

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

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The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**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	Ind.
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	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
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
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, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Monday, October 30, 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.

Please be seated.

Good afternoon, everybody.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege.

**MATTER OF PRIVILEGE**

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a matter of privilege.

**Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I'm seconded by the member from The Maples.

Madam Speaker, this is the first opportunity that I've had to bring this issue up and I think we will all agree that this is of some immediate concern.

Madam Speaker, I'm about to quote your ruling from last Thursday. I am not reflecting on that ruling in a positive or negative way, I'm just going to quote it to make my point.

I would urge—this is the Speaker's ruling—I would urge caution about comments placed on the record when raising such issues as they could be—unintentionally show information that would or could be used that is 'defermential', such as noting the location of certain members while the security sweep was taking place. The security of MLAs and staff and visitors in this building is a primary concern of your Speaker.

And you're absolutely correct, in my view, but what has occurred—I was inspired to check social media this weekend and, Madam Speaker, it is particularly concerning that during this emergency MLAs would, in my view, irresponsibly divulge the

locations of many of their colleagues and themselves on dozens of social media platforms in real time.

Obviously, mentioning where we are is quite serious, and I would submit that bad guys do not read Hansard, but they sure look at social media. And these posts are still up, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the people in place to post—the people—MLAs—to post, in real time, images that are obviously and without any concealment the muster points is, in my view, beyond the pale. This is not by—I haven't done an exhaustive search of social media. It's simply what I found in a few minutes. It does not include blogs, media, TV, radio, private video, et cetera. The ability—where there's an ability to minimize exposure, it should be done. MLAs should be setting the example in a positive way, not creating a larger problem, as we have seen on October 5th.

Madam Speaker, I'm talking about social media like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and it goes on. So, the motion is this—before I get to the motion, I will be tabling relevant issues of privilege that this affects from Beauschêne and Montpetit, but in the interest of time, perhaps I will just move straight to the motion.

Be it resolved bad people will see social media postings long before they read Hansard. Therefore, the Speaker must direct MLAs to immediately delete revealing images and/or comments posted on social media by MLAs revealing, in real time, the location and distribution of MLAs and other staffers in the Leg. during the emergency. This order should include websites, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube and the like. Moreover, the Speaker must direct MLAs not to post images or comments during emergencies that could be detrimental, such as noting the location of certain members while the security sweep was taking place. The Speaker and appropriate authorities immediately must develop and communicate alternative evacuation plans for MLAs and legislative staff.

**Madam Speaker:** Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether

the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

With no speakers standing—oh, the honourable member for River Heights.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Well, I just want to point out that I think this is a valid security concern, and I think it's reasonable to raise this.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

On the matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), I would like to inform the House that it has been ruled a number of times by Manitoba Speakers that comments made outside the House cannot form the basis of a prima facie case of privilege. Beauchesne's citation 31(1) advises that statements made outside the House—and I would indicate, activities that take place outside of the House—may not be used as a basis for a question of privilege.

On page 614 of the House of Commons practice and procedure, O'Brien and Bosc state that the Speaker has no authority to rule on statements—and I will add, actions—made outside of this House by one member against another.

Therefore, I must respectfully rule that the honourable member does not have a matter of privilege.

**Mr. Fletcher:** Madam Speaker, some of these comments were made in the Chamber, therefore I'd like to challenge the ruling of the Chair.

**Madam Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

\* (13:40)

Does the member have support for challenging the ruling?

The member does not have adequate support, so the ruling cannot be challenged.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills?

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Standing Committee on Human Resources First Report

**Mr. James Teitsma (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

**Madam Speaker:** And just for clarification, we are in routine proceedings.

**Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Your Standing Committee on Human Resources—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on HUMAN RESOURCES presents the following as its first Report.*

### Meetings

*Your Committee met on the following occasions in Room 254 of the Legislative Building:*

- October 25, 2017
- October 26, 2017

### Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 31) – The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire**

### Committee Membership

*Committee Membership for the October 25, 2017 meeting:*

- Hon. Mr. GERRARD
- Mr. LAGASSÉ
- Ms. MARCELINO (Logan)
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD
- Mr. MICHALESKI
- Hon. Mr. SCHULER
- Mr. SWAN
- Mr. TEITSMA
- Mr. WIEBE
- Hon. Mr. WISHART

*Your Committee elected Mr. TEITSMA as the Chairperson at the October 25, 2017 meeting.*

*Your Committee elected Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE as the Vice-Chairperson at the October 25, 2017 meeting.*

*Committee Membership for the October 26, 2017 meeting:*

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Mr. BINDLE
- Mr. JOHNSON
- Ms. LAMOUREUX
- Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE (Vice-Chairperson)

- *Hon. Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mrs. SMITH (Point Douglas)*
- *Mr. TEITSMA (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. WIEBE*
- *Hon. Mr. WISHART*
- *Mr. YAKIMOSKI*

#### **Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record**

*Non-Committee Members speaking on the record at the October 25, 2017 meeting:*

- *Mr. KINEW*

#### **Public Presentations**

*Your Committee heard the following thirty-eight presentations on **Bill (No. 31)** – The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire:*

#### **October 25, 2017 meeting**

*Nick Brown, Brandon University Students Union*  
*Whitney Hodgins, Private Citizen*  
*Drew Caldwell, Private Citizen*  
*Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour*  
*Dele Ojewole, Private Citizen*  
*Wayne Chacun, MGEU – Manitoba Government and General Employees Union*  
*Michael Barkman, Private Citizen*  
*Tanjit Nagra, University of Manitoba Students' Union*  
*John Prystanski, Westland Foundation*  
*Darrell Rankin, Communist Party of Canada – Manitoba*  
*Megan Linton, Private Citizen*  
*Laura Garinger, University of Winnipeg Students' Association*  
*Niall Harney, Private Citizen*  
*Brianne Goertzen, Private Citizen*  
*Matt McLean, Private Citizen*  
*Sadie-Phoenix Lavoie, Private Citizen*  
*Peyton Veitch, Private Citizen*  
*Coty Zachariah, Canadian Federation of Students*  
*Annie Beach, Private Citizen*  
*Lauren Webster, Private Citizen*  
*Ayla Hamilton, Private Citizen*  
*Allison Kilgour, University of Manitoba Students' Union*  
*Patrick Harney, Private Citizen*

#### **October 26, 2017 meeting**

*Carlos Sosa, Private Citizen*  
*Jakob Sanderson, Private Citizen*

*Natalie Copps, Manitoba Law Students Association*  
*Carlen Comegan-Ronke, Private Citizen*  
*Janet Morrill, University of Manitoba Faculty Association – UMFA*  
*Robert Chernomas, Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations*  
*Geoff Bergen, Private Citizen*  
*Elizabeth Carlyle, Private Citizen*  
*Chris Rigaux, Private Citizen*  
*Mackenzie Peters, Private Citizen*  
*Eric Schillberg, University of Manitoba Engineering Society*  
*Taylor Daigneault, Private Citizen*  
*Wesley Fallis, Private Citizen*  
*Hilary Lockhart, Private Citizen*  
*Mathew Scammell, Private Citizen*

#### **Written Submissions**

*Your Committee received the following two written submissions on **Bill (No. 31)** – The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire:*

*Krystal Kayne, Private Citizen*  
*Lonnie Patterson, Private Citizen*

#### **Bill Considered and Reported**

- ***Bill (No. 31)** – The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration de l'enseignement postsecondaire*

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

**Mr. Teitsma:** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte), that the report of the committee be received.

#### **Motion presented.**

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Agreed and so ordered.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

#### **Voice Vote**

**Madam Speaker:** As there was a no, all those in favour of the motion to receive the report, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

In my opinion, the Yeas have it and the motion is carried.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for the Crown Lands and Property Agency for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table Phase 1 Public Outreach on Potential Development of the Parker Lands.

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I am pleased to table the Department of Education and Training Annual Report for 2016-2017.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

#### Family Law Reform

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Since forming government, our team in Manitoba Justice has shown that we are committed to stronger and healthier families and children.

Recently, I announced the establishment of an advisory committee of judges, lawyers and community leaders on family law reform. This committee, chaired by former CEO of the Law Society of Manitoba, Allan Fineblit, will report back to our government and to all Manitobans with a detailed framework for an administrative model for family law. This will help reduce the financial burden and escalating acrimony that too many Manitoba families experience in our current family law system.

This innovative approach has also been taken by our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding), who recently announced significant reforms to our child and family services system.

But our government isn't alone in stepping up to protect families and children.

The Chief Justice of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench, Glen Joyal, recently announced clear timelines for child protection matters, ensuring that our children are kept safe and that our courts meet the timelines set out in the Supreme Court's decision in the Crown v. Jordan.

Madam Speaker, it is the contribution to our judiciary that I wish to highlight today by recognizing the recent retirement of Justice Robyn Diamond from the Family Division of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench.

Justice Diamond was appointed to the bench 28 years ago, which makes her the longest serving woman justice in the history of Manitoba courts.

Throughout her career, Justice Diamond has been a tireless advocate for families and children in our province and across the globe. Justice Diamond graduated from the University of Manitoba law school in 1975 and was called to the bar in 1976.

From 1982 to 1989, she served as the first director of the Family Law branch in the Department of Justice, where she did important work developing policies and programs to better serve families and children in our province.

Since her appointment to the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench in 1989, Justice Diamond has represented Manitoba and Canada on the global stage in child-protection matters.

In 2006, Justice Diamond was appointed by the Canadian Judicial Council as one of two Canadian judges on the Special Committee on International Child Protection, forming part of the international network of judges.

In that capacity, she helped ensure greater communication between Canadian and international network judges on matters relating to the 1980 Hague Abduction Convention, helping ensure the prompt return of children to their home country after an abduction to a foreign country—or, to a foreign jurisdiction.

In 2007, Justice Diamond was appointed chair of the Canadian Network of Contact Judges for international and interjurisdictional child protection.

In this role, she oversaw initiatives to expedite interjurisdictional child protection cases, developing

procedures for quick resolution and breaking down barriers to communication between judges.

In addition to her incredible international work on child protection, Justice Diamond has also served on the national Justice Child Support Advisory Committee and the federal spousal support guidelines national Advisory Working Group on Family Law.

Madam Speaker, it is the work of trailblazers like Justice Diamond that has laid the foundation for further innovation in family law and child protection in our province.

I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Justice Diamond, who is joined in the gallery today with her husband Harvey, for the strong foundation she has left for all of us to better support and protect families and children in Manitoba.

Thank you.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Speaker, for the past 28 years, Justice Robyn Diamond has served the Court of Queen's Bench Family Division with dedication and compassion. Today, we commemorate her retirement after many years of service to Manitoba's justice system and the people of Manitoba.

Justice Diamond has dedicated her career to Manitoba family law. She has been tremendously involved in a leadership role in improving family law in the province. Her input in the development and evolution of the case-management system resulted in an overhaul of the Queen's Bench family-law rules that became effective in 2015.

I was very fortunate to appear before Justice Diamond many times over the course of my career while practising family law and always admired her fairness and compassion. Justice Diamond's work in family law helped to transform the role of a family court judge from primarily an adjudicator to more and more one of a mediator, a dispute resolver and a problem solver. Her willingness to try to resolve matters continuously translated to a more transparent, meaningful way of approaching what can be a very emotional and stressful time for the children and their families. She was always mindful of the needs of families.

I must put on the record, she was also mindful of the needs of her own family. As we approached take-your-kids-to-work day this year, I do recall one

morning many years ago when her son, then in grade 9, attended court with her. I was arguing a motion in her courtroom that morning when her son interrupted the proceedings to ask if he could go down the hall to watch the Court of Appeal instead.

I would like to think it was because of the lure in the Court of Appeal and not the quality of my argument. I know it certainly wasn't because of the quality of the judge sitting in that courtroom. We've had an opportunity to laugh about that day.

As the honourable Justice Robyn Diamond embarks on her next chapter of her life, she can be assured that her work has positively impacted the lives of Manitoba families.

On behalf of our NDP team and all Manitobans, I'd like to thank Justice Diamond for her commitment to the Court of Queen's Bench.

Milady, we hope your legacy of improving family law can continue in the province of Manitoba.

Thank you.

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

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Justice Robyn Diamond was appointed the first director of the newly created Family Law branch of the Attorney General's Department in 1982. In 1989, she was appointed to the Family Division of the Court of Queen's Bench and has been the longest serving woman justice.

\* (13:50)

We thank Justice Diamond for her work in the family law courts and her emphasis on making every effort to help families solve their issues through family case conferences and other mediation approaches without having to go through expensive and often divisive litigation.

We thank Justice Diamond for her work internationally representing Canada on efforts relating to international child abduction, in particular her efforts on international and inter-jurisdictional cases of child protection and representing Canada on the special commission of the 1980 Hague induction convention.

In my discussion with her son Richard, I gather that as a mother she was very fair. She encouraged

her children to follow their own dreams, but was also very hard to win an argument with.

I wish Justice Diamond all the best as she moves into retirement, spending summers at West Hawk Lake and winters in Florida and continuing to travel and explore the world as she's done so much in the past.

On behalf of the Manitoba Liberal caucus, our well wishes on your retirement.

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

### Manitoba 4-H

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture):** I am pleased to invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating a glowing example of how Manitoba 4-H connects with our communities, builds leadership and communication skills among youth.

This past summer, in celebration of Canada 150, the Manitoba 4-H Council co-ordinated the 4-H Manitoba Art Challenge. Canvases were provided to participating clubs, along with guidelines for finishing artwork. Using the medium, participants were asked to create a piece of art telling the story of 4-H from our province's agricultural roots to modern-day farming.

Regional art competitions were held throughout the summer months, with the provincial competition 'taking' place on October the 28th with the agricultural exhibition in Brandon. I was given the honour of participating as a judge in this final stage of the contest, which took place in conjunction with the signing of the annual proclamation of November as 4-H Month in Manitoba.

This—today, it is my pleasure to 'congratulate' all the participants in the 4-H Manitoba Art Challenge and to recognize the winner of the provincial competition, the Roseland South Brandon 4-H Club. As part of 4-H Month, all 20 of the art challenge finalists will have their canvases displayed in the Keystone Gallery at the Manitoba Legislature from today, October 30th, until Friday, November the 10th.

