonathan Scarth, the principal secretary of Priorities and Planning Secretariat; Lanette Siragusa, the program director of surgery for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority; Milton Sussman, the president and CEO of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority; Sarah Thiele, who is the acting ADM for the Treasury Board Secretariat; and Ron Van Denakker, the CEO of the Interlake–Eastern Regional Health Authority.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Can the minister cite the specific clause of the contract awarded to KPMG that makes the document proprietary?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Obviously, there are a number of issues that exist when it comes to proprietary information, whether that's in contract or in other expectation. Certainly, we know that, in many different forms of agreements with different companies, that–private companies that government around Canada might engage with in a different manner is to have reports done. There are many companies that engage in a way and use methods and practices that are specific to their company and specific to their operation. And that often comes with an expectation of privacy. That often comes with an expectation that those methods and manners will not be released publicly, obviously, because it becomes an issue of competitive advantage. That's one situation that often arises.

Other situations when it comes to reports–it wouldn't be unusual to find names or others who are providing advice within the context of a report. Sometimes they would sit within government, other times they would not be within government. And they would not prefer, usually, to have their names as part of a publicly released report. But, also, of course, there are other things that arise, including freedom of information and privacy protection rules around advice to Cabinet that is provided when government is making decisions. That would have been the case under the former government, as well. I'm sure that the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) would be happy to weigh in on some

of those issues. He would have seen that, being the premier for a number of years, as well.

So there are a number of different things that often restrict a government from providing information publicly. However, I'm pleased to say that it was my expectation prior to the report being provided to me that we would be implementing the vast majority of the KPMG report, and that is a similar discussion, of course, that we've had around the Peachey report, where members opposite, after having not only commissioned the report, but individually selected Dr. Peachey to provide the report—it wasn't a tendered contract, the member will know, as he discovered—and we discovered together yesterday, that the NDP hand-picked Dr. Peachey to do the report that they now try to disavow, that the expectation that I would have had would be that we would implement the vast majority of the report. And I imagine that the member might, today, argue that that should be the case so that Manitobans get value for money. On the other hand, he tried that with the Peachey report, and then did a quick 180 and said that we shouldn't be implementing it. So who knows? Members will have their different views on these sorts of things, and that's fine. That's all part of the democratic process.

But my expectations, of course, when we continue to implement the work of KPMG in alignment of the health-care system—and I spoke a little bit about that in the hallway, actually, before we started the Estimates process here today, about some of the changes that'll be coming in terms of how the department is organized, and some of those recommendations come out of the KPMG report. Those will be seen publicly, and so the public will not only receive value for money in that we'll be taking action on recommendations and advice, but, also, there will be public disclosure in terms of the actions that we're taking.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, given the numerous reasons why this minister cites that the KPMG report might be proprietary, surely, he could indicate at least one clause of the contract. He could quote from that clause. Maybe he could provide a copy of the contract, which should be readily available, provide that to the House and table it here so that we can take a look at it and see all of the reasons that KPMG has given for this report to be not made public.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, and—if only we lived in a world where everything was governed by contracts, the world would be, well, maybe not a simple place but

certainly a wealthy place for contract lawyers of which I have many friends, and they do excellent work. But, of course, there are a number of other things that govern the work of legislators beyond contract, of course.

The member will know that there are provisions of the freedom of information act that talk about advice to Cabinet and what constitutes advice to Cabinet and whether or not information that is provided as advice to Cabinet can be disclosed. The member will know, beyond that, that there are often expectations expressed in contract or otherwise by companies about proprietary information or methods that they might use in analyzing and developing reports for government. That's not particularly unusual.

There are also reasons of protection of names and other things that come forward in drafting of a report, that there's an expectation of privacy from individuals; that often is the case when it comes to government reports. It would have been the same under the Selinger government, of course, with certain kinds of reports as well, but not always. But, I think, the hallmark and the difference, of course, is that we will be acting on the vast majority of those things that KPMG has recommended.

I spoke in the hallway about one of those things in terms of a commissioning model for health care, where the ministry provides greater direction in terms of goals and expectations of a health-care system and works to commission, through an entity, those services to the health-care system whereby the ministry might suggest that we need so and so many procedures, health-care procedures in a particular year to drive down a wait time, for example, and then that is commissioned to the health-care system to find the best way to meet those goals. And that is certainly one of the things that came forward from KPMG.

So, even in that one example, and there'll be many others, of course, the member will be able to see the work in action and publicly disclosed and talked about. And I hope that he doesn't take the same approach that he took with the Peachey report, where one day he stood up and demanded that we look for efficiencies as recommended by Peachey, and then the next day, he did a 180 and said, no, I actually don't think you should do anything about it. So I'm hopeful that that isn't the case, that there'll be a consistency with the member.

I personally like the member. I think he's a good individual. But I hope that there'll be a consistency of approach when it comes to the reports that are discussed here in the Legislature.

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Wiebe:** I think all of this could be cleared up if the minister would simply provide a copy of the contract to this House. I hear the minister equivocating and trying to not give us a clear answer here.

But maybe he could answer this very, very simple question, then: What—did KPMG require that the entire report be proprietary to them?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I mean, there are always various discussions that happen with individuals that you're engaging in government for different reasons. I wish it was as simple as to say that everything that exists in the world or in the complexity of government or in life could be neatly summed up in a contract, but we know that's not true. And if—and one would probably not want to govern their life by contracts.

There are, of course, other expectations that companies have when they engage within government. There are often expectations, for example, around how a certain company gleans information and uses that information. Some companies have particular ways of analyzing things that are specific to their individual company, and they will use a particular method that they don't necessarily want to be bandied about in the public because they've either developed it or it's unique to them and to their particular business. And that expectation, I think, is a reasonable one.

We know, as well, that there are many things that form advice to Cabinet that are governed under our Freedom of Information laws. And the member, of course, and any member of this House, and any member of the public, not just members of this House, can—and the media, of course—can have Freedom of Information requests. And those are then judged by the legislation that is—governs all of us here generally as a government, not just—but particularly those within government.

So there are a number of different things that govern actions within government when it comes to reports and how reports are treated, and the member will know that from the time that he spent in government. But one of the clear differences is that we are acting on the advice that we've been given.

Manitobans will see that in action. They will see the ability of a government to look for advice, but then to put that advice in action. And then, of course, they'll judge us by those actions. And that's the expectation that I would have if I was the member opposite, having spent some time in opposition.

So I expect, of course, that he will continue to hold us to account as we make changes within the health-care system. That is clearly within his role. And I look forward to those questions going forward.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Sounds like the minister is saying that no, it wasn't KPMG's idea. So, if it wasn't KPMG that wanted the entire report to be proprietary, whose idea was it?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think the member, you know, tries to surmise that it wasn't KPMG or others who are looking for information to be kept in a proprietary fashion. But I think he also knows that there are many different tools that govern—or that companies use that are proprietary to those companies, that they use them in a way that is unique to their company when they're analyzing data and providing advice, not just to government but to other organizations as well. And through that proprietary process, of course, they obtain further work and they obtain further contracts as a result of their work.

So private business would have that expectation that those proprietary tools would remain within the context of government and not be disclosed in a way that might hurt their future work or, of course, they wouldn't be using other—they wouldn't be doing other work or other similar work. So, I think that that is certainly one of the expectations of an organization, but of course they also work to maintain the confidentiality of those who are interviewed within a process to try to find advice. Those who are interviewed, I think, have an expectation of privacy as well.

But beyond that, there's always Cabinet confidence, of course, that exists within the context of a government, and so that is something that would be important to remember as well.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Did the minister ask KPMG for permission to disclose the report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think it's important, of course, when you are dealing with companies who have an expectation of privacy, that you respect that expectation and that they will know that the work that they undertake, in particular after using

proprietary tools or other analysis, will remain in that way.

They certainly would do so recognizing that it wouldn't be the last work that they would do in that field or maybe even with that government, but not necessarily. And to have some of their tools and practices exposed could be difficult for a company, generally. I'm not speaking specifically of KPMG, but I can certainly see how they would be one company who might be concerned about that.

There, of course, exist other rules within the freedom-of-information requirements of government and advice Cabinet in particular. The member will recognize that. Those are long-standing rules that exist here in Manitoba, and there are similar rules across the country in different provinces. And those exist for a reason as well, of course: to allow government and Cabinet to look at advice freely and to look at advice in a way that is not prejudicial in terms of the outcome. So that is important.

And then, of course, there are many individuals who are often interviewed, in the context of a report, that will expect privacy in terms of the information they provide, either because they have unique information or unique knowledge, or there are other things that might be specific to their information. And so, I think that that is important for the member to recognize as well.

You know, in terms of this particular contract, within the RFP, in the index, there is a section that is indicated as scope of work, section 2.1. It indicates that the consultant will provide management and consulting services to undertake a sustainability and innovation review of the health-care sector spending and to provide confidential advice and recommendations to the ministers of Finance and Health for consideration during the development of the next and future provincial budgets.

\* (15:50)

So there it indicates, of course, that this is confidential advice. And there are many reasons, of course, beyond contracts and RFPs and indexes in terms of why a company might expect something to be confidential or not released publicly in entirety or in part. But I don't think you can look just in the four squares of a contract. Even though it cites confidentiality in this RFP, even beyond that, there are many other reasons that one would expect that certain things may not be released.

So that might not always be the case, but I think that members of the public, and this member in particular, should feel good about the fact that, having reviewed the report, our expectation is the vast majority of it will be implemented in the health-care system and the public will see that, will see it in action. And they can judge, of course, as the member will, whether or not that is a good use of—or good decisions in terms of the policy undertaken. But I believe that they'll know that there was value for money in the contract and that the government took the recommendations seriously and that the vast majority of them were implemented.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Did the KPMG report recommend closing emergency rooms and urgent-care centres in Winnipeg?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, the member now is referring back to the Peachey report. The Peachey report was commissioned by the NDP. In fact, they hand-selected Dr. Peachey because there wasn't a tendered contract, so they presumably looked at all the different individuals who do the kind of work that Dr. Peachey does and chose him specifically to do the work in Manitoba, clearly feeling that he would do the best job and do the most accurate job in terms of a clinical services review, which had never been done in the province of Manitoba before. And I would think that the former government, the Selinger government, undertook a good scan of experts across North America who—to do that work. And while I generally, of course, lean to the idea of a tendered contract, the fact that the NDP hand-selected this individual must have meant they had extreme confidence in his work.

So he, of course, the member will know from reading the Peachey report, which is published online, that there was a recommendation that the system be reconfigured to have three emergency rooms in the city of Winnipeg, clearly, St. Boniface and the HSC as part of the tertiary health-care system in Manitoba, and then also a third, one of the community hospitals designated as a full-time emergency room, and then to have two subacute hospitals as well, those being the Victoria hospital and ultimately will be Seven Oaks.

Of course, that hasn't changed at this point. I want to dispel any notions that hospitals have closed, which has been said by members opposite and unfortunately repeated by some health-care leaders in the community. That is not true or responsible, I



think, to suggest that hospitals have closed or are closed.

But, certainly, the recommendation when it comes to the Peachey report was to do exactly what we have done. And I know that there are members of the media—I have many good friends in the media, not personal friends, but we maintain a strong, you know, business friendship, as much as politicians and media do—who suggested that we perhaps wouldn't have the political courage to undertake the recommendations of the Peachey report, that it would be politically difficult and politically damaging. And I think that's unfortunate that that feeling exists in the media or the public in general, because, ultimately, when you seek advice, an expert advice, advice that took in the advice and the interviews of literally dozens of health-care professionals, including experts in unions, including experts in the health-care field—they had representation on a steering committee from the Manitoba Nurses Union and from Doctors Manitoba. For anyone in the public to suggest that we would have taken that and then change it somehow for a political purpose, concerned me—that that is actually the feeling that how health care is being run.

Now, maybe they got that from the past 17 years in—the former NDP government, that decisions were made directly off the desk of the Health minister without a real look at the—of what the experts were advising. I hope that's not the case. I will trust that it's not, but I, certainly, believe that when expert advice is sought and expert advice is given, that that advice, unless there are extraordinary circumstances, should be considered to be followed. And that's certainly what we did.