I encourage you all to visit the gallery and celebrate the tremendous contribution of 4-H in our province, and today are given—gathered here today with Clayton Robins representing 4-H Manitoba.

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** The 4-H pledge is: I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service and my health to better living.

4-H Manitoba empowers young Manitobans to come together and engage in meaningful contributions to their local and global communities.

This weekend, the 4-H Manitoba Art Challenge Finals were held in Brandon. Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who participated. Events like this are a testament to the energy, creativity and awareness of Manitoba's youth.

The 4-H program was designed to encourage improved agricultural practices and develop leadership skills in sustainable agriculture. Community programs like 4-H need government funding through grant programs like Neighbourhoods Alive! The government's pause on Neighbourhoods Alive! means community organizations are struggling to offer programming that keeps kids healthy and engaged.

We hope that the success of events like 4-H's art challenge will encourage the government to make strong investments in communities that help Manitoba's youth learn valuable skills.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**Ms. Klassen:** This past Friday, 4-H Manitoba wrapped up their annual art challenge. Five clubs across the province were chosen as winners.

It is great to see organizations like 4-H Manitoba encouraging youth to get creative and showcase their inner artist. We must continue to encourage our youth to get involved in the arts, whether it be through music, dance, theatre or visual arts.

Madam Speaker, the previous NDP government failed to support Manitoba's arts community, and this PC government is following suit. Funding has been cut or frozen for years. If the arts community was as



supported as well as other industries, we would see a drastic increase in our provincial GDP.

Art can be and should be enjoyed by all. This government must take further steps to invest in Manitoba's arts community.

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, I would like to commend 4-H Manitoba for engaging youth with art, and we congratulate all youth who took part in the art challenge.

Thank you.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Firefighters in Dawson Trail

**Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Good afternoon, Madam Speaker and members of this House. It is once again an honour and a privilege to rise in this House before you today.

Firefighter is a powerful word, bringing up dramatic images of men and women in full gear, fearlessly charging through danger to help in dire situations. As a small child, I was inspired by the ideas of firefighting. At the age of 15, I had the opportunity to join the Ritchot Fire Department, and here is where I learned first-hand the work that is required to be a firefighter.

It is not a—it is not glamorous. It is physically demanding. I remember a rural fire scene I attended where we needed to control it and monitor it for days. You don't get to leave or take a break when there's a fire. You just work at it because you know your community needs you to do it.

And you need more than physical endurance. You need to be smart and make sound judgment calls. Lastly, you need mental endurance. You need to have the strength and will of mind to know that you are doing the right thing.

Today, I am making sure the firefighters in Dawson Trail also know it is appreciated and recognized. When the call comes, it's more than just help they need to be prepared to offer. They offer courage.

It is my pleasure to present to you the Ritchot volunteer firefighting service, under Fire Chief Scott Weir. Fire Chief Scott Weir was inspired to firefight, like me, when he was a small child. Today, he has been a firefighter for over 20 years. He was deputized five years ago and has been chief for the last two years, serving fire halls in Ile des Chênes, St. Adolphe, and Ste. Agathe. Scott Weir is a

Dawson Trail hero, along with his colleagues Rich Nelson, Deidre Perron, Mike Rempel, Michel Trudeau and Eric Wutingz, who are here in the gallery today.

Thank you.

### Barry Anderson

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Speaker, the people of Manitoba lost a musical giant last week with the passing of Barry Anderson. Barry's passing has moved many to reflect and reminisce on the countless beautiful memories Barry gave them as a mentor, teacher, choirmaster and friend. Barry touched the lives of everyone around him with the gift of music.

Many, many Winnipeggers were blessed by Barry's gifts. He was a music teacher at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute, a school in the heart of the West End with a proud musical tradition, until he was hired away by the Winnipeg Police Service to direct their choir. For an incredible 43 years, he was the choirmaster of the Winnipeg Police Service Choir. He was awarded the rank of special commissioner for his contributions but also to outrank any inspectors in the choir who needed some direction.

Barry served as the music director of the DMCI Alumni Choir. In addition, Barry performed with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir and played during the processionals and recessionals at the University of Winnipeg's annual convocation services. He played at weddings and funerals at the former Rosh Pina Synagogue in the North End and could be heard playing at Christian churches across Winnipeg.

\* (14:00)

Many of Barry's most gratifying experiences came in his 46 years as the organist at Knox United Church across from Central Park. Barry said he loved to set the mood for worship each Sunday and was known to pull out all the stops at the end of the postlude, ensuring there were no sleepers left in the pews.

Barry's character shone through his music, and whether it was a piece by the Winnipeg police choir, or his favourite rendition of the Lord's Prayer, Barry played and directed the way he lived: with joy, love and kindness. We truly honour all he did to share his love of music.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Erin Owens

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** It is my pleasure to share with this House the accomplishments of Portage la Prairie's Erin Owens, who competed in the 2017 Legion National Youth Track and Field Championship this summer in Brandon, Manitoba, as part of 18 female athletes named to the team from across the province and northwestern Ontario.

Owens qualified for the national event by participating in the Legion Athletic Camp at the International Peace Garden. The 15-year-old distance runner was among 650 others under the age of 18 competing in the track and field events. Owens qualified for both the female and midget 1,200- and 2,000-metre races where she finished eighth and third, respectively, in her heats. Participating at the national level was an incredible experience for Owens, competing with the talented and highly trained athletes from across the country.

Owens—Ms. Owens is a passionate and committed to her sport, plans on joining the Winnipeg Optimist Athletics, a track and field club based out of Winnipeg, founded in the 1970s, that offers highly qualified coaches available year-round for the athletes striving to reach higher levels of excellence. Ms. Owens is hoping to train hard this year under the guidance of the specialized WOA coaching to develop and set personal goals in order to go back stronger in 2018.

The Legion nationals are the country's premier and only national—or, nationwide competition for youth and midget categories.

I ask all honourable members to join me in congratulating Erin Owens—who's not able to join us today, but who is well represented in the gallery by her father and grandparents—on her outstanding sportsmanship competing at the Royal Canadian Legion youth track and field national championships.

Thank you.

### Amber Trails Green School Designation

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** This May, Amber Trails school was awarded Canada's Green Building Council's designation of the Greenest School in Canada for 2017. Amber Trails was chosen as the greenest school for both its excellent environmental curriculum and its dedication to maintaining a green LEED Platinum building.

A teacher once asked her class on a Monday, who played outside over the weekend? Only two children raised their hands. Recognizing the need to reintegrate nature and sustainability into children's lives, Amber Trails formulated their curriculum to include sustainable features of the building and outdoor learning activities.

The school began a vegetable farm club last year, providing children with the opportunity to get outside and learn where their food came from, how hard it is to produce and how buying local makes a difference.

In June, Amber Trails hosted their first two-week outdoor challenge: two weeks of children—where they got to play outside, camp and learn about nature.

Children and the community have embraced the outdoor classrooms, their school's walk-bike-roll-to-school initiatives and their strong recycling and composting programs.

We often say in education that we must lead by example with our words and our actions. By supporting land-based education, Amber Trails is a leading example by promoting environmental awareness. Children are being educated to think sustainably, which translates to them becoming environmental stewards at home and in their community.

As a past member of the visionary Seven Oaks School Division, I am proud to see the accomplishments that Amber Trails school has made. I am also proud that our past NDP government was able to meet the growing needs of the northwest area of Winnipeg by building an award-winning school.

Today we are joined by the staff and students from Amber Trails school. Please join me in congratulating the staff, students and school division in their success in creating a model school in Manitoba.

### Patrick St. Godard

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I rise today to recognize the extraordinary young man in my riding who has overcome cancer to become an active member of the community.

Patrick St. Godard was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of 6 months. Incidentally, the person who diagnosed him was the honourable doctor opposite, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Patrick beat the disease and attended high school in Killarney, where he served on the student council and volunteered at a local care home. He was also a mascot and spent many of his hours with the local hockey team.

Now 25 and living in St. Pierre, has gone on to work at the St. Pierre Big Way grocery store. His job is to stock shelves with new products, check for expired products and assist customers. He's a valued member of the staff at Big Way.

I had the opportunity to go to work with Patrick on Take Your MLA to Work Day last week and saw first-hand his dedication to his job and to his customers.

In his spare time, he volunteers for the local drop-in, preparing and serving lunches for students, as he had for a number of years.

Patrick is very knowledgeable and a hard-working young man with a great sense of humour. He has a passion for history and is an avid curler.

Patrick is able to join us today with his friend and driver, Terell Moquin, employment facilitator for Eastman Employment Services.

Madam Speaker, Patrick's commitment to his community after experiencing such a personal adversity is truly inspiring. I would invite all members of this House to rise and recognize Patrick St. Godard for his service to his community.

Welcome.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Changes to Physio/Occupational Therapy Services

#### Impact on Patient Care and Future Health Costs

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Manitobans are speaking out about this Premier's cuts to outpatient occupational therapy and physiotherapy services.

We're hearing from Manitobans who are suffering while waiting for surgery but are worried that services won't be there for them when they need it. We're hearing from Manitobans whose quality of life will be affected.

Now, physiotherapy and occupational therapy are expensive. Even those individuals who are lucky enough to have insurance coverage, many times it's not enough to cover this therapy that they need. Recovery from a knee replacement can be three to

six months or longer, and sometimes coverage runs out after a few weeks. Now the Premier's decision to cut will lead to more pain and suffering for patients and it will lead to more costs to the health-care system in the long term.

Will the Premier table for the House today any evidence that cancelling outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy services will help patient costs or reduce—will help patient care or reduce costs in the long term?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I appreciate the member asking a question about costs, and let's talk about the costs.

Let's talk about the costs to Manitobans of \$3 million a day of interest—service costs on the NDP debt that was handed to the people of Manitoba by the overspending, by the out-of-control spending, by the lack of value-conscious spending by the previous NDP administration. Three million dollars a day, Madam Speaker, that cannot be put to the valuable, important services that we need today.

In spite of these challenges, this government has invested over half a billion dollars this year alone in health care above the previous NDP record of the previous government by finding savings; we've economized in other departments; we've trimmed at the top. We're finding the savings to maintain and enhance and improve services, Madam Speaker.

But the member speaks of costs; he shouldn't neglect the \$3-million-a-day service costs on the NDP debt.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** The question was equally about care, and, again, the Premier dodges that side of the question, focusing only on the money. And the point is that the services that these surgery patients need, whether it's physio or OT when they go home, now they won't be there for those patients when they need them.

\* (14:10)

Now the Premier refuses to present evidence to this House about this issue. What was his decision founded on?

Other jurisdictions in Canada recognize the value of outpatient OT and physiotherapy. That's why Ontario covers it; that's why Saskatchewan covers it; that's why Alberta and British Columbia

cover it. Now, when the Premier said other provinces didn't provide this service back in July, he was wrong. Madam Speaker, we know the Premier was basing his decision on that mistaken fact, perhaps others.

So will he present any evidence he has comparing the impact of these cuts to physiotherapy compared to the impact of repeat hospitalizations and surgeries for these patients?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, again, Madam Speaker, the member, in his preamble, demonstrates the fact, without doubt, that there is nothing new over there, nothing new: always advocacy for spending more, no concern whatsoever about getting better results, no concern about care. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Where's the caring? Where's the compassion and \$3 million a day out the window to a happy moneylender that could've gone to health care? Where's the care and concern about that, Madam Speaker?

Out-of-control spending doesn't maintain a home, out-of-control spending doesn't maintain a small business, and out-of-control spending jeopardizes health care, Madam Speaker.

We're dealing with the broken system that the NDP created, Madam Speaker, and we'll fix it where they failed.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** After surgery, patients who are going through knee replacements need physiotherapy. If they don't have that service available to them, their quality of life is worse. But if they re-injure themselves and have to go back to the emergency room, it's a bigger hit to our health-care system, because delivering services at someone's home is much cheaper than 'deserving' care in an acute-care centre or in an emergency room. That is the logic that the Premier is overlooking in his rush to make these political ideologically driven cuts to our health-care system. We know that this will cause more pain for patients and families.

We've also established in this House that it is the Premier who makes the decision to cut at the Cabinet table.

So will the Premier tell this House today: What evidence did he use to determine that outpatient

physiotherapy and occupational services are not needed? And what evidence did he use to compare how repeat hospital visits and surgeries will impact our health-care system in the future?

**Mr. Pallister:** The member speaks about overlooking logic, and, Madam Speaker, that's exactly what he does yet again, as his predecessor did and as his previous NDP government did. They overlooked the logic that faces all households when they have to decide what to buy and what not to spend money on; that faces every small business when they have to decide where to spend money and where they cannot afford to spend money.

They refused to address those issues. They said, year after year, while they were in government, while they were doubling our provincial debt, Madam Speaker, in the last six years alone, they said they'd bend the cost curve. They said they find ways to rationalize their decision-making processes so they could, well, come back to balance, and then went further and further away from balance, as we know.

Now we've inherited this \$3-million-a-day obligation that they handed us, and we're facing up to the challenge of dealing with it, where they ignored that challenge, Madam Speaker, dug deeper in the ground like little gophers and didn't do anything to help sustain health care for our province.

We'll sustain health care for our province, Madam Speaker, by facing the challenges they handed us. They broke it. We'll fix it.

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

### **Manitoba's Carbon Plan Manitoba Hydro Rates**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Premier is talking about—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:**—decisions, and we say the decision to cut physiotherapy was wrong.

It's getting harder and harder to make ends meet for many families in Manitoba, and now we see the Premier's carbon tax is going to make things worse for many of them.

The irony at the centre of his plan is that while he puts a price on carbon-intensive fuels, that price will remain flat, meaning that if you take inflation

into account, the cost of fossil fuels will actually get cheaper year over year.

At the same time, we know that under this Premier's watch that hydro rates—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —are going to get more and more expensive: by 8 per cent in the first year, by 8 per cent again in the second year. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** If that's carried out all the way to 2024, that could be a 71 per cent net increase: fossil fuels becoming cheaper while clean green energy becomes more expensive.