So that is what the Peachey report recommended, and the member knows, even though we have disagreements, and I—that's certainly fair, and I understand that disagreements that exist with the member. But, I think, that the report that Mr. Peachey provided needed to be acted upon. And we are acting upon it.

**Mr. Wiebe:** In the media, shortly after the minister said that the KPMG would not be made public, he said, when asked how the public would be able to measure the report's recommendations against the—decisions the government will make, Goertzen told reporters—well—I'm sorry, my mistake, Mr. Chair. The member for—the Minister for Health said—told reporters, quote: Well, just ask me. End quote.

So that is what I'm doing here today, Mr. Chairperson. I'm asking: Did the KPMG report recommend the closure of emergency rooms and urgent-care centres in Winnipeg?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I appreciate the member reading the quote. I believe I referred him to the appendix of the RFP for KPMG, which—section 2.1, which indicated the consultant will provide management consulting services to undertake a sustainability and innovation review of health sector spending and to provide confidential advice and recommendations to the ministers of Finance and Health, Seniors and Active Living for consideration during the development of the next and future provincial budgets.

The member wanted me to speak on a contractual level, and so I've done that. But I—as I have said for the last hour, I don't think we should be limited specifically to the contractual situation, because there are many things that exist beyond contracts. And so, while there is, of course, discussion in the RFP of KPMG for confidentiality, there is many other expectations that companies may have or look to for government or others that they engage with in a contractual or other situation when they're engaging them for services. That is an overlay, of course, of—from the freedom of information rules that exist in the province of Manitoba and in other jurisdictions. And so both, contractually, there are, of course, concerns around confidentiality as well as other things when it comes to working with consultants. And so that is significant in terms of the decision and the point that we stand right now when it comes to KPMG.

Now, the member asks about the quote in the paper, and I—now that he reads it back, it feels dangerously close to a quote that I think the former Prime Minister Trudeau once issued, and that was entirely unintentional. I have—not want to normally quote the late Pierre Elliot Trudeau, but I do think that, in fact, that is one of the ways that people will judge us: is by how we undertake actions and the actions that we do with government.

\* (16:00)

I will say, when it comes to KPMG's work and the Peachey report, that they are not dissimilar in terms of their actions towards helping the health-care system. They looked at different things, but they were not acting in vacuums. In fact, Dr. Peachey had conversations—I would probably characterize it as several conversations but certainly a few—with KPMG to ensure early on that his work was not

misaligned with the work of KPMG. And I was heartened when I spoke with Dr. Peachey, when we had the briefing on his report, that he indicated that he was pleasantly surprised that the two reports, that the work that was happening by both of those, both KPMG and the Peachey report were complementary.

In fact, Dr. Peachey indicated that while his focus was more on service sustainability and how service is provided within the health-care system, KPMG generally looked at more fiscal sustainability. And so often when a new government comes in, there can be a different sense of direction, and I was pleased, hearing from Dr. Peachey that he felt that the KPMG report was very complementary to the work that he was doing and was very glad to see that work being undertaken. And I can tell the member that the report of KPMG certainly does not contradict the actions that we are taking within the health authority in Winnipeg.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, we have a development here. The minister has been changing his story day to day, and now it seems he's changing it hour to hour and minute to minute, and he's coming up with a different excuse at every opportunity why he can't simply tell the people of Manitoba what's in the KPMG report.

It sounds to me like the review of the fiscal management of the health-care system it recommended—maybe he could elaborate on exactly what the recommendation was and tell us a little bit more, rather than just trying to take the fifth here, you know.

When asked, he said, I quote, minister said, well, just ask me. Well, I will continue to just ask him: Was cancelling PCH beds and putting a freeze on PCH projects in Winnipeg and throughout the province in the KPMG report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, you know, I hear the member suggesting, and I've been around long enough that I'm not offended easily in the Chamber, the member suggests that I've—changing positions quickly and that would be hard to take from any member. It feels even harder to take today, Mr. Chairperson, when I think of my friend from Concordia who on one day demanded that we follow the Peachey report because there could be efficiencies that were found in the Peachey report and that certainly that those efficiencies should be sought. He went into the hallway and he spoke to the media and acknowledged that it was the former government, the Selinger government, that commissioned the

Peachey report and validated that there were efficiencies to be found in there. And then, I gather he either then read the report or went back to his caucus and was given different marching orders, whatever happened, and then quickly came to the hallway again with the media on a different day and said that we should absolutely ignore the Peachey report and has continued on that track, and that is concerning.

It's not the first sort of instance that I've seen an inconsistency. I recall the member opposite concerned about what he would classify as potential privatization in the health-care system and railing against that possibility, that we might do what other provinces had done.

And then he came into this very Chamber and from his seat demanded that we follow Quebec and follow the lead of Quebec when it comes to health care, the very province that has the most privatization of any province when it comes to health care in Canada, by virtue of a court ruling on the Quebec Charter, and the very province that has had private doctors, where you could pay for your private doctor and many, many other private procedures.

And so, while I'm not adverse to the back and forth of a debate here in the Legislature, I do take somewhat of an exception to the member's characterization of my position. In fact, I would say, if anything, he's contradicting himself from this very question period that we had just a couple hours ago, where he demanded I change my position, where he stood in this place and demanded that we change the position of the government and do something different when it came to Peachey.

So on the one hand, today he says—he admonishes me for saying that there are positions being changed; on the other hand, he demands that those positions be changed on a minute-to-minute basis, Mr. Chairperson. But that—and that's the nature of the Legislature, and that's all fair, I suppose, in those backs and forth. But I would say for the member that we've been clear in the need for change.

Manitobans who write my office have been clear for the need to change. We in the Department of Health, we don't track mail by the number of mail we get, we track it by the feet, and we get one and a half to two feet of mail a day. And many people write about the concerns that they have of the health-care system as developed under the NDP in the last 17 years. And they don't all have the same concern, but almost all of them will say something to the

effect of something needs to change, that there needs to be change in the system.