Will this Premier stop the hydro rate increases and commit to making our clean green energy—

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

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, the only green the NDP ever cares about is the green in your pocket and the pockets of all Manitobans. They don't care about green. The Auditor General's report last week says it clearly. They drew it up on the back of the napkin just before the last election. No science, no analysis, no considering the needs of Manitobans whatsoever.

In fact, it says right here on page 14 that the December 15 plan was to reduce emissions to just under 14 megatons by 2030—great target, Madam Speaker. What would that mean? It says right here in the report, quote: This would require more emission reductions than could be obtained by taking every gasoline- or diesel-powered vehicle in Manitoba off the road.

That's not a plan Manitoba wants, Madam Speaker. That's not a plan they need. He speaks about hydro rates going up. Yes, that was an NDP thing. That's what happened. The NDP decided to raise the hydro rates.

They broke it; we'll do our best to fix it.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I care a lot about the environment. I grew up hearing that the earth is our mother and that water is life. I'm very passionate about these things, and over the years of studying them one of the things that I heard about a carbon price is that it should

make it more attractive for people to switch to green energy. And yet the exact opposite is slated to occur under this Premier's carbon tax plan.

Again, after the first year, the cost of fossil fuels will be flat, will actually become cheaper when you take inflation into account. Yet, at the same time, under this Premier's watch, hydro rates will increase year over year, by 8 per cent in the first year—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —by 8 per cent in the second year and then again by 8 per cent every year after that, potentially 'til 2024.

Will the Premier listen to Manitoba ratepayers and businesses and ensure the cost of hydro does not go up by 7.9 per cent a year?

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, when it comes to environmental issues the only recycling the NDP really supports is recycling political staffers between here and Alberta. That's it; that's as far as it goes.

Nobody who cares about Mother Earth and makes platitudes about Mother Earth, would support taking a hydro line and moving it unnecessarily, at billions of dollars of additional cost to Manitobans, halfway around the province, destroying hundreds of miles of boreal forest in the process. No one would do that, Madam Speaker, who cared about Mother Earth.

These platitudes don't work for Manitobans because that's what they represent in the absence of a plan from the member opposite. The only plan he's put forward so far, Madam Speaker, is that the carbon tax should be higher and that he should get more money from Manitobans' pockets so he can take the green out of their pocket and get credit for pretending he's green.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** The Premier cannot address the contradiction at the heart of his carbon tax plan. Again, the purpose of a price on carbon is supposed to make it more attractive for people to switch to green energy such as hydroelectricity. Yet, if their hydroelectric rates are increasing year over year

during the same time period when electric vehicles are coming to market—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —well, that incentive for them to switch to green energy just becomes less and less as those hydro rates increase.

So, again, the Premier has tabled a plan where fossil fuel prices will remain constant, or when you take into account inflation, they will get cheaper year after year. Meanwhile, we know that under his watch hydro rates go up and up and up.

Will the Premier commit to not raising hydro rates by 7.9 per cent per year?

**Mr. Pallister:** NDP never had a plan before. The Auditor General confirmed that last week with an amazing report condemning the fact there were no targets set, no consideration of Manitobans' needs whatsoever. And the member hasn't demonstrated a single change in position. All he's saying is the carbon tax should be higher, Madam Speaker; that's all he's saying.

\* (14:20)

What we're concerned about here is that there be a plan that works for Manitoba and for Manitobans. That's why—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —we spent the last year designing, consulting and working with Manitobans: to present a plan that will work better for the environment, that will work better for the economy, that will work better for Manitobans. The members opposite never had a plan, Madam Speaker. You can't call the back-of-a-napkin guesstimate a plan. No plan whatsoever, and the only thing we've heard from the NDP so far today is they want the carbon tax higher so they can spend Manitobans' money.

We want a better plan. We'll build a better plan, Madam Speaker. They never had a plan at all.

#### **Public Transit Services Municipal Funding Formula**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** One of the best things that any government can do to help communities fight climate change is to actually support those communities at the municipal level. And yet, this very same government, its own actions are undermining the words that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) just shared with us in the Chamber.

They have brought forward legislation—[*interjection*]—Do you want to ask the question? You can get up if you want.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** If he's actually serious about supporting communities, then he should probably withdraw the legislation before the House right now which actually cuts funding for public transit across Manitoba.

Is it actions or is it words? I would ask the government to withdraw that part of their bill before the Legislature today.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Member opposite talks about the best thing that we can do to support our communities, and that's exactly what this government is doing. And I want to take this opportunity to thank the many stakeholders that have participated in our made-in-Manitoba climate and green plan and the hundreds of Manitobans that are going to have their say on this plan.

When it comes to protecting the environment and protecting the economy, our government is going to get it right, unlike members opposite who we learned last week from the Auditor General's scathing indictment of their plan on the environment, they had no plan to fix the environment.

Where they failed, we're going to get it right, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Altemeyer:** The minister's quite partisan and hollow answer is going to be cold comfort—literally, cold comfort—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** —to Manitobans that are left at the bus stop waiting for a transit bus which might not be arriving because of the funding decisions of this government.

We are not the only ones raising this concern. No less than Mr. Chris Goertzen, who is head of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, expressed his concern on behalf of all municipalities in Manitoban. It looks like this government is off-loading climate change costs to municipalities.

Will the minister withdraw the bill, which cuts funding to public transit, today?

**Ms. Squires:** Member opposite, he talks about cold comfort to communities and to Manitobans. I'd say that there was nothing more than cold comfort coming out of the previous administration when they talked to members of our community about the environment. They had absolutely no plan to save the environment, to protect the environment. They talked about emissions—they talked about emissions that would require taking every vehicle off the road. That's cold comfort to Manitobans if we're going to talk about a plan that removes every single diesel and gas-burning vehicle off of the road.

So where they failed to get it right on protecting the environment and protecting the economy—where they failed, we're going to get it right, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Well, it's a bit of a case of 'deju'—déjà vu all over again.

The Filmon government, which the Premier (Mr. Pallister) was a member of, of course, cancelled the 50-50 funding partnership with municipalities. In contrast to what the minister just claimed, our government restored the 50-50 funding arrangement with all municipalities.

And I would ask the minister why in her plan did she only speak to the City of Winnipeg's needs for electric transit—for their transit buses? There are transit services offered around Manitoba. Why didn't she talk about Brandon or Selkirk or Flin Flon or any of the other communities? Do they not deserve the same support from this government that they're talking about being interested in providing to Winnipeg?

Thank you.

**Ms. Squires:** Speaking of déjà vu, members opposite released a plan in 2008. They had unachievable targets; they had absolutely no idea how they were going to reduce emissions in this province. They had no idea how they were going to work with all Manitobans to transition to a low-carbon future. So then what do they do? In 2015, they tabled the same report, again, with unachievable targets, no plan to transition to a low-carbon economy.

Unlike members opposite, we're going to be consulting with all Manitobans, including all the

rural municipalities, and working with our municipal leaders as we achieve our goal of transitioning to this low-carbon future.

### **Public Transit Services Municipal Funding Formula**

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** For the past couple of weeks, my colleagues and I have been reading a petition on behalf of Functional Transit, which is a grassroots advocacy group that supports the enhancement of public transit because it's good for the economy, it's good for commuters, it's good for the environment.

Now, Functional Transit objects to the government's funding cut to public transit and the elimination of the 50-50 funding formula, and as a result, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of Winnipeggers and Manitobans have signed this petition.

The Minister of Finance says he's all about listening, so will he listen to Functional Transit and restore funding for public transit in Winnipeg and across Manitoba?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I thank the member for the question.

Now, I thought the member's question would be, of course, natural curiosity on our green plan that we unveiled—and the minister and the Premier—last week on Friday. He should be interested in that plan. Of course, that plan is exactly the—our plan to succeed where his government failed.

We know that the federal government has made it very clear, explicit, in their spring budget, backstop provisions for any province who does not bring a plan. We're bringing a made-in-Manitoba plan, a plan by Manitobans for Manitobans.

And what starts now? It's the very considerable consultative exercise. Our message to Manitobans: we're listening.

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

**Mr. Allum:** I think the Finance Minister missed the bus on that particular answer.

You know, when the—when this matter—when this funding cut was revealed—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Allum:** –by the NDP because the Finance Minister wouldn't announce it, the mayor for the city of Winnipeg said this would cause pain. This wasn't like some kind of metaphorical pain, Madam Speaker, some kind of phantom pain, but real pain for the City of Winnipeg that will be out millions of dollars and real pain for workers, for seniors, for families, for students, for children who will all have to pay higher fares for less reliable service.

So I ask the minister again: Will he listen to Functional Transit and restore the 50-50 funding formula?

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the member for Fort Garry-Riverview for the question, but let's be clear: that opposition party's lack of a plan would've put all Manitobans under the bus when it came to the climate plan.

Madam Speaker, our government has been clear that there needs to be recognition, there needs to be—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** –consideration given to this province's very substantial investments in green energy. Ninety-eight per cent of the generation of our electricity is green. That needs to be accommodated; it needs to be accounted for. Our plan accounts for that.

Why doesn't he get on board and support a plan where we're listening to Manitobans?

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

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Allum:** That was about as disappointing an answer as I've ever heard, but it's also disappointing to hear the Health Minister singing at the expense of Manitobans.

You know, the real problem—the real—what's really egregious about this bill—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Allum:** –is that the Finance Minister didn't announce it in the budget, but he buried it in the budget implementation bill. That was hardly transparent, hardly accountable, but, in fact, he's hiding from the people of Winnipeg.

So I want to ask him: Many Manitobans have signed up to talk about this bill in public hearings, will he call that committee today so Manitobans can have their say?

**Mr. Friesen:** Well, I don't have sufficient time to talk about all the things that that former government tried to hide in budget lines, but we can say this: when it comes to a question about hiding, let's be clear about the Auditor General's scathing review of their failure to enact real measures, failure to set targets, failure to monitor, failure to report. It was a failure to be accountable to Manitobans.

Where that party failed, this government is listening. This government will succeed.

#### **Additional Training for Provincial Court Judges Domestic and Sexual Assault Awareness**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Victims of domestic violence and stalking are seeing their safety seriously compromised by some of the decisions by—that are being made by some of Manitoba's judicial justice of the peace in denying protection orders.

We see a media report today highlighting JJPs' lack of awareness in respect of the urgent and volatile nature of domestic violence and, despite the changes to The Domestic Violence and Stalking Act, I would suggest that JJPs need additional training ensuring that sexual assault and domestic violence victims are treated with compassion and have full access to protection orders.

Will the Justice Minister commit to passing Bill 227?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Certainly, the protection and safety of victims of domestic violence is paramount and our government is committed to ensuring accessibility to needed supports and programs for those who suffer from that.

Madam Speaker, I will say that JJPs were provided with information on amendments to The Domestic Violence and Stalking Act last year and further education was organized by the judiciary earlier this year.

We respect the independence of the judiciary and we know that the chief judge is on this and is—and we respect her judicial independence when it comes to the education of our judges.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The minister held a press conference this past summer indicating that she refuses to legislate update training for judges.



Yet again, though, we see last week the need for training when Quebec Justice Jean-Paul Braun made disgusting comments about a 17-year-old sexual assault victim when he suggested that this child is flattered by the attention of a rapist, while describing her, and I quote, a little overweight but she has a pretty face.

Unfortunately, we see this type of disgusting narrative occur previously here in Manitoba and across Canada. It can easily happen again.

Will the minister support Bill 227?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Certainly, we are very concerned for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and stalking, and we are working with victim services and our judiciary to ensure that they feel safe and respected in our courts.

We know that the JPs were provided with information with respect to the changes of the legislation that took place. We know that when—certainly we have respect for judicial independence. It is my understanding that there is regular training that takes place in a number of different areas including domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault, and, again, that falls under the purview of the chief justice—chief judge provincially and we recognize her judicial independence.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** As more Canadian judges get called out on unacceptable comments made in sexual assault trials it—the critical need of judicial training becomes more transparent and apparent.

Yes, it is important that victims get to trial quickly, but what's the point if they're heard by judges who hold archaic beliefs about sexual assault of women and girls and continue perpetuating the belief that somehow we asked for our rape or our sexual assault? Manitoban sexual assault victims deserve better.

Will the minister push Manitoba forward and support Bill 227?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** And we certainly look forward to a good healthy debate on Bill 227, but I will say the protection and safety of victims of domestic violence, stalking, as well as sexual assault, is paramount and we are committed, as a government, to ensuring accessibility and needed supports and programs for victims of domestic violence and stalking, as well as sexual assault.

We recognize that there is training that is ongoing and education programs within the judiciary. It does fall under the purview of the judiciary and we certainly respect their judicial independence.

### **Halloween Safety Warning Fentanyl Blotters Discovered**

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Winnipeg police unit that undertook the recent drug bust in which they came across fentanyl blotters.

It is a mixed blessing that the drugs were found, unfortunate because it is our reality, but fortunate that we know it's out there and our government can be proactive.

Our children in Manitoba are excited for Halloween. Ministers, my hope is that TV and radios are flooded with warnings tonight. It is this government's job to protect Manitobans. This government doesn't need Trudeau for that.

Can the First Minister outline for us what this government has done to be prepared so that our children can enjoy a safe Halloween?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** And all of us remember, you know, as children, when we would have—our parents would often go through candy for us and they'd look for things like needles. We were all shocked, of course, to hear the terrible report this weekend about fentanyl blotters being seen. I appreciate the fact that members of the media have done a good job of getting that message out. There is only, of course, one more day to Halloween. I trust that they'll continue to put that message out and, as parents, we have our own, of course, responsibility.

I appreciate the member raising this and I know that there will continue to be awareness over the next 24 hours, Madam Speaker.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** Winnipeg police are warning the public about a potential deadly drug that looks like a harmless piece of paper with a witch stamp on it.

I'm lucky; I have access to the newspaper, but I fear for those who don't. I quote: It is potentially lethal, a Winnipeg spokesperson—police spokesperson said Sunday, adding if the public comes in contact with the blotter they should call nine one one right away, and do not touch it. He said

not even police and first responders would touch the blotters.

Will the Minister of Justice share with us what the department has done to keep Manitobans safe this Halloween?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** And I want to thank the member for the question. Certainly it is a significant issue that we're faced with in Manitoba—in Winnipeg and in Manitoba. And through—the Minister of Health and myself and others, we work hard every day, along with our law enforcement, to develop strategies to ensure that we can eradicate these situations in Manitoba.

I have a tremendous amount of respect for the work that the Winnipeg Police Service does. I want to thank them each and every day that they put their lives on the line to protect our citizens here in Manitoba.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** Tomorrow is Halloween.

I quote: Police are especially concerned the blotters could get into the wrong hands, maybe that of a child, and be mistaken as just a piece of paper.

It's scary to learn that opioid poisoning puts Manitobans in the hospital at a rate of one every two or three days.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) stop blaming other levels of government for their own lack of a plan and take this crisis seriously?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the member raising the issue of the blotters that might be going out—and I, again, I believe that there'll be good public awareness about that, we, as parents and caregivers, have our own responsibility when it comes to the general nature of the crisis with opiates in Canada.

Madam Speaker, this government has taken a lead. We went to Ottawa. We pressed for a ban on pill pressers. That was done. We went to Ottawa. We talked about having restrictions of importations of drugs like fentanyl coming in from other countries. We got success on that.

\*(14:40)

Locally, we've had public education campaigns and, of course, we've looked at putting things like

Suboxone on the formulary so those who are addicted to certain drugs can get treatment.

So we've taken steps. We know there's more to do and we'll continue to do that.

### **Manitoba's Climate Plan Government Update**

**Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan):** I welcome everyone back from the weekend. I hope people had time to take some time for themselves and their family.

I, unfortunately, did some reading of a horror story. Last week, the Auditor General of Manitoba issued a scathing report on the failure of the previous NDP government to produce a credible climate change action plan. In 2009, the NDP government was aware that in 2008 the emission reduction plan would not be met, but even still they did not update their plan 'til 2015, just before losing power.

My question to the Minister of Sustainable Development: Can she update the House on how we will avoid the mistakes of the NDP while implementing our plan, which was built on strategic pillars of climate, jobs, water and nature?

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

And our made-in-Manitoba climate and green plan sets out achievable, realistic and practical solutions to a—transitioning to a low-carbon economy. This plan was made in consultation with hundreds of stakeholders throughout the province, and we're going to be talking to thousands of Manitobans in the weeks ahead on how we can achieve our low-carbon future.

And, unlike members opposite, who failed to make any meaningful reductions in emissions and are now advocating for a carbon tax that is escalating and knows no bounds, our plan sets out a flat tax—or a price on carbon that's flat like the prairie horizon to show that we are interested in protecting the environment and protecting the economy.

Where they failed, Madam Speaker, we're going to get it; we're going to get the job done.

### **Northern Manitoba Small Business Programs**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Job losses are predicted to reach at least 1,500 in northern Manitoba in the next few years. Now is not the time to freeze programs that help small and medium-sized

businesses in the North. But that's exactly what this government did. The Communities Economic Development Fund has been on hold since March while this government has conducted yet another review.

Why is this government freezing investments that could very well create jobs in the North?

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade):** Well, Madam Speaker, the member from Flin Flon talks about the challenges of the North that should have been dealt with 10 years ago, which they failed to do.

The Leader of the Opposition—the current Leader of the Opposition has signed the Leap Manifesto which claims—which proclaims that all mineral resources should be left in the ground. That is not going to help northern Manitoba.

Unlike the previous government, this government will work with our northern partners and create economic development in the North.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Madam Speaker, the CEDF provides capital and operating loans to small and medium-sized businesses and Manitoba fishers.

According to the latest report, CEDF-supported businesses employ approximately 482 people and 871 fishers. According to the annual report there are \$3.14 million in loans on hold because they're waiting for government approval.

Will the government stop with their ideological reviews and fast-track those loans so that northern Manitobans can stop waiting and start working?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, Chief Ron Evans and his committee are working on a mining protocol. It's working with the First Nations across the North. This is to develop a protocol for mineral extraction, which the current Leader of the Opposition does not want. But this is—this takes into account cultural, economic, environmental sustainability to developing mines in partnership with the First Nation communities all across the North. This will create good jobs and build on a future, a positive future for northern Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** In late August, privately run economic development agencies like World Trade Centre

Winnipeg and 'innavoke' Manitoba compared funding cuts to a blood bath. To quote: No one knows if they have a plan in place. It's hard to fund against a policy framework that's not even built yet.

Now we know that confusion has reached northern Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, when will the government allow CEDF to do its job, provide financial support to northern Manitoba businesses?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Madam Speaker, the Auditor General just confirmed that the NDP have never had a plan and couldn't manage a plan if they did try to figure out one.

The look—there's the Look North task force report; we have the mining protocol committee going on—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pedersen:** —last week we had the announcement of the aerospace and OCN proposal. We will work with the people of the North to fix the finances, to repair the services and to rebuild the economy in northern Manitoba. This government will work in partnership with all people in the North.

#### **Social Housing Units Need for Investments**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Madam Speaker, over the weekend, a Point Douglas man died after the rooming house that he lived in caught fire, and more than 12 people living in the three-storey house are now homeless.

Eight people have died in Winnipeg fires this past year, and six of those people lived in rooming houses.

We know many of these homes are chronically overcrowded, lack working fire alarms and haven't had their electrical checked. For very-low-income families in Point Douglas, these risks are worth it to avoid being homeless.

This weekend's tragedy is a reminder that quality social housing is needed to keep people safe. Will the minister listen to the community and start making investments in social housing?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** This government is investing in housing solutions here in the province of Manitoba.

We know the one thing that leads to things like homelessness that the 'menter' had talked about is

things like poverty. We know that the opposition had the child-poverty capital of Canada. We also know that CFS—60 per cent of people that come out of the CFS system become homeless. That's something that the NDP knows well about.

Our government is investing millions of dollars in terms of new housing solutions to make it affordable for people to go, including things like the Rent Assist program—a \$39 million increase in the Rent Assist program, which means 2,215 more families are supported under our plan than your plan.

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

## PETITIONS

### Transit Funding

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly, and it's a good one about transit.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8), repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act which states, and I quote here, "The municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue." End quote.

(2) Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

(3) Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

This petition is signed by Liel Golubchik, Emelie Brookes and Muriel Conner as well as many other Manitobans.

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

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

\* (1450)

Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8), repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act which states, quote, "The municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or a rapid transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue," end quote.

(2) Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

(3) Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

### Northern Patient Transfer Program

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

To—the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitobans recognize that everyone deserves quality accessible health care.

(2) The people of northern Manitoba face unique challenges when accessing health care, including inclement weather, remote communities and seasonal roads.

(3) The provincial government has already unwisely cancelled northern health investments, including clinics in The Pas and Thompson.

(4) Furthermore, the provincial government has taken a course that will discourage doctors from practising in the North, namely, their decision to cut the grant program designed to bring more doctors to rural Manitoba.

(5) The provincial government has also substantially cut investments in roads and highways, which will make it more difficult for northerners to access health care.

(6) The provincial government's austerity approach is now threatening to cut funding for essential programs such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program, which was designed to help some of the most vulnerable people in the province.

(7) The provincial government has recently announced it would cancel the airfare subsidy for patient escorts who fly to Winnipeg for medical treatment, which will be devastating for the patients with mobility issues, dementia or who are elderly and need assistance getting to the city.

(8) The challenges that northerners face will only be overcome if the provincial government respects, improves and adequately funds quality programs that were designed to help northerners, such as the Northern Patient Transportation Program.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to recognize the absolute necessity of maintaining and improving the Northern Patient Transportation Program by continuing to respect Northern Patient Transfer agreements and funding these services in accordance with the needs of northern Manitobans.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by many, many, many northern Manitobans.

#### **Taxi Industry Regulation**

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

The background of 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 that 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 livelihoods of hundreds of Manitobans, many of whom have invested their life savings in 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.

Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

#### **Transit Funding**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment Act, 2017, section 88(8) repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act which states, quote: The municipal grants for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that

operates a regular or rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in an amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue. End of quote.

(2) Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserving its infrastructure and to reducing the carbon footprint.

(3) Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agencies will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans to employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Manitoba government to withdraw its plan to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017.

Signed by many, many Manitobans. Thank you.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amendment act, 2017, section 88(8) repeals the portion of The Municipal Taxation and Funding Act which states: The municipal grant for a fiscal year must include for each municipality that operates a regular or rapid public transit system a transit operating grant in the amount that is not less than 50 per cent of the annual operating cost of the transit system in excess of its annual operating revenue.

(2) Public transit is critical to Manitoba's economy, to preserve its infrastructure and to reduce the carbon footprint.

\* (15:00)

(3) Eliminating the grant guarantees for municipal transit agency will be detrimental to transit services and be harmful to provincial objectives of connecting Manitobans for employment, improving aging road infrastructure and addressing climate change.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to withdraw its plans to repeal the annual operating grant for municipal transit agencies and remove section 88(8) of Bill 36, the budget implementation and statutes amended–amendment act, 2017.

Signed by P. Tolsma, P. Sprague, F. Pullen and many other Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Government House Leader):** If you could call Committee of Supply.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections) EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of resolution 2.1 of the Estimates for the Department of Executive Council.

Are there any questions? Seeing none, I will now put the question.

Resolution 2.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,425,000 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Executive Council.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Families.

The next set of Estimates—oh, sorry.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and critics the opportunity to prepare for the

commencement of the next department? Agreed?  
[Agreed]

*The committee recessed at 3:32 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 3:33 p.m.*

## FAMILIES

**Mr. Chairperson:** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Families.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** It's—very pleased to be here today to provide an opening statement to the Department of Families.

Making Manitoba most improved province—when our party was first elected last year, we committed to making a number of very important investments: protecting and supporting the well-being of families, supporting the growth of our communities, helping Manitoba families—or, helping Manitobans develop the skills and the resiliency they need to rise above social and economic challenges and participate fully in the—in a prosperous Manitoba economy.

We also promised Manitobans that we would focus on making the province the most improved province, ending this year—ending years of wasteless spending, deliver the high-quality public services that Manitobans need and want at a reasonable cost and balancing these objectives with charting a new course for the Department of Families has not been easy. This has been—some difficult decisions to make along the way.

However, 2017-18 budget decisions have been informed by a comprehensive prebudget consultation exercise. As a result, I'm very pleased, Madam—or, Mr. Speaker—or, Mr. Chairman, rather, to present the highlights of the 2017-18 Manitoba Families budget.

Budget 2017 provides \$105 million in new funding for the department, which represents about a 5.4 per cent increase over last year. Budget 2017 recognizes the growing demands placed upon the programs and shows the services to support for vulnerable Manitobans who will not be compromised. It builds upon the important work that

we've done in the department over the last year. It really demonstrates our continued commitment to improving the circumstances of all Manitobans, in particular low and modern—or, modest income families here in the province of Manitoba.

By adding responsibilities for EIA and Manitoba housing, through the corporation, the Department of Families in 2016 was brought together into a ministry of wide range of programs, policies and services to improve collaboration and service deliveries for all Manitobans.

Recognizing the difficult and often interrelated social and economic challenges facing Manitobans in 2017-18, the budget for the Department of Families includes investments in a wide range of social services supports including early learning and child care, help for low income Manitobans and employment and training supports. It also includes new investments in supports for social housing and rent supplements, Child and Family Services, adult and—adult with intellectual disabilities and family violence prevention.

To complement these investments and to further support the well-being of Manitobans' families and communities, my department will also be moving forward in 2015-2018 with some important legislative amendments that will support these initiatives.

One, Improving permanency options for children in care and the Child and Family Services agencies. Have fewer children in care and provide better outcomes for children, reducing red tape related to early learning and child care, improving the social inclusion of persons with disabilities and bringing in to force The Protecting Children (Information Sharing) Act and then the advocate for children and youth to enhance transparency and openness.

In terms of early learning and child care, we know that quality child-care options are important to Manitoban families. Unfortunately, too many families in the province are still waiting for child-care spaces. As the Minister of Families, I am committed to shortening the wait times and increasing accessibility for parents. Budget 2017 provides an initial \$6.2 million in early learning and child-care initiatives that will be part of our new multi-year early learning and child care strategy. This is an increase of 3.8 per cent from 2016-18 for financial assistance to grant. Overall, that represents a \$12-million increased investment in child care since we left it on an annual basis.

Since coming to office in spring of 2016, our government has been working to find new ways to improve Manitoba's early learning and child care. We have taken serious a look at our early learning and child-care system and we have heard from Manitoba families, child-care workers, stakeholders alike about what works and what is required. As a result, Mr. Chairperson, our new multi-year early learning child-care strategy includes a number of areas to focus in on: supporting new and newly funded affordable and accessible spaces, introducing innovative initiatives to strengthen the sector to build sector capacity, supporting rural and northern communities, enhancing diversity inclusion in the child-care sector and engaging the early learning and child-care community in public reporting.

I can also tell you that we have taken important steps towards achieving these goals. On March 9th, 2017, for example, our government announced a commitment of \$6.1 million for 15 community-based CAPA projects that were created over 739 new licensed early learning and child-care spaces. In addition, we announced plans to improve and modernize the early learning and child-care system, increasing efficiencies, child-care services and address regulatory barriers for child-care operators.

In 2017-18, we'll also be making it easier for families with children to simplify the process governing the operating and operations of child-care facilities and grow in the capacity of early learning and child care.

Mr. Chairman—Mr. Chairperson, we will continue to work with 'federal' partners to sign a bilateral early learning and child-care framework that will see new funding formulas come to Manitoba to support further expansion in the child-care sector.

\* (15:40)

I want to be clear that our \$6.2-million early learning and child-care investments in the budget of 2017 is addition to any other funding that will be—that we'll participate with, with the federal government on the bilateral frame agreement. So there'll be a lot of money invested in this area over the next number of years.