So the member can defend the current system and status quo, but I believe that Manitobans are looking for change in this system. We can have a healthy debate—and I'm sure that we will—over what that change will look like, but I would not be doing my job as the Minister of Health if I close my eyes and pretended that everything was going well and that nothing would change within the system, that we continue to funnel money into a system that wasn't working. That would not be a responsible course of action. We can debate on whether or not this is the course of action that the member now likes, even though he proposed—or purported to like it at one point.

And that's fine. That healthy debate can happen, and I'm willing to participate in that debate. But I will not apologize for taking action to try to better the health-care system. And if the member wants to characterize that as changing from minute-to-minute, then he should stop asking me to change the course of action that we've undertaken.

We are on the right course of action, not an easy one. Not an easy one, Mr. Chairperson, but the right one, to ensure that the health-care system is better for all Manitobans.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, the minister made it very clear to the press and to the public that if they wanted to know what was in the KPMG report, they—all they had to do was, quote, well, just ask me. End quote.

I continue to ask—I will continue to ask: Was the cancelling of capital projects, \$1 billion in capital spending in health care—was that in the KPMG report? Was that one of the recommendations that was made?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I mean, there is no question that within the KPMG report there was, you know, clear discussion about ensuring that capital funding was used in an appropriate way. And I would remind the member that, you know, I learnt—I've learnt many things over the last years as Minister of Health. I've learnt many things about the department. I've learnt many things about the people who work in the health-care system. I'd say I've learnt many things about myself, Mr. Chairperson.

But one of the things that I learnt very early on in this time as Health Minister is that the Department of Health has a capital cap. And the capital cap was put in place under the former NDP government by

the Treasury Board of the NDP that indicated that the department could not, on an annual basis, spend more than that cap on interest and principal for capital. That was a surprise to me, and perhaps to my—you know, to my shame, I wasn't aware that that capital cap existed when I was a member of the opposition. But, as the minister, that was one of the first things that became aware to me. It was in my transitional binder, I believe.

And, when I asked about the question of the capital cap, Mr. Chairperson, I was told that the department was almost at the cap, and that if we approved nothing when it came to new capital in the Department of Health, we would exceed the cap within the next several months. And so I asked the officials in the department, well, how did this happen, and what does that mean for projects—because I knew that there were billions of dollars promised of capital projects in health care during the campaign and leading up to the campaign by the former NDP government. How in the world were they going to be able to stay under the cap?

\* (16:10)

And, of course, I didn't get an answer, because I don't believe that there is an answer. I don't believe there is any way—well, I know there isn't any way. The department was already, essentially, at the capital cap. They weren't able to build more things and take on more interest costs under capital without exceeding the cap. And I've asked the member this in the past. Not that he would necessarily have the answer, but he could ask the former premier, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), how in the world that the NDP planned to keep their promises on capital when they'd already essentially hit the cap that they were under.

*Mr. Scott Johnston, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

Now, I guess there were options. They could have raised the PST by three and a half per cent and raised a billion dollars a year. So perhaps the member was planning—or, his government was planning to bring the PST to eleven and a half per cent, and that would have paid for, I suppose, the projects. And if that's the answer, I'm happy to accept that. Perhaps they would have slashed the budget in other places by a billion dollars. Maybe they were planning to de-fund education by a billion dollars to pay for those—to those promises as a way to meet the obligations of Treasury Board under the cap.

So, you know—and the member talks about capital, he may want to be a little careful because I don't think there's anything compassionate about promising people a project that you never intended to build because you never had the money to and you were legislated not to because you had this cap that was put in place. So, in fact, I would say that there's some degree of hurt that would be brought to communities if they knew clearly and understood fully that promises that were made by the former government prior to the election not only were ever intended to be kept, but couldn't be kept without breaching their obligations within government. And, to be clear, there was a full understanding of the former government about what that cap meant and how that cap operated.

So I understand the member's question when it comes to capital. I have no doubt that there were many organizations that were disappointed that we were not able to proceed with the projects, but they should be under no illusions that the former government would have been able to proceed either, and I would stand clearly on the side of being truthful and honest with organizations, as I have been. For—very difficult meetings. But I'll say this to the member: that with some of the organizations that had an expectation because they were promised for capital, when I sat down and I explained to them the situation, they thanked me for being honest because I don't think that they had always felt that that was the case before. But they appreciated the fact that we were honest up front.

I had made that commitment to be honest and up front about the financial obligations and ability of the government and, even though the answer is not always easy, I'd far sooner be honest with people and tell them the truth than try to string them along for something that was not going to be coming to fruition, as the former government did.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I think the minister was being honest and up front with the House just now when he said, clearly, that this is not in the KPMG report.

This is not something that Peachey recommended. This is not something that a health expert or someone concerned with patient care recommended. Instead, this was a decision made in the minister's office purely for political reasons. And so, at least, he's being clear about that, and he can be clear and honest and up front about that over and over again. I think people would appreciate that honesty.

The question I have for the minister is: Were there any results of the KPMG review that were inconsistent with the recommendations of the Peachey report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** For further information for the member, because this is an important point, the capital cap that exists in the department of half-Health, is 189 and a half million dollars.

That means that, as set by Treasury Board, the department is not allowed annually to pay more in principal and interest for capital costs of health than 189 and a half million dollars. And, in the analysis that I received after becoming the Minister of Health, there was knowledge when the Women's Hospital and the Selkirk hospitals were approved in 2008 that the department would exceed the cap—they wouldn't be able to stay within the cap if any other announcements came forward after that.

That is how egregious the situation was, that after those announcements for the Women's Hospital and the Selkirk hospital were made, that the department—the minister—the former minister—the NDP government understood that any capital beyond that that was announced wouldn't be able to be done under the cap.

And think about the implications of that. I mean, that means that the promises that were made to organizations and to many entities doing good work, very good work in the community, were being told something that was less than truthful in terms of the ability of government to meet those commitments.

And I would say to the member that he should take stock of that about what that truly means, about what that truly means for those individuals who were given commitments. And I'm not putting this on him, because he—while he was a member of the government he was not in Cabinet and may not have been any more aware than I was about the capital cap.