Help for low-income Manitobans, Mr. Chairperson, our government remains committed to ensuring that low-income, modern—modest-earning Manitobans do not spend their entire paycheques on rent and they can access income supports when they experience some financial difficulty. This is why

Budget 2017 has provided an additional \$97 million, or 17.6 per cent increase in EIA, or employment income rental assistance programs. This increase will help maintain existing income assistance benefits and programming for eligible Manitobans, address rising case-load costs for EIA as well as Rent Assist and address increasing utility costs on municipal fees such as transit, water, sewer fees, et cetera.

The funding will also ensure that a maximum rent assistance benefit are fully indexed at 75 per cent of the median market rent so that low-income Manitobans are able to access a reasonable priced private market accommodations. Our government is also taking steps to better align the Rent Assist program with other existing shelter programs.

Recognizing the importance—costs of providing housing services, Budget 2007–'17 also provides a 1 per cent increase in board and room rates for persons requiring care and supervision of adults living with licensed residential facilities. For—within the additional \$97 million for EIA and rent assistance programs, Budget 2017 also provides an increase of \$9 million or 13.5 per cent increase in the rising costs of health services related to increasing the number of folks that are involved in the EIA system.

The funding will also address the increased cost for prescription drugs within the EIA program. Ensuring income assistance recipients have access to employment, training, supports, we'll continue to provide our department in 2017-18.

We also continue to work closely with the Department of Education and Training to find new ways to improve employment outcomes for people receiving income assistance. For example, we will continue to use motivational interviewing techniques to participants to reach their full and training potential.

A significant focus of EIA 2017-18 is enhancing rapid employment services for people that are assessed at being closest to labour market. One example is the Jobs on Market, which is a new service centre in Winnipeg that assesses plans with and refers to ready-to-work, non-disabled individuals to employment services within seven days. So it's a quick process to get people back in the work world.

Terms of housing, Budget 2017 demonstrates our commitment to ensure the low- and moderate-income households have the specialized needs and



services that have access to safe and affordable housing solutions to support communities across Manitoba. Our government knows that housing costs are typically a family's greatest expense. We also know that the good-quality, safe and affordable housing is fundamental, supporting the development—I'm getting the call sign here, so let me continue to go on.

Our Budget 2017 includes a \$16.1-million or 8 per cent increase in the budget overall. That's for items just mentioned. And, in 2017, our recoverables for these areas increased by upwards of \$20 million.

We also are encouraged with the—a large part is to do with the 'federal' SIF funding that we got through the federal government, an \$89-million fund. Just under \$150 million in loan act authority for capital programs in Manitoba Housing are allocated.

The long-term sustainability of Manitoba's social housing portfolio is key to the province and, as a result, our government has undertaken a broad consultation session. We've fit close to 1,500 Manitobans. Social housing is a viable alternative. And with that, Madam Speaker, although I have very much more to say in terms of the areas, I'm going to yield to the clock.

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

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I do.

Thank you to the minister for his opening comments. You know, I look forward to learning more about this file as this file is new to me and, you know, to work—to see how the processes work in terms of supporting families.

I also want to thank the member's staff. I don't know if they're over there, or where they are, but who I know take part in providing excellent public service and who work to make sure that there's quality services and that it's diligent in giving Manitobans accessible social services.

As you know, I'm new to this Estimates process. This is my first Estimates—you know, facilitating it. So I want to thank you for your patience. If I'm asking questions, just know that, you know, these questions are for me to fully understand the work that you do in this department.

As the MLA for Point Douglas, you know that the area and the constituents that I serve are the

lowest income in Manitoba. Many struggle with housing. As you heard with my question, someone just, you know, passed away in a house fire; the rest of those people are still homeless. I just got off a call with one of them before I got in here, asking, you know, how do I access any kind of housing. So they called Manitoba Housing, and they were told because they're not disabled or have any health issues, that they can't access, they have to go through the process. So I look forward to your response on that.

Also, as you know, you know, many of our families live in poverty and are working to get back into, you know, the labour force. Many have children who are waiting for daycare spots. As we know, this government, since you've taken government, these spaces have increased to a wait—or a waiting period of 15 months for some families, but also increased in terms of how many people are on the wait-list, from 12,000 to 17,000. So I also look forward to hearing about this bilateral agreement and, you know, what your plan is to make sure that there's spaces available for those 12,000 families—or 17,000 families that are waiting for spaces so that they can return back to work and not have to wait longer.

Education, as you know, is a huge, you know, area within that strip of Selkirk, and families can't access any of that without child care. So, you know, I want to know about extra child-care spaces being created within the Point Douglas, but all of Manitoba, really.

EIA has been a huge struggle with families—have I—as I've heard from families that they're being offered training programs for eight to 10 months, not being employable at the end of those eight to 10 months. So it's great that you have, you know, training and education going on, but we also need to look at the jobs market and what we're training these people, so that at the end of, you know, their training, that they're employable, and employable at a living wage. So if you have, you know, housing increasing by 3 per cent—they're paying 25 per cent because they're living in Manitoba Housing—it's increased to 28 per cent; maybe they're receiving some Rent Assist, which has also decreased—all that combined—and then daycare, you know, we have to think about all of Manitobans when we're making these decisions. And if we want people to contribute to the economy, we need them to be in jobs and not, you know, kept on EIA and in social housing and then low-paying jobs.

They rely on lots of these services that were cut in my community. So, if you look at Neighbourhoods Alive! funding, you know, it affected a lot of the programs and organizations within Point Douglas, and, you know, families are struggling. They have lots of anxiety. There's women that are having to do things to pay their rent that they wouldn't otherwise do, and I've heard these stories because I've gone and visited these centres and I've listened to these families, and I'm—I get calls every day from families saying, like, I need help; it's getting harder and harder to live; you know, I need a child-care space; I need affordable rent; they've taken away more of my Rent Assist. You know, so we have to start thinking about how we can help. You know, I'm not saying giving a handout, but a hand up to these people so that they can get out of poverty.

You've made significant changes to service delivery which has forced families, you know, to stretch their budget even further. And I've alluded to some of that, you know, the housing, 3 per cent decrease in Rent Assist, and, you know, as MLA for that community and all of Manitoba, it's my duty to come here and let you know how these things are affecting the families that all of us here as MLAs, you know, represent these people.

How much time do I have? Five minutes, okay.

\*(15:50)

So I talked about this in the House. You know, I was a former kid in care when I was 13. I'm now 44, so that was 31 years ago.

When I was a kid in care, we worked with families, so I'm really looking forward to, you know, working with you and ensuring that kids are staying in their homes.

But I am concerned that you are taking the numbers of kids who would be living with families and not including those in the numbers, and the support that's still going to be given to these families, even if it's not financial support, in terms of caring for this child, but if this child has, you know, critical needs, they need to go to a therapist or, you know, they need medication that maybe the family can't provide, that that support is still there for families and that they should still be included in that number.

When I was a kid in care, it was not—at that time, kids weren't being apprehended. What was happening was kids were—people were being put into the households to help support the families to keep the families together so that the parents had the

supports, because it wasn't the failing of my mother and her parenting; it was just the choices I was making as a youth.

So I think that we need to keep that in mind, too, when we're dealing with families, that sometimes, you know, they get labeled as, you know, being a parent that can't care for their children when, in fact, it's not—it's, you know, sometimes kids are being kids, and, you know, how do we help support those families.

You know, I hope to work with you on a variety of issues and do my part, you know, to stand up for my Point Douglas families and make sure that, you know, more services aren't being cut but, in fact, that we're investing more money into that community because, like I said, it's one of the poorest communities in Manitoba and people are struggling.

I also want to remind you that, you know, balancing the budget off the backs of families is not the right way to go. We need to be investing in families. We need to put the infrastructure in so that people are able to get out of poverty and transform their lives.

I'm one of those people, lived in poverty my whole life—single-parent family; my mom was on welfare, lived with three kids, often didn't have lunch, which many of our kids don't have now, and I spoke about this in the House.

Schools in my area are accessing food banks. That's wrong. No kid should be having to, you know, eat chili for breakfast because that's all the food bank can supply because there's not enough money to feed kids. You know, we need to invest in kids and their futures and families so that they have enough money to send a lunch with their kid.

And, you know, the cuts that we're seeing and, you know, the raising of this, that and everything is making it harder for families to be able to do that, to be able to care for their kids, which, you know, I've heard from other families and I've heard this from you that it's part of the plan that, you know, if somebody goes into the house and they don't have food that you're going to help, you know, make sure that those kids aren't apprehended because of poverty.

So I'm happy to hear about that. You know, I'm definitely going to be pushing and making sure that that is, in fact, what's happening. And, you know, I want to hear about what this training and education

for EIA is, and thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you to make sure that, you know, more Manitobans live better lives.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the critic from the official opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 9.1.(a) contained in resolution 9.1.

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

**Mr. Fielding:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to call up our staff. You want to come join us, everyone here.

First up, Jay Rodgers. Jay is our Deputy Minister for Families. We also have Brian Brown. Brian is in charge of ADM for, really, the Finance Division, I guess, of our department. Jennifer Rattray, as well as Michelle Dubik. Jill Perron, Steve Spry. Steve's with the Housing; Jill is assistant to the ADM for CFS. Michelle, as I should have mentioned this, is with the CSD and Jennifer is CPCS. That's for all the acronyms—I can get a dictionary here for you.

Carolyn Ryan is executor director of Portfolio Management, and she is representing Brent Timmerman, who is actually the COO for the corporation.

And I think that's it. That's all the people we have here—oh, sorry, Catherine Gates. Catherine is in charge of the EIA for the department.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, the honourable Minister of Families.

Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion? What is the wish of the—

**An Honourable Member:** Global.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Global? Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Thank you. It is agreed, then, that the questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner, with all resolutions to be passed once during—once questioning has concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Smith:** So can the minister tell me how many staff does the department have, and how is it divided among the divisions?

*Mr. Nic Curry, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Fielding:** Okay, the whole division—I guess I can break them down by division, and I believe you had mentioned that you wanted the amount of staff positions. So one of the divisions is administrative and finance, and we have 86 total staff positions that fill those roles. Close to 62—\$6.2 million in salaries.

The next division is the Community Service Delivery, and there is close to 1,733 FTEs that are associated with it.

The next one is Community Programs and Community Supports. And there's close to—there is, in fact, 172.4 total numbers in terms of the FTEs.

Child and Family Services, we have close to 125 FTEs. And in Housing there's just over 667—is that right—for total staff. And the departments, minus the department—or, rather, Housing is—for a total of 2,096. And again, that does not include the 667 that are affiliated with Housing.

**Mrs. Smith:** Miigwech for that.

Can I be provided with a list of all the political staff, including their names, positions and how long they've been in the department?

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Fielding:** Thank you for the question.

There's two political staff that are in the office—I think that was the question—one is Shawn Nason and the other is Melanie Maher. They're in the roles of SA and EA.

**Mrs. Smith:** Will EI rates be increased?

**Mr. Fielding:** I can tell you in the last budget we increased the EIA through Rent Assist—there's the non-EIA as well as the Rent Assist—that the budget increased by over \$39 million, which represented about 2,213 more people supported on EIA, such as Rent Assist and non-EIA Rent Assist, that are affiliated with it. So there was a \$39-million increase. You know, there's obviously a budget process that happens on a go-forward basis. We're consulting with Manitobans, and so that process is ongoing.

**Mrs. Smith:** So correct me if I'm wrong. Rent Assist is to assist EIA—people who are in EIA, with rent. But that doesn't—it isn't for use for extra food or anything like that. So my question was, is there going to be an increase to EIA, not including Rent Assist, because Rent Assist goes to rent, not to, you know, assist people in living?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, I would say there's \$39 million more than when you were in office that were dedicated towards Rent Assist. So, on an average basis, and I know the argument is, is there some change in deductibility that's there. What I'm saying is that there's over 2,200 more people supported. In fact, there's about 191 more in Point Douglas constituency that are on the non-EIA Rent Assist area. So my point is that people are getting a lot more money than they used to, and, to be fair, in the last days of your administration, the Rent Assist was changed. So there is a lot more money for people to spend the money on however they deem fit, essentially.

**Mrs. Smith:** So would you agree that rents have increased—that's why Rent Assist was put in place, so that people weren't taking money out of their food budgets or, you know, their utility bills to, you know, pay for rent?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, so, of course, we indexed it to the mean market rent. So there is an actual increase that does happen on a yearly basis to everyone that's affiliated through the Rent Assist program. So, for instance, to answer your question directly, there is a 5.9 per cent increase in terms of that. That's something that we committed to in opposition and we fulfilled it. So, to answer your question, rents have gone up, and people are receiving more money on an annual basis based off the mean market rent, which is part of the legislation.

**Mrs. Smith:** How will the department be changing Rent Assist? What Rent Assist changes will be—will the department be implementing?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, when we were in opposition, we really made the Rent Assist—increasing the amount that people can have, whether you're low income or people on a fixed income a priority. And so we were disappointed that it took so long for the previous administration to increase the Rent Assist. But a part of that process, we have increased it by upwards of \$39 million. So we think that's an important process going forward. There obviously is a budget process that happens, and so we're consulting with Manitobans. So, you know, in a budget process, you

generally make decisions that's going to make sense in terms of the sustainability of the program.

But one thing is a fact, that there is about 2,200 more people—you're right, there has been some changes in the deductibility, but there is 2,200 more people that were supported under our program than the previous program under the former government.

**Mrs. Smith:** So I've been talking to some of the constituents that live in my area and other areas as well, and they've been directly affected, some as much of \$48 per month they've had a decrease in their Rent Assist.

So I hear you telling me that 2,000 more people or families are being given aid, but yet other families are being affected with decreases.

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, what I would say is that there's 2,200 more people that are supported than—in fact, 2,213 more people that are supported in Point Douglas, you mention that that's your constituency. I don't know if I said the number right, it's 117 more people that are supported in Point Douglas.

If you look at the senior population there's about 333 more seniors that are supported in our program and, also, if you look at families, there's about 1,302 more families that are supported that weren't supported before we were in office.

So I guess what I would say to you is that \$39 million is a pretty significant increase, especially when we're facing the financial challenges that we are. And there is indisputable amount of more people that are supported, so even in your own constituency, you know, you got 132 more people that are supported under the program that we are administering than the previous government.

**Mrs. Smith:** That's an interesting number, because I've just visited the nine seniors homes that are in my constituency, and every single senior in every single one of those apartment blocks that was receiving Rent Assist has told me a different story: that life has got harder, that they're having to make decisions whether they pay for their medication or whether they pay for their rent.

So, you know, were any of the Rent Assist clients engaged on this decrease in funding?

**Mr. Fielding:** I don't know what to say. I mean, it could be an uncomfortable conversation. You know, as being a new representative, when you have over 113 more people that are supported in these areas, there is 333 more people that are supported. So, you

know, to be fair, there's substantial increase in terms of numbers that are there.

So I'm not sure, you know, which seniors you're talking to. But, you know, it is a fact that there is substantially more people that are supported in the long term. You're right, there is some changes which were tough decisions to make in terms of the deductibility level for it.

But what I would like to reference you to the fact that the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation takes in consideration what level you should be paying in terms of your rent or essentially your housing component of your overall annual, I guess, income levels. And the mark—the bar metric level is around 30 per cent.

So Manitoba is underneath that; it's actually around 28 per cent which actually is, you know, our support is broader than places like BC, Alberta, and places like Saskatchewan where there, you know, there's two components here. There's the Rent Assist program. There's also the rent-geared income proportions.

But my point is that we are kind of above, or, you know, we're doing better than the national average in terms of what the bar 'meture' they say is that you should be spending on rent. At the end of the day, there's a lot more people that are supported by the program.

**Mrs. Smith:** So many of these seniors were also, you know, seniors who are on fixed incomes. Their rent also increased because they lived in social housing. So not only did they get a decrease in Rent Assist, their rent was also raised.

Were any of, you know, the Rent Assist clients, communities or poverty advocates given notice of this change in advance?

**Mr. Fielding:** Right. Well, I would argue that if you look at the amount of money that people are left in their pockets, which is an important measure, you look at the recent changes with the PST increase that impacts. I don't think anyone would argue that increases of PST has dramatic impacts on people that are low income.

\* (16:10)

So I guess the question is back to you with your previous government to how much consultation did you do before you increased the rent—or, rather, increased the PST, which has had dramatic impacts on low-income Manitobans.

**Mrs. Smith:** I can't speak to that because I wasn't in this chair that I'm sitting in.

But again I ask: Were these poverty advocates, Rent Assist clients or communities consulted on the Rent Assist being decreased or changed?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, we have a normal budget process that we go through for people to make presentations and there is a lot of social advocacy groups that come out and make presentations one way the other. As a representative from Kirkfield Park area, I had a number—I've had probably close to about, I don't know, six or—no, five or six different budget consultation sessions that are there.

So I think it's always important to consult with residents and so this year I'm proud to say that we had a extensive budget consultation. We've had over 37,000 Manitobans that have been consulted on the ongoing budget process going forward to make sure we're getting it right.

Really, what this government would like to emphasize is the fact that we need to make sure that, you know, it's sustainable, all programs and policies are sustainable for the future. So that is a pretty extensive process on the ongoing basis in terms of having over 37,000 people consulted. And I would imagine that we'll continue that process going forward because it's always best to find out from Manitobans what sort of changes and how things are going to impact people.

**Mrs. Smith:** Will Rent Assist be—still be available for families that are on EIA and low income, or non-EIA low income Manitobans?

**Mr. Fielding:** The change in the deductibility had no impact on people that are on EIA that are not in the working world. That—the changes were for the non-EIA, which is essentially kind of the working poor, I guess based on parameters would be there. So I don't know the exact numbers. I could probably get them for you in terms of the EIA numbers. I think it's close to 25,000 or so. And the Rent Assist, it's over 7,000 in terms of the non-EIA. It's, again, it's about 2,200 more than it was when we took office.

**Mrs. Smith:** So am I hearing correctly in you saying that this will not affect families on EIA and those non-EIA families who currently receive Rent Assist in the future?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, we are talking about 2017 Budget, right? So that's what we're here to discuss.

So what I can tell you is that we've announced the changes that we are having for the non-EI Rent Assist. You know, they've been, you know, talked about a lot in the public so I won't get into the details. I think you probably have them, but suffice it to say that we have increased the budget, in this budget which we're talking about here today, upwards of \$39 million. That's taking into consideration EIA folks, people that aren't working as well as the non-EA.

It's gone up by over \$39 million, and I can tell you \$39 million in a tough economic time when you're spending close to a billion dollars now on service costs for debt, that sort of stuff, is a substantial increase in terms of the budgets. And I tell you it wasn't a—it's a tough process, going through, when you're talking to Treasury Board and making sure you got the right amount of money to allocate for different programs. So I guess what I'd say is I'm proud of the fact that we are able to support close to 2,200 more people from our plan.

**Mrs. Smith:** How many public child-care spaces has the department created since May 2016?

**Mr. Fielding:** Sorry, just a clarification. So, from which date? From when we took off—? *[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The member for Point Douglas, could you repeat your question?

**Mrs. Smith:** May 2016.

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, okay, our—I'll do the, actually, in two years. Since two thousand and—we're elected in 2016. So, our budget allocated was for 904 in the first year and 501 last year. We also make a budget commitment of six hundred and—or \$6.1 million, which represented 15 community-based capital projects for 739 new licensed child-care spaces, and this was in March, I believe, of—March 9th, 2017.

**Mrs. Smith:** How many child-care centre spaces have been put on hold—or child-care centres have been put on hold?

**Mr. Fielding:** I don't understand the question.

**Mrs. Smith:** There was planned child-care centres that were put in place prior to this government coming into government. Has this government moved on any of those child-care centres?

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Fielding:** So we don't have any community-based capital projects that were not fully funded. There was 15 community-based capital projects that

we announced funding for from 739 licensed spaces that we announced in March of 2017.

**Mrs. Smith:** I just met with the university of St. Boniface. Were you aware that they have no child care and that they have raised public funds to open up a child-care centre and that they've also asked the government for support, which has fallen short in terms of getting their, you know, their students quality daycare spaces?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, we have a—what's called a community-based capital program, so it represents about \$2.8 million of the budget. The RFP was, you know, request for proposal, was—it is a request for proposal, right, that was brought out—that asked for proposals to come forward. That process actually closes this Friday. So we're encouraged with them, and if they would like to submit, we encourage them to submit that by this Friday and applications will be reviewed and we'll make some decisions on it. But we allocated \$2.8 million to that fund, and so at that point we're making some decisions once it closes this Friday.

**Mrs. Smith:** So, in this document, what does an actual housing allowance look like? It states: the long-run plan is eventually to have a single stream of all Rent Assist recipients as administered and other issues are resolved over time. Does the minister plan—what does the minister plan to do?

**Mr. Fielding:** Could you—I'm not sure what you're referring to, so if you could table that so I could take a look at it. I'm assuming that may be KPMG report, but I'm not a hundred per cent sure of what you're—

**Mrs. Smith:** I'd like to table this report.

How many new housing units have the—has the government built since, again, May 2016—and if you could keep it to May 2016 to the current day.

**Mr. Fielding:** Right, so thank you for the question.

New builds, we've created 141 new social housing units being constructed. There's 327 new social and affording housing units that have been committed to. This is above and beyond the 2,213 new subsidy spaces that were associated with the Rent Assist.

I don't think you can kind of just categorize builds versus the Rent Assist. We truly believe in a balanced approach, so we think it's important to identify, either through a new build, through social-affordable, or through some sort of rent subsidy, through Rent Assist. There's over 2,200 more.

I think, on average, there's above and beyond that if you look at the Rent Assist portion. And, again, there's the non-EIA and the EIA portions of things. There's—for the non-EIA—that's the working poor, that would essentially be just over 7,000—I would say 7,200, right around that ballpark. And the EIA Rent Assist would be around 25,000 or so. So there's a mixed—kind of a balanced approach, I guess, if I will, to building new versus subsidy types of programs.

**Mrs. Smith:** How many of these are social housing?

**Mr. Fielding:** I'll just refer back to my previous answer.

**An Honourable Member:** A hundred and forty-one?

**Mr. Fielding:** Yes.

**An Honourable Member:** I just wanted to clarify.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable member for Point Douglas.

**Mrs. Smith:** How many were non-profit funded?

**Mr. Fielding:** Point of clarification, is it funded or managed? There's like—you know, you can have a direct—you know, the government kind of does some stuff through Manitoba Housing. There's kind of the direct—there's supportive housing where you have non-profits that deliver the housing.

So you're talking about funding as opposed to managed?

**Mr. Chairperson:** The member for Point Douglas, but I'd like to—sort of—so we make sure we get everything on record, that you wait—like, I'm glad you've been giving me your hand signal, I'm trying to—I can't guess at all your—So, please, use your signals to tell me when you'd like to speak.

**Mrs. Smith:** Correct. Non-profit funded.

**Mr. Fielding:** We don't have this information here right now, but we can get back to you on that.

**Mrs. Smith:** Can the minister please tell me how much of the department's budget is for building new social housing units?

**Mr. Fielding:** The total housing operating budget for 2017-18 was \$301.4 million before taking into consideration any revenue recovery. The increase—this represents about a 17.8 per cent—or \$17.8 million expenditures increase from the previous years, which was at 283.6.

\* (16:30)

So, again, there's a lot of ins and outs with the funding that's there. There's things like, for instance, federal government contributions through SIF funding. That's the federal agreement with the provinces in terms of Health funding. There's things like lot sales, because the Province owns half of Waverley West. So the overall operations of the dollars was the numbers that I referred to.

**Mrs. Smith:** Does the minister prefer non-profit housing to social housing? Why or why not?

**Mr. Fielding:** Our government prefers a balanced approach to housing, so we want to provide people with housing solutions. That's why we really enhanced things like the Rent Assist program. But at the same time, you do want to build social and affordable housing, so I guess I would suggest that we are looking for a balanced process, you know, kind of non-ideological approach to housing.

**Mrs. Smith:** So is it a 50-50, a 60-40, and why?

**Mr. Fielding:** Depends on what the solution is, right?

**Mrs. Smith:** So, take Point Douglas, for instance. Can you give me a balanced solution for the residents of Point Douglas?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, I would suggest in the Point Douglas—for instance, you know, we've increased the amount of people using Rent Assist by about 117—just relaying it back to your constituency, over 117 more people are supported through the Rent Assist program. So I would suggest in that area, in itself, you want a balanced approach. You want to build some houses where it's possible to build; you want to provide affordable housing solutions—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please.

A formal vote has been requested in another section of Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

*The committee recessed at 4:32 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:46 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Will 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 Families.

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

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Smith:** Can the minister tell me how many renovations, upgrades have been done to government housing since May 2016?

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Fielding:** Just to answer the question, in terms of the MNI, the modernization improvements, last year, we spent just under \$70 million: \$69,960,000. This is on page 109 of our annual report, so if you do want to take a look at the projects that are a part of that, that kind of identifies the costs and the projects.

For this year, as of July 2017, there are currently 403 units undergoing renovations; 251 units are located in Winnipeg, and the remainder 152 are outside the city of Winnipeg. That'll add to the fact—part of the—what's called the SIF funding, that's the federal-provincial agreement on housing, there's about a \$89-million fund over the two years; \$33 million went to modernization improvement, MNI. A part of that \$33 million, there was, I think it was 13—I'll have to double-check the number—\$13 million for our existing housing stock, and there's \$19 million for non-profit housing stock. So if someone needed a, maybe an HVAC or some sort of improvement to that, that's an agreement we made with the federal government, and so we announced that, and probably, I think, it was in early spring, yes.

**Mrs. Smith:** So you mentioned HVAC upgrades, and can you tell me a little more about what other upgrades that this funding was used for, or this budget was used for?

**Mr. Fielding:** You know, we can probably get you the itemized list of what projects were happening, but essentially, they were, you know, refreshes, in some way; some were deep refreshes; some were upgrades to air conditioners, HVACs, to these types of items, you know. Again, we have kind of a breakdown of the amount of money that was spent on each region in the annual report, but if you do need to know, you know, what each project consisted of, I'm sure we can get that information for you. I don't have it handy right here though.

**Mrs. Smith:** I would appreciate that information.

As I alluded to earlier, I've been meeting with the senior homes in my area. Some of them have provincial operating agreements with the government. What is the minister's plan for these expiring

or 'expiring'—expired operating agreements for non-profit housing?

**Mr. Fielding:** That is something that is still under negotiations with the federal government, so part of the housing funding that the 10-year horizon, I guess, if you will, in terms of housing strategy. What we're referring to is the social infrastructure fund, the SIF funding. That was the initial first tranche of \$89 million through the—for the federal and provincial system. And then the other eight years, essentially, based on a kind of a 10-year housing strategy with the federal government, is still being negotiated.

Now, it is my understanding in the federal budget that they had suggested that they're going to freeze those levels. So we don't anticipate there should be any issues, the operating issues. But, again, that's something that is being discussed and negotiated with the federal government as we speak. So I can't give you any guarantees, but based on what they've put out in their budget, we anticipate those levels would be frozen at the 2016 levels, which there's kind of a sliding scale in terms of the amount that would flow back to the provinces that were supposed to be scaled down over the years. So, again, the feds have suggested they're going to freeze that level without a reduction on the 2016 level. But the devil's in the details, so once we're able to sign the agreement with the feds, and we're getting somewhat closer, then we'll have, you know, a guarantee from them in itself, so.

**Mrs. Smith:** So, Ivan Franko senior centre—their agreement is up next year. There's several residents in there that receive funding from the government for X number of suites. They don't know whether the owners are going to sign another agreement. Is there anything in place for these residents that may find themselves homeless because this agreement might not be signed?

**Mr. Fielding:** We will—maybe what I can do is just read into the record about your question prior to that, and then I'm going to ask which residents it is so we can get the information for you to get the right information.

But you had talked about the part of the capital planning that followed the need were identified, what sort of improvements you're suggesting in terms of the MNI. So, deep refresh projects include installation of new kitchens, cabinets, plumbing fixtures, bathroom fixtures, electronic fixtures, doors, insulation, flooring in all units, upgrades to



buildings—kind of the building envelope, I guess, if you will, mechanical electronic systems, so a whole spectrum of things. That's for the deep refreshes.