But that is the reality of the situation that I walked into, and as the Minister of Health, that there existed this cap, that it was already essentially at the cap, that the knowledge of the cap would be exceeded went back almost a decade. Nothing had been done about it and yet promises had been made all through those years. And I would say to the member that that is not what I would expect from him or any member of this Chamber.

And so I have had those difficult conversations with the many organizations who had been made

commitments between that time, between after the knowledge of the cap would be exceeded if any other capital projects had been approved. And I had those difficult conversations because it was the right thing to do. People needed to be spoken to honestly.

Was there disappointment? Clearly, there was disappointment. But the disappointment rests as much as those members who promised those facilities knowing that they couldn't deliver them than on anybody else. And I was more than willing to bear the disappointment of those organizations knowing that we told them the truth about the situation that had happened.

I sleep okay at night, not well every night, but I sleep okay at night knowing that I was honest with those organizations, was truthful of the financial situation. I won't judge how others sleep who made those promises knowing that they couldn't be fulfilled. But I certainly see well enough knowing that we kept our—that I was truthful with those organizations and they know the truth of the financial situation.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, I think it's clear now that the minister is just making it up as he goes along here. You know, one minute he's saying we have to listen to experts, it has to be this health expert that's the only person we can listen to. He says we have to listen to the KPMG report, we won't tell you exactly what's in there, but we do have to listen to that; no matter what, that's our direction.

For other things he says, no, I just—I made a decision in the minister's office. Patient care was at risk, there was a project that would've helped with patient care. It didn't matter it didn't fit in the budget and it wasn't something that we could do. So that gets cut. He says he wants parts of the Peachey report, he doesn't want other parts, he wants parts of the KPMG report, maybe parts that contradict other parts of the Peachey report.

He's got it all mixed up here. Can the—at the very least, will the minister say for the House today is it his intention to implement every recommendation of the Peachey report.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Mr. Chairperson, I mean I said just a little while ago to the media that we are implementing the Peachey report. Can it all be implemented at once? I don't believe so. I've said publicly there's more transformation happening in the health-care system now than there has been in the previous 30 years, and that's just what's happening

within the Winnipeg Regional—*[interjection]* well, the member for Elmwood says that's not true. I'd—I would be happy to hear what transformation it was that he can think of in the last 30 years, but—that would be greater than this.

But I know that when we look at just changes within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, that that is transformative. That doesn't include other changes that'll happen in rural Manitoba nor does that include changes that'll happen in the department itself, Mr. Chairperson, and how we interact with the Winnipeg regional health authorities and collectively, if not individually, that would certainly be greater transformation that has happened within the last 30 years.

Now we'll be judged on that transformation, and that's fine. We're prepared to be judged upon that. Doing nothing was never going to be an option. But I'm concerned that there are—it's only so much change that the system can take at any given time. And so while there are many other parts of the Peachey report that are valuable and that I think are worthy of consideration for implementation, I also recognize that there is so and so much change that the—those who are working in the health-care system can implement in a reasonable fashion. And so I'm mindful of that when we look at further changes that come in.

\* (16:20)

But the member opposite shouldn't dismiss the issue, as he dismissed about the issue around the capital cap in suggesting that this has been made up. This is something that was put in place by his former government—and again, he was not a—well, I don't think he was a member of Treasury Board, he wasn't a member of Cabinet—but the capital cap that was put in on Health by the former NDP government is not made up. It was 189 and a half million dollars. It was set by Treasury Board. It was intended to ensure that the expenditure on capital and interest was contained within the Department of Health and was held reasonably.

And, when I became minister, I was told that we were essentially at that cap and that the knowledge that we would be at that cap existed in 2008 when the Women's Hospital and the Selkirk hospital were approved, that when those hospitals became online or substantially online, that the cap would be exceeded, which means that all of the promises that were made between that time and the election—and there were a legion of them, Mr. Chairperson,

totalling billions of dollars—didn't fit within the finances of the Department of Health. And that means that those promises that were made to residents of The Pas and residents of Steinbach and residents of Riel and residents of Selkirk or residents of Radisson. Those promises had no basis in financial reality, that they've made those commitments to residents who lived in those regions and every part of Manitoba who had those promises made to them, knowing that they financially couldn't fulfill those promises unless they were—their plan was to raise the PST by 3 and a half per cent to get \$1 billion each and every year.

And if the members opposite want to question whether or not it is a difficult decision to not be able to proceed on a capital project in Health—because there are no bad projects that are brought to that office—it is a difficult decision, but it is a far better place to be than to be telling people something on an expectation that they know, that the government knew, the NDP government knew, was never going to be fulfilled.

So, again, do I have difficulty sleeping at night as minister of the Health? I sure do, because there's a lot of decisions that are not easy decisions to make. But I don't lose sleep because I'm not being forthright and honest with people. And I wonder how former ministers who made those promises, knowing that they were never going to be able to meet them, knowing that the capital cap existed, knowing that they had no financial ability to meet those commitments, I wonder how they sleep at night. I hope they sleep well. But I know I wouldn't be sleeping well if I had made those promises without the ability to actually fulfill them.

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** I have a few questions based on concerns in my constituency.

When you're speaking about promises, the hope for our—a new clinic to be built and the cancellation of that clinic was truly heartbreaking, especially when I've been in and out of the system in The Pas myself with young children, where the walk-in clinic currently that we have right now is only open in the mornings from 8 'til 12, and after that we're all shuffled in to the ER, clogging up those services. And I could tell that the strain and the stress on those doctors is getting to them, where, at one time, where I was mistreated in that emergency room because I could tell they were overworked and stressed out.

And so to me that promise—well, we were this close to have that reality, to address our health

concerns, and because where I'm come from we're shipped out six hours to Winnipeg, sometimes for only a five-minute appointment—so loss of income, loss of holidays, loss of vacation, kids missing school. That clinic would have provided a space to house our specialists and to house more doctors. Since we have that northern program to recruit and, you know, grow our own doctors in our North, well, where are we supposed to put them when our services in Thompson and The Pas are closed?