For the unit refreshes, the projects that we're working on, again, are included installation of new kitchen cabinets, plumbing fixtures, bathroom fixtures, electrical—electrical, sorry—fixtures, doors, insulation, those types of things. There is also security upgrades that include installations of new closed-circuit television networks, I guess, if you will; card-access intercom systems and exterior lighting.

So that's kind of identifies a number of the types of initiatives we have. Also, water and energy efficiency upgrades is part of the capital programs, including building envelope improvements, heat recovery, the HVACs expansion to basement and attic insulation, energy efficient lighting and applications. The goal of these upgrades is obviously to lower utility costs and reducing the environmental impact.

And with that, I'll just ask the senior centre that you're referring to about the operating expenditures.

**Mrs. Smith:** So it is Ivan Franko senior centre. It's located on Pritchard and McGregor. The residents—I can't tell you the names of the residents, but there's several apartments there that receive subsidy, and they are worried that once their agreement is done that they will have nowhere to live because they aren't sure that the apartment is going to renew that agreement.

On another question, back to the balance between public and private housing, what research has the government done to, you know, make sure that there's a right balance, and what reviews or cross-jurisdictional, you know, things has the minister done?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, I guess what I'll say is that we think it's important to have a balance between both, and we, quite honestly, if we can provide solutions, whether it be in things like the Rent Assist program—so, you know, I mentioned—I won't go into it again, although it's 113 more people in the Point Douglas area supported through Rent Assist. There is also social and affordable housing that's created.

Another one, for example, is we announced the affordable housing facilities in the North Point Douglas area; that's \$7.5 million. That's Austin commons that were there.

So, if you're asking me, is there a formula, you know, I'd suggest that probably if you talk to residents, they want a housing solution, whether that's through a Rent Assist-type of program that I know the federal government is looking to, if you read in the papers, or interested in investing in or you're building social affordable housing.

I can tell you, when you do build affordable housing, and specifically in terms of social housing, the costs are great, and it does take a long time to build these facilities. So, for instance, I believe to operate—and I'll double-check this number—but I believe to operate a social housing facility for a unit basis is somewhere around \$23,000 a year. What the government can do for someone in terms of a subsidy through the non-assist—EIA through Rent Assist, it costs the government about \$3,600 on average. Some are more; some are less.

So, what I'm saying is—

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

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

\* (15:10)

**Madam Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Sustainable Development.

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

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Ah, sure. It's a sellout crowd here, but it's probably going to be me for the foreseeable future, I would guess. Well, if members of the government want to chime in, feel free. You had a chance in question period, but no one took me up on the offer.

The government, of course, has now finally released its report and carbon pricing's all over the news, so Neil, lucky you. You get to help out.

I do want to say I really appreciate all the answers we had on the water file. There's a lot more that I'd like to ask on that front, but we've got other topics to cover as well, and I will give the minister a heads-up. I've been told by our House leader we might be wrapping up this section of Estimates

before 5 o'clock today, so if—[*interjection*] Are you up next?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I thought it was municipalities. In any event, whoever is next, fair warning and, yes, we'll have some questions on—[*interjection*]

**An Honourable Member:** I'm not the critic anymore.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** He's a very good critic.

So, anyways, government's plan is out. When will the carbon tax take effect in Manitoba: is that January 1st of 2018?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Well, I thank the member for the question, and I also want to say that I've enjoyed our productive conversations thus far and look forward to another day of productive conversations, and I'd also can confirm that we need to obviously introduce legislation on this measure, on our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan.

So we'll be consulting with Manitobans between now and November—or, 30th, pardon me, and then it'll go to the House for consideration, likely in the spring, and I haven't quite figured out House rules and who decides how things get put forward and at what pace certain bills move through the House, but I know that greater minds than mine have worked out this agenda of how bills proceed through the House.

And so, subject to a healthy debate in the House on our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan and subject to a variety of other issues that our House leaders work out on a regular basis, I would anticipate that this legislation would get passed in 2018 and that the—it would become law and the carbon price would take effect probably towards the latter half of 2018.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I'd like to thank the minister for that answer.

Could the minister explain that the rationale or the requirement that the carbon tax go through a legislative process first? Is that a legal requirement? I'm confused because her government had previously said that all new taxes would go to a referendum process, but the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has, I think, been on the public record multiple times, saying that the carbon tax wouldn't go to a referendum.

So I'm wondering, what is the legal requirement that binds the Province to not apply a carbon tax

until new legislation can be introduced and passed in the House next year?

Thank you.

\* (15:20)

**Ms. Squires:** I thank the member for the question. And, as our Premier has said, that he does believe that Manitobans have a right to say when there are any tax increases upon them, such as for income— income taxes, business taxes, retail taxes and payroll taxes.

What we also know is that Ottawa had spoken very loud and clear that this was going to be— a carbon price was going to be imposed on all provinces who did not come up with their own plan for carbon pricing. And Ottawa was very clear that, if we did not implement a plan, they would come in at \$10 a ton this year and escalate by \$10 every year to 2022, where it would be \$50 a ton.

And what is also very unclear about Ottawa's plan is that we don't know where that money would even go. And I believe that you've calculated the price at \$50 a ton on Manitoba families and businesses. That would result in a significant amount of money collected by the federal government. And where that money would be allocated, how that money would be spent would not be anything that Manitobans would have a say on, necessarily. And we certainly didn't think that it was very prudent. We don't believe that that is the best—that Ottawa is the best decider for these decisions that ought to be made locally in the province of Manitoba regarding our economy and our environment, and so what we did is we came up with a carbon plan, a Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan.

Carbon pricing is one measure in a vast array of measures in our new carbon plan that includes discussions on how we can all work together towards transitioning to a low-carbon future, and we also want to hear from Manitobans on how we should spend the money. We certainly know that a lot of it—we can do some investments in green initiatives, but we also have to be mindful of Manitobans who are—low-income Manitobans are on fixed income. We don't want them to be overly facing punitive measures, and a lot of them are already living in a low-carbon economy just by virtue of their circumstances and we want to be respectful and reflective of that.

So the notion of Ottawa making those decisions about how to—how this province should

collectively transition towards a low-carbon future was not palatable to Manitobans. They believe that Manitobans should have a say in that, and so that is—our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan is a result of over a year of consultation and work with many Manitobans. And the work is really just beginning on our consultation and rolling this out. But, again, it was a matter of if we said no, we weren't going to be moving forward in this manner, it was quite clear that we would be getting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's \$50 price on carbon and we also—we didn't think that that was very palatable or fair to Manitobans and that is what our plan is about. It's about protecting the environment and protecting the economy.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Thank the minister for her answer there.

So just so I have it straight in my head, it's not a—there isn't a legal requirement that we enact legislation to implement the carbon tax; it's a policy decision of her government to go that route?

\* (15:30)

**Ms. Squires:** So, yes, a legislative framework is required for implementing our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan. Of course, policy is useful in determining many other factors of the plan, such as how the revenue is going to be invested in Manitoba, and those are policy discussions that I'm looking forward to having with all Manitobans and how much we should be allocating for investments in clean-tech industries and how much should be invested in wetland restoration. All those aspects will be more policy-guided decisions and will be fleshed out in policy.

But, of course, the framework itself for the Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan is—requires legislation.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Thanks for that.

Giving a quick look at the anticipated revenue that the minister just referred to, the level of it, in the neighbourhood of a quarter of a billion dollars annually. Obviously, it won't be that much in the first year if we're starting halfway through the year, but, by my math, that would mean that the carbon price is being assigned to roughly half of Manitoba's 20 megatons of emissions, right? Twenty-five dollars a ton times 10 megatons would get you \$250 million.

So I'm wondering if the minister could sketch out for us which half will have the carbon tax assigned and which half will not.

**Ms. Squires:** So yes, the member is correct in that about 50 per cent of our 20.8 megatons will have a price on carbon. And those include households heating and transportation fuels. That accounts for 15 per cent. Businesses account for 28 per cent. And, of course, again, heating and transportation fuels will be applied in that regard. And about 7 per cent is allocated to other fuels such as marine fuel, aviation fuel and rail fuel. Those will all have the carbon price applied. And then, in terms of the 50 per cent that are not covered with—by the carbon levy, 36 per cent is agriculture and, as we know, Manitoba agriculture producers have been good stewards of this land for centuries and will continue to be good stewards of this land. We're working with that sector on a variety of initiatives to help them—and, in many cases, have them help us transition to a low-carbon future. And working with them in terms of how we can protect our fragile ecosystem. And so we are excited about some of the initiatives that we'll be partnering with the agriculture sector on.

And then the other 14 per cent that will be exempt from a carbon price right off the hop is landfill wastes. And, as member knows, we do have many initiatives in our carbon plan, our Climate and Green Plan that talks about diverting some of the recyclables out of the landfills and also looking at some initiatives on how we can use—divert our organics.

And, of course, these are all ideas that are at the conceptual stage, but they're ideas that I'm really excited about and excited to have those conversations with Manitobans and the municipal leaders on how to get 30 per cent of those contents out of Brady landfill, because we know 30 per cent of the contents of Brady landfill right now are things that could be recycled, whether it be organics or other recyclables.

And so we're going to be working with them in another array of measures. We know that they do some methane capture, but more, certainly, could be done to help the landfills offset their methane output and their emissions. So we will be working with them in a separate way.

And then, finally, our industrial processes will be exempt in the—at the initial stage on the carbon price because they are being dealt with in a separate measure in terms of with the large emitters that

outpaced—or, output-based emissions will be dealt with as we look at how we can help them reduce their cumulative emissions and work at applying a different—more of a hybrid system, if you will. And that needs to be flushed out in a little bit more detail as we proceed down the path of implementing our Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Thank you for that info. That's good to have.

One thing I'd just flag for the minister is, last time I looked, three of our 10 largest emitters are, in fact, landfills. All of them in the city of Winnipeg. So the minister will have to decide, you know, maybe on—taking a nice zinger out of question period out of my quiver here, but just for the department's and the minister's benefit, you're going to have to decide if those three landfills, Kilcona—or, no, well, Summit and Brady for sure—I think the third one is—I could be wrong. But there's three in Winnipeg. You'll have to decide if that's going to be exempt as a landfill or if it's going to be included under the separate industrial approach going forward. But thank you for that breakdown.

\*(15:40)

The—and, I mean, the minister references the landfills. Those are, of course, primarily run by municipalities. And one of the other—not really a specific question, but just an opportunity for the minister to chime in. I mean, the plan that was released on Friday raised a number of concerns from the municipal side of things, and we already had our back and forth in question period. I don't mean or need to repeat that. Our positions on that have been established on the public record.

But there's clearly concerns from municipalities, the AMM. There's clearly concerns from our largest city's mayor, Mayor Bowman for Winnipeg, about the lack of information that's been provided to municipalities, fears that the price of transitioning to a greener economy is going to be, you know, downloaded, was Mayor Bowman's term, onto the municipalities.

Does the minister have any words of reassurance or additional information that she would like to put on the record for, you know, for the sake of municipalities who might be paying attention to what we say?

**Ms. Squires:** One of the exciting things about our Climate and Green Plan is the vast array of options that are going to be discussed and talked about over

the next weeks and months ahead, and we certainly do think that all levels of government and, in fact, all Manitobans have a role to play as we transition to a low carbon future.

And—but in terms of with the municipal leaders, I do really look forward to my discussions and dialogue. I do have a—ongoing discussions with Mayor Bowman and those will continue as we work towards partnering. This is really about developing partnerships, whether it's talking about how we can deal with some of those large emitters that are, of course, our Brady landfill, and how we can look to, perhaps, electrify our busses. I think it's a really exciting conversation to be had about, you know, imagining a future where our—all of our entire transit fleet is made in Manitoba, busses that were made here in Manitoba by a local company, powered by Manitoba clean electricity and servicing Manitobans around the province.

So those are conversations that I really look forward to having with municipal leaders and working with them as we transition together, but I certainly do want to assure the municipalities that we are interested in a partnership and moving towards this low-carbon future together.

And one of the things that I find is a lot of people that I'm talking to have various, you know, passion points for developing a plan that will help us all transition to the—this new low-carbon future and I just want to put on the record or share a little anecdote about one of my incredible passions, and it was made real again yesterday as I took my grandson to the Assiniboia park zoo and we stood in front of the cage where there's the two bear cubs. They were orphaned cubs from Churchill and now they're at home in the zoo and we watched the bears play, and it was a cold, windy day and it reminded me, again, of why we're protecting our environment. And we're protecting our environment not just for Manitobans and for our people but most specifically for all of our species, and in Manitoba we are the polar bear capital of the world.

And last year I read with quite concern one of our own leaders in Manitoba Conservation had said, his name's Daryll Hedman, had quoted—it was quoted by—in a story by the Canadian Press that the ice form didn't—or, the ice didn't form well into December, leaving hungry polar bears crowding on the shore, and that it was the latest year ever for this ice to develop. I believe it was December 7th when the ice had formed up in Churchill, and not only does that

really make the polar bears—they're hungry. They want to get out on the ice and they need to get access to their high-fat foods, but it also creates risk for the community.

And we know that families and visitors to Churchill and tourists and people who live up there, they are endangered when we allow—when there's a large number of polar bears who are congregating on the shorelines and wanting to get on that ice and they're getting hungry, and yet the ice isn't there, and so that puts the entire community at risk as these large carnivores are walking around. Many of them come into the townsite and I know that our Manitoba Conservation officers work diligently round the clock.

The night that I was in Churchill I believe the polar bear alert line rang no fewer than six times. There was a male problem bear who had wandered into town—and we call him a problem bear but ultimately he was a bear who was, you know, starting to feel the grumbings of hunger and was looking for an ice floe and yet they're the—he's in town and it's a real challenge for the folks living up in Churchill. And so our conservation officers are working diligently to ensure people are safe and yet these bears are taken care of. And so decisions have to be made to work with these problem bears, and again, they're labeled problem bears but they—the problem is really just they need to get on that ice and get out to find their high-fat meals.