So, with that, I just want to gain some information, perhaps some insight, in regards to looking at this project in the next few years to make it reality and so the people in The Pas can have access to the services, perhaps look at the Northern Patient Transportation Program as well.

And so my question is: Is there hope in the future, working with the leadership with the northern regional health authority to get this dream off the ground again to have a bigger clinic to house these specialists to serve not only The Pas but the whole region as well, all the communities surrounding The Pas?

**Mr. Goertzen:** So there's a couple of questions that the member asks, and I appreciate her asking the question.

There's the Northern Patient Transfer Program, and if she wants to speak about that in a separate question, I'm happy to do that.

In terms of the clinic in The Pas, we recognize that the need exists. The member asks whether there's hope in the future. Well, I mean, of course, we want to continue to work with communities as we work to get into a better financial situation not just in the Department of Health, but in the Province more generally. And as that starts to happen, as things start to improve, obviously we'll be looking to ensure that investment is made in a—the best priority way possible, knowing that there are many needs that exist in the province of Manitoba and certainly in her community as well; there's no question about that.

And so we'd be—want to continue to have those discussions and work, for certain, but I will re-emphasize the point that I made a little earlier, although perhaps more gently, that the capital cap that existed and the reality of where the capital cap is—I know the member, she indicated that the clinic was almost about to happen, that the dream was almost to come to reality. I would dispute that in terms of where the finances of the Province existed

and what it would've required for there to be room under the capital cap in Health.

So I—we might have a difference of opinion of that, but I don't put that upon the member. I know that she was not a member of the former government, and so her understanding would've been not dissimilar to mine when it came to the issue of capital funding within Health. I didn't have great understanding or knowledge of it prior to becoming the minister and being briefed on some of the issues that existed. So—but, yes, of course, there—hope would exist as there is in many different places, and it is my hope that as we move into a better financial situation, that there'll be projects that fit the key priorities that we could re-evaluate.

**Ms. Lathlin:** It'd be interesting to see what the map would be if it was a \$5.3-million project compared to what money is spent every year to medevac our patients in and out of the North.

And, also, too, I just wanted to look at the northern regional health authority board. I just wanted to see—it was, you know, rather disappointing being an indigenous woman from the North where the indigenous population is, from what I can remember, was 76 per cent in northern Manitoba. Now, is it important and shouldn't it be reflective, representative, of our communities to maybe have more than one Aboriginal person on that board? Previous board had many, many Aboriginal representatives, including our outlining communities such as Cormorant; we had one from Norway House; we had, oh, I think, Wabowden. So, to me, that composition that exists right now does not truly represent northern Manitoba, and would there be—you know, I truly believe those representatives truly represented and lived the real socio-economic factors that exist—our people in northern Manitoba. It could've gave a true voice to that board. And right now I'm pretty sure there's only one Aboriginal person, and would they be goals in the future to have that more—much, much more representative than what it is right now?

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Goertzen:** So it's a good question, and, just to follow—or to finish a point from the previous, on the northern transportation program. My understanding is that the budget has increased 'significantly' under the program, from a point of about \$7.9 million, in 2007, I believe, to \$17 million to 2014-15. So that's a significant increase in the cost.

Now, it ties in to what the member said earlier on her question about, you know, we need to look at better ways to ensure that people who are accessing services in Winnipeg from the North, that there might be better ways to provide treatment to them that doesn't require them leaving—going so far from their home. That's a valid point and one that we've raised federally, as well, to look for support. There's disputes about the funding that used to come from the federal government on the northern transport of First Nations individuals, and we continue to advocate for support when it comes to transport but also for support to ensure that we can perhaps provide services closer to home for those living in the North, because, I think, that that would be a much better alternative.

In terms of the regional health authority, the northern regional health authority and representation, it's not an unfair point in terms ensuring that we have the right balance. I know that we've done hard work in terms of trying to find a way to ensure regions are represented as best as possible, that there is more balance in terms of ethnicity, gender, indigenous representation. The Winnipeg—or, sorry, the regional health authorities are not set up to have individuals represent a particular region per se, in that they are supposed to, when they go onto those boards, represent the region as a whole and to make their decisions based on the region as a whole. So they're not really intended to be advocates for their particular community when it comes to being on a regional health authority; they are really supposed to come to that table with a broader view.

That doesn't diminish the fact that it wouldn't be—that it would be advantageous to have people who represent the region generally within an regional or within a—yes, a regional health authority, because it would, I think, provide a balanced perspective on the whole. But I want to be careful that we don't suggest that members are supposed to be from a community to advocate for that community. They really are supposed to look at the region as a whole, but we do certainly encourage people to apply to become members of the regional health authority—continuously. There is always changeover that's happening on those boards within the health authorities; they're never static, or rarely are they static. The—we change the intake, so that it doesn't happen at just one time of the year; it now happens annually.

So, if the member knows of individuals who have an interest in being a member of the northern or

any other regional health authority, and she feels they have the right aptitudes, or they feel they have the right aptitudes to be part of a contributing board, I would certainly hope she would encourage them to apply for that. And, you know, maybe they'll be suitable for that; maybe they're not.

There is a process that's now undertaken in terms of ensuring that people get—go through a screening process to test their—not only their aptitudes but their ability to work within the regional health authority as a whole. But I would certainly encourage her to have those individuals apply, if they haven't already, because it would be our desire—it would be my desire to have boards that are representative of the region of the whole, of Manitoba as a whole, of a variety of different groups, recognizing that they're not there to advocate specifically for a certain community or group of communities, but they are really there to make decisions on the basis of the region as a whole.

**Ms. Lathlin:** Speaking of screening processes, I've been involved with University College of the North, where one of our interview questions is to ensure that individuals that we hire truly understand where we come from, where, like I said, 76 per cent of northern Manitoba's indigenous. So it's quite important that there's an Aboriginal cultural awareness training, because there's many stereotypes within emergency rooms where I've been in, myself—because I truly believe I'm an Aboriginal woman and been treated differently.

What practices are out there right now in regards to our RHA staff and our board members as well?

**Mr. Goertzen:** That is a—it's a good question, and we had some discussions within the department about it in the past and sort of seeking a bit of an update in terms of where things are at.

I would say very truthfully that we're not as far as we would like to be. I think that there's disparity in terms of the training and cultural sensitivity both at the staff and board levels across the province. I would say that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority is probably more significantly advanced in terms of that training, that there is an online training program that individuals can access within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, I'm advised from officials.

And so there's more advancement there likely coming from the Sinclair inquiry which recommended that from—particularly to Winnipeg, and so I think there's been greater advancement in Winnipeg

than there is in the rural communities, not that there hasn't been some rurality, but I would suggest, certainly, that Winnipeg has taken bigger steps in terms of that type of training and awareness coming out of the Sinclair inquiry. But I recognize the point that there is more work that can be done beyond Winnipeg, and within Winnipeg as well, but recognizing that they've taken more steps than in other places.

**Ms. Lathlin:** I just wanted to ask—it's quite unique where I'm from. I don't know if you've ever had the chance to visit my community there, Minister. Opaskwayak is divided by the Saskatchewan River then The Pas, so there's jurisdictional issues now.

So I've worked, when I was a band councillor for OCN and also a board member, for the Health. There was, like, concerns that people just living just across the bridge weren't able to have access for their children with disabilities from the province and vice versa, so it was kind of like—it didn't make sense that, even though we just lived across the river, there was jurisdictional issues in place for Aboriginal people.

And so it's out—it's been a long-going issue that's been going on for a while, and I'm just wondering if there's ever, you know, a chance that these two governments can come together and work together, like—and for that common goal and perhaps break down some of these 'jurisdictional' issues for our indigenous communities and Metis communities.

\* (16:40)

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member for the question. I'll maybe speak more in generalities than any specific scenario, but I know there's been lots of discussion, both in this House and nationally, around Jordan's Principle, and as the member and the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) has asked questions about Jordan's Principle in the past about ensuring that it comes to quicker action.

The departmental lead on Jordan's Principle in the government of Manitoba is the Department of Families, but we do have ADM representation on that committee that is helping to try to advance Jordan's Principle to ensure that individuals are served first and the jurisdictional issues are worked out later. But I do want to assure the member that one of the issues around the Peachey report, which I know has, you know, gotten a lot of debate in Winnipeg, and that's certainly fair, but it was really a clinical services program for the province of



Manitoba and not just the city of Winnipeg, and looking at how the system in Manitoba generally worked. And it is one of the reasons that we—or that, I should say, the former government included First Nations, Inuit and Metis on the steering committee to get a better understanding moving forward of how do we ensure those jurisdictions—jurisdictional issues aren't an impediment to care.

But, on the Jordan's Principle issue of it, I certainly think there's more work that can be done federally. I know there is work that is happening federally. We would probably want to get an update from the Department of Families, or that could be asked in the Estimates in the Department of Families for more specifics in terms of how that is rolling out.

**Mr. Wiebe:** On page 54 of the Peachey report, it says, "This report does not include restructuring of facilities in its mandate or recommendations."

Can the minister explain what this comment means?

**Mr. Goertzen:** So I—the member will know from page 62 of the Peachey report that he provides an outline in terms of how Mr. Peachey believes the structure of the health care system, within Winnipeg in particular, should be aligned.

Within that structure, the indication is that there should be three emergency rooms that operate on a 24-7 basis that have a greater ability to move patients through the system, not in complete co-ordination, but there has been also a release from the University of Manitoba, the health research portion of the university, that indicated that part of the problem with the wait times in the ERs is the ability to have diagnostic testing, so, to move people through the system of the ER.

So, as I mentioned previously, the Grace Hospital has, with an MRI—it'll be—have an expanded emergency room which will be open at some point next year, and so it has the additional capacity that we believe will be needed within the system.

And so Mr. Peachey provided that outline in terms of how he believes the system should be structured by having the three emergency rooms and then two sub-acute facilities.

They talked about a little bit in question period yesterday but also in Estimates; the idea was that there should be two urgent care centres to better direct people to the kind of care they're seeking anyway. You know, many of the statistics that we

see, and I'll use Seven Oaks as the example, is that the vast majority of those individuals who are at the Seven Oaks Emergency Room are really seeking urgent care. They might not define it that way and they might not know it that way, but once they are triaged, that is essentially the kind of care that they are seeking. They are presenting it in an emergency room, but they really are seeking an urgent care service.

And so, by repurposing Seven Oaks and Victoria as urgent care centres, we are essentially rebranding, if you—you could say, the centres to the need that they are already, in most cases, serving because the vast majority of people, for example, in Seven Oaks, are presenting with urgent care needs but they're presenting at an emergency room, and so, for them, for those, the vast majority of the services essentially now are better aligned to the—what they were presenting with.

So Mr. Peachey presented the outline on page 62 in terms of how he believes the system should be structured with the three emergency rooms, the two sub-acute facilities and also the transitional care unit.

I would say, at this point, however, that, you know, the debate that exists within the health-care system is not an unhealthy debate. I welcome the debate that is coming from the NDP-commissioned Peachey report. We don't shy away from it. I think it's not unanticipated; nor is it unwelcome. I would be surprised that if any change that was as transformational as this one were to happen without debate, that that would be surprising and perhaps not good.

And so I continue to welcome the questions from the member opposite on the Peachey report and its recommendations and look forward to answering those questions in the best way that I can.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** The minister said earlier on that he would—if an activity or an action was recommended in the KPMG report that he would acknowledge it as a way of enlightening us as to what was in the KPMG report.

Was the closure of the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre recommended in the KPMG report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member for the question. They were very different reports and one of the things that, I think, Dr. Peachey was concerned about early on when he heard about the commissioning of KPMG—concerned is my word; I don't know that he's expressed it that strongly, but I suspect he did have

concerns—is whether or not those two reports would not be complementary, that they—that—or perhaps that if KPMG was doing the same sort of work that he was being asked to undertake by the former NDP.

\* (16:50)

Dr. Peachey did meet, I believe, several times with those who were doing the work on KPMG and realized fairly quickly that not only were they not at odds in terms of their work, that they were actually quite complementary, and that Dr. Peachey was working towards how the system should function to provide efficiency and better patient care, and well, KPMG was more focused on fiscal sustainability and how to ensure that the system remains financially stable now.

And that goes to my comments that I've made in the media, that there's been some consternation, that I refer to the fact that KP—or that Peachey was not really an exercise in financial savings; it was about how do you make the system work better. And I suspect, you know, that the former government, when they commissioned Peachey, would have thought that having some better alignment of a system would also save money because it's more efficient, but I don't think that was the primary objective. It was really about making sure that the system worked better.

So the Peachey report talked about the structure of services and specifically about hospitals, as outlined on page 62 of the report. KPMG was not focused on that; KPMG was focused on how do you have fiscal sustainability within the system. So they were doing different things.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I would ask the minister, in terms of the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre, was there a specific analysis done on Misericordia Urgent Care Centre above and beyond what was present in the Peachey report?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member. It's a good question, and it maybe gives me an opportunity to be more specific in the differentiation between the two reports.

So KPMG did identify that there needed to be a rationalization of emergency and critical-care facilities in Winnipeg. So they also found that, for the population of Winnipeg, that there were significantly more emergency and critical-care facilities than exist in other cities of similar or much larger size, comparisons being Vancouver or Calgary or Ottawa. So, yes, KPMG also identified that there

needed to be rationalization of the emergency and critical-care facilities in Winnipeg from a fiscal sustainability perspective, but the Peachey report provided the outline of how that system should actually look.

And so that is—it's a good example of how the two reports are complementary but different. Peachey report gave much more specific advice about how you would build a clinical-services system to provide better patient care, whereas KPMG identified places where one could look at financial sustainability—different approaches, the same conclusion. But, ultimately, the Peachey report, which governed the decision about how we would align hospitals in Winnipeg, was about patient care, driven by patient care and patient outcomes.

However, as I've said publicly, my expectation is—although there wasn't a financial analysis done with Peachey, because that's not what the report was about—is that, if you found efficiencies in the health-care system by making it run better and having better patient care, that that would seemingly lead to a savings of money, that having a better health-care system in terms of efficiency and saving money aren't mutually exclusive goals; that those two can work together, and this is certainly one example of that.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I thank the minister and I wonder if the minister could provide the specific rationale for recommending an intravenous therapy centre to replace the Misericordia Urgent Care Centre.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank the member for the question.

So that recommendation came from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and their assessment on service placement. The current facility is located, I understand, in the Lions Manor on Portage Avenue and the feeling is that that facility is too small and that it could—the service would be better provided at the Misericordia, that it is both better—it's a better space and a better place to provide the service.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I wonder if the minister could provide an update on the current state of negotiations with regard to the health-care accord with the federal government.

**Mr. Goertzen:** The primary lead on the negotiations would be the Department of Finance, and that's one of the reasons why Health ministers were invited to Ottawa in December to the FPT of Finance. I think the Finance ministers felt we stormed their meeting,

but we were invited prior to Christmas to come to the Finance FPT to discuss the needs of health care. How it's primarily rolled out in other provinces is that Health ministers have spoken to the need of funding for the health-care system because we are responsible for the health-care system, so we have spoken publicly and taken the lead on communicating the need for funding to ensure that the health-care system is managed properly and has the right resources. But the transfer, the CHT is actually a transfer into Finance. And so, as a result of that, where there have been offers made by the federal government between governments, from the federal government to the province, the offers have not been made to the Department of Health from the minister of Health, they've been made federal Finance minister to provincial Finance minister.

**Mr. Gerrard:** With the health-care negotiations still being under way, was the money expected for mental health and for home care included in the budget or is that still to come?

**Mr. Goertzen:** It is a good question. We have not, at this point, directed specific—

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

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Doyle Pivniuk):** The hour being 5 p.m., the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

#### CORRIGENDUM

On April 25, 2017, page 1556, second column, fourth paragraph, should have read:

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, and while my staff is conferring on a labour market example, I would like to point out to the member that we have done something very similar to this in terms of the need for the refugees and particularly the Syrian refugees with the REDI program that we've put in place. What we've done there is, because there was a specific need that applied to them—a lot of them had not been in, either in the labour market for a number of years because of the refugee status, or had not been in the education system for a number of years—and what we did, working backwards from industry that had shown an interest—and the first one out of the gate was, in fact, painting and drywalling industry—we worked back from an industry employer.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Preliminary Hearing Reform	
Bill 220–The Environmental Rights Act		Guillemard	1588
Altemeyer	1579	Stefanson	1588
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>		Health-Care Review	
Wishart	1579	Allum	1588
		Pallister	1588
<b>Members' Statements</b>		Health-Care Budget	
Rick Plaisier		Lindsey	1590
Piwniuk	1579	Goertzen	1590
		Pallister	1590
Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum		<b>Petitions</b>	
Isleifson	1580	Concordia Hospital Emergency Room	
ArtsJunktion		Wiebe	1590
F. Marcelino	1580	Taxi Industry Regulation	
French Legion of Honour Medal Recipients		Maloway	1591
Nesbitt	1581	Selinger	1591
Manitoba's Agriculture Sector		Lathlin	1592
Michaleski	1581	Lindsey	1592
<b>Oral Questions</b>		Kelvin High School Gymnasium and Wellness Centre	
Health-Care Budget		Kinew	1593
F. Marcelino	1581	Taxi Industry Regulation	
Pallister	1582	T. Marcelino	1593
Health-Care Budget		F. Marcelino	1593
Wiebe	1583		
Goertzen	1583		
Rural and Northern Health Care			
Lathlin	1584		
Goertzen	1584		
Job Creation			
Kinew	1585		
Cullen	1585		
Pallister	1586		
Funding for Arts Program			
Swan	1586		
Wishart	1586		
Pallister	1587		
Road-to-Recovery Plan			
Lamoureux	1587		
Cullen	1587		
Emergency Room Closures			
Lamoureux	1587		
Pallister	1587		
Goertzen	1588		

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

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