And this has a direct correlation on our climate plan and I think that when we're leading discussions with our neighbours and with our friends and with our municipal leaders and talking about forming a true partnership where we can all stand shoulder to shoulder at working towards reducing our carbon footprint and building a better environment for our future generations, it's incumbent upon us to do that for Manitobans and for all of our species, particularly our polar bears.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Just back to my original topic on consultation with the municipalities, I'm sure they are looking forward to further dialogue with the government and it looks like there was an opportunity missed there, so hopefully in the weeks ahead, you know, good conversations can take place.

Shifting gears down to the—about as local as we can get. Can the minister give me some ballpark numbers—obviously everyone's home is going to be different, but you take your typical Manitoban home and—heated with natural gas. How much are people

paying to heat their home with natural gas in a year and how is that going to change once the carbon tax is in effect, you know, for a full year?

\* (15:50)

**Ms. Squires:** It's a really good question and one that we're going to be endeavouring to provide a lot of clarity for Manitobans in the very near future by putting household profiles on our website, on the [manitobaclimategreenplan.ca](http://manitobaclimategreenplan.ca)—if I got that website right. I hope I did—*[interjection]*—[manitobaclimateandgreenplan.ca](http://manitobaclimateandgreenplan.ca). So the profiles will be on that website. If they're not up there as we speak, they will be in the very near future.

But just to answer your question. Let's look at a couple with two children, and if they have two vehicles, one of those vehicles is consuming 7.5 litres per 100 kilometres a year, and let's call that vehicle a Corolla. I'm told that that's about the efficiency of a mid-sized car or small to mid-sized car, so let's call that one a Corolla, and driving approximately 20,000 kilometres per year. So that's one vehicle. The second vehicle is a larger diesel-burning truck, let's presume at 12.5 litres per 100 kilometres, and drives, again, the same distance of about 20,000 kilometres a year, and they have natural gas to heat their home at 2,400 cubic metres of natural gas a year.

So we're looking at that as a general characterization of a potential household: couple with two children, two vehicles, natural gas for their—it could be for their heating as well as their fireplace and their gas range. So their profile, what they would be paying under the made-in-Manitoba price, would be \$242 a year in transportation and \$114 a year in heating and—for a total of \$356 on carbon—a carbon price per year under the made-in-Manitoba plan.

Under the federal backstop, just to be clear, that—what that would cost that same family would be \$484 in transportation, \$228 in heating, for a total of \$712 for that family of four under the federal backstop plan.

Now, let's just look at a couple with no children. They have two vehicles. Both of them are the mid-size. Let's call them, like, say a Ford Escape vehicle, at 10 litres per 100 kilometres, and they drive a little bit less. They drive 15,000 kilometres. Possibly one of them takes the bus in to work or one perhaps doesn't have a long commute every day, and then—but they, too, heat their home with natural gas and they consume—because they don't have the kids to

keep the house warm, they might be able to turn the thermostat down a little bit more. They're using 2,300 cubic metres of natural gas a year; also includes fireplace, gas range and their heating.

So their price on transportation is going to be \$158 under our carbon price, and their heating bill would be an extra \$109. So the carbon price that that family would pay would be about \$267 compared to a \$535 federal carbon tax if we were having to implement the federal backstop plan.

And then let's look at a single parent who has an electric home—heats their home or their housing is heated with electricity. I know a lot of apartments are using electric heat, and there's only one vehicle in the household, consuming about 10 litres per 100 kilometres and driving about 25,000 kilometres. We're using that profile with higher mileage because as a single parent, likely driving—doing more of the driving themselves, and that price for that single parent would be an extra \$133 in transportation—carbon price on their transportation, but only \$1, a nominal amount, on their extra heating. So, a total price for that family would be \$134. When we compare that to the \$267 that they would have to pay under the federal carbon tax program, we certainly are advocating for our lower made-in-Manitoba price.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Yes, thank you for that response, and I think those profiles will certainly help people wrap their heads around what's coming up.

One of the—I mean, one of the surprising things, and, I mean, this takes us back to the minister's comment about the electrification of public transit, and our leader, I think, did a good job in question period today of pointing out that for a government that's trying to use a market mechanism to send a price signal that carbon should be used less, the price of electricity is increasing a heck of a lot more and for much longer. So how does the minister reconcile the goals of what, you know, her department has said they want to accomplish when actually the market signals that her government is sending seem to be working at cross purposes?

\*(16:00)

As our leader noted in question period, if all of the rate increases that are being asked for by this government's new board at Manitoba Hydro are implemented, electricity becomes 71 per cent more expensive when you include the 3.36 per cent rate increase that's already been asked for and granted.

Contrast that with a flat carbon tax of \$25 a ton. It would seem that the government's own policies over time will make it less and less likely and more and more difficult for a municipality to electrify its transportation grid.

**Ms. Squires:** I am pleased to hear from the member a recognition that Manitoba Hydro, because of political interference and years and years and years of mismanagement, did result in what I would call colossal challenges that the hydro utility faces right now.

We know that, you know, if we got back to 2011, I was a candidate in that particular election and the No. 1 question that I was asked time and time and time again is why are they—why are we building a bipole line that is going to be, you know, several hundred kilometres longer by going down the west side? And we were told at that time that the bipole line would pay for itself and that actually did not prove to be true at all. We know that the extra 400-plus kilometres certainly did not pay for itself and that not only are they—is hydro—is—was the project well over budget, it was also well over its time frame that it was to be completed in. So the recognition that the political interference from members opposite resulted in significant mismanagement at Hydro, which resulted in a significant situation that Hydro has to deal with right now.

Another situation is that Keeyask generating system. It was being built without the contracts that could certainly mandate that amount of power, and having this excess power being sold on the open market at prices cheaper than what Manitobans are paying is certainly a huge challenge that our government recognizes and our government is going to achieve the challenge of managing this appropriately, and certainly the thing that we've learned from members opposite is that political interference on these decisions is not the way to go.

We know Hydro's debt is set to rival the provincial debt right now. Hydro is also managed by an arm's-length entity. It is a Crown corporation and the Public Utilities Board sets their rates and we are mindful of that, but in terms of, you know, the utility itself, our government recognizes the absolute benefit of this utility.

We know that Manitobans have been producing clean energy since 1906 when we developed the first—started to develop clean, renewable resources, and we're going to continue to be a leader with our

new Efficiency Manitoba and our legislated targets on reducing—on achieving efficiencies. We're going to have excess power that we can certainly sell to clients, hopefully at a good price we'll get for those—for that power. And through Efficiency Manitoba we're also going to be helping Manitobans achieve those efficiencies in their home and giving them real, tangible solutions on how to reduce their energy consumption because even though that energy is generated right here in Manitoba, it is local and it is green and it is something that we are very proud of. We also do want Manitobans to be energy efficient and to conserve energy and to make sure that they are using all the tools available to them to achieve that energy efficiency, and so we're really excited about that.

We're proud of helping—we're proud of Manitoba Hydro's potential for being a leader in clean, renewable energy and we certainly are excited about the role that Manitoba Hydro is going to play in helping not just Manitoba, but the entire nation to transition to a low-carbon future.

I've had some very exciting conversations about a future in which there are more energy contracts signed with our neighbours east and west of us. Would really like to see what that future would look like where if we were to remove some coal plants from our other jurisdictions in this country and supply Manitoba Hydro with that clean renewable energy, it would benefit all of—not just Manitobans, but it would benefit all of Canada as we work together and collaboratively to reduce our carbon footprint.

But, in essence, it is imperative that our government be respectful of the situation at Manitoba Hydro. It is an arm's-length entity and we know that great risk is to be had when there is undue political interference at the utility and we certainly have learned from the members opposite's mistakes of the past and we'll look towards ensuring that Manitoba Hydro is a crown jewel, not just for this generation, but for the future generations.

\*(16:10)

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Yes, I was honestly just curious. But it's called question period, not answer period, and Estimates operates on the same principle. I mean, all of the content the minister just put on the record has been mentioned before, and the piece that the government does have control over is the carbon tax and whether it should stay flat or whether it will need to increase, especially given the minister's own

words, now, that she recognizes having more people be able to use our green electricity properly. Like, that—the carbon tax piece is 100 per cent under the government's jurisdiction, but we—you know, point's been raised; we can move on.

The—I have to be honest; the most surprising part of the government's plan for a lot of people, myself among them, was the absence of a target on net emission levels. And just to be clear about what I'm talking about here, I recognize that the government has said, hey, we've identified some low-hanging fruit, if you want to call it, whatever the case may be. There's some areas where we think we're going to be able to be able to reduce emissions from a business-as-usual case, but that's different. That's a different type of target than saying our emissions in Manitoba are here; we recognize what climate science is saying; emissions everywhere have to drop and here's what we're going to try and achieve.

So I guess my first question would be to the minister: Does she intend to bring in targets—what I would call a net target as opposed to a business-as-usual or a cumulative target? Is she going to bring in a net target on Manitoba's emissions for the upcoming years and when would that be announced?

**Ms. Squires:** So I'm happy to answer the question in terms of how exactly our carbon savings account works, and what we have done is taken a view over a five-year period of time. We know that carbon emissions don't evaporate after a one-year period of time. They stay in the atmosphere and they accumulate, and so we have to really look at cumulative emissions and really work towards cumulative emission reductions. And we did lay out five different pathways and, of course, we are going to be talking to Manitobans about those five different pathways and what they look like. And what we've done is we've taken the business-as-usual line and where we are today at just slightly below 22,000 kilotons of carbon and having that—if that were to increase upward we'd be at about 24,000 within five years if we did absolutely nothing. We know that that is not acceptable, and so we're asking Manitobans to really provide some input.

Now, pathway No. 1 is taking a look at what kind of reductions we're going to get with carbon pricing alone, and we would bring that—bring those cumulative emissions down over a five-year period and bring us by about one megaton, which is a little bit more than what the federal backstop legislation

calls for. And we also have—but that's just looking at carbon pricing alone in pathway No. 1.

Pathways two, three, four and five is looking at carbon pricing as well as other variations, other measures that we can do to reduce our output. We know that carbon pricing is one plan, one tool in a very, very extensive tool box of ways in which we can all work together to reduce our carbon emissions.

One thing that we do know, in the Auditor General's report it really spelled that out clearly, is setting target reductions without any—that aren't really that meaningful or practical. One of the suggestions in the 2015 climate plan introduced by the former administration would have brought us down to the levels of carbon that could only be achieved by eliminating all diesel and fuel-burning vehicles off the roads in Manitoba, and I don't how that could be even possibly achieved without doing—having drastic consequences for each and every Manitoban, individual and business alike. It would ultimately bankrupt our economy.

And so that was what the former plan had called out for, was a target to achieve reductions that would require the elimination of every fuel-burning vehicle off the roads, and we just felt that that wasn't practical at all to be setting a target in that manner. And so we're looking at having targets that are realistic and achievable and practical, targets that will certainly work in Manitoba, and we do believe that we—our mandate is to protect the environment but also to protect the economy.

And, you know, and speaking of target reductions, I know that in the 2015 plan, members opposite had said that they would be carbon neutral by 2080, and that was a pretty aggressive, take-every-vehicle-off-the-road kind of plan. And then, just two weeks ago, members opposite said, actually, forget 2080; we've got to plan to be carbon neutral by 2050.

\* (16:20)

So, if you've taken all the vehicles off the road and you've done—and you've—you know, I'm not sure exactly what else members opposite is advocating for. I know they're in favour of an accelerating tax on carbon. So I'm not exactly certain how the member was able to shave 30 years off of his plan towards carbon neutrality from 2080 down to 2050 simply after two years of being in opposition. But I would greatly appreciate being enlightened as to how that

member was able to achieve that in his various, you know, analysis of the situation.

But, again, we think our plan is practical and achievable.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I have been informed by our House leader that our time together in the legislative sandbox has come to an end, so we are prepared to move forward.

Let me just say very quickly that I appreciate the dialogue that we have had—political differences, of course, but it's been respectful and useful and I want to thank the minister and her staff for approaching Estimates in what I believe the spirit of Estimates should be.

I also want to thank all the other staff here and particularly give recognition to the fact that, owing to a shortage of time, we did not get to a number of really important sections of the department. We didn't get to wildlife; we didn't get to licensing; we didn't get to waste management and reductions there.

So it's not in any way meant to be disrespectful to the staff working in those areas. I promise I will do my best to have some good questions in question period that will send you all scrambling for answers in the months ahead as best as I can because that's my job. But, really, the—I have the highest respect for the civil servants in the department, having had the honour of working with a lot of them in a very indirect kind of way while we were in office.

So, yes, thanks to everyone for the work that they do, and we'll proceed now with the money issues which I'll leave in the hands of the honourable chairperson.

**Ms. Squires:** I just want to take a moment to thank all of my staff who have not only done an exceptional job of preparing for this process, but have just done an exceptional job for years and years and years, and just really thank you for hard work and dedication and providing this amazing service to Manitobans and, also, just helping a new minister get ready for this process—so much appreciated.

And I have no doubt that our esteemed colleague will certainly continue to provide questions that are relevant and meaningful. We have a shared passion for our environment and protecting our species and, you know, setting—making sure that our land is protected now and for future generations.



So I'm excited to work with you. I'm excited for the healthy debates that we've had thus far and look forward to many more to come.

**Madam Chairperson:** Hearing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department.

I will now call Resolution 12.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$70,221,000 for Sustainable Development, Parks and Regional Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 12.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$14,614,000 for Sustainable Development, Environmental Stewardship, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 12.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$30,979,000 for Sustainable Development, Water Stewardship and Biodiversity, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 12.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,894,000 for Sustainable Development, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 12.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,439,000 for Sustainable Development, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 12.1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 12.1.

At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** I do have a motion to move, if I may?

I would move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), that line item 12.1.(a), the minister's salary, be reduced to \$33,600.

**Madam Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) that line item 12.1.(a), the minister's salary, be reduced to \$33,600.

The motion is in order.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Chairperson:** Shall the motion pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Chairperson:** I heard a no. All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Madam Chairperson:** All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** Recorded vote, please

**Madam Chairperson:** We're going to repeat the vote here on the motion.

All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Madam Chairperson:** All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

#### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Altemeyer:** A recorded vote, please.

**Madam Chairperson:** A formal vote has been requested by two members. This section of the Committee of Supply will now recess to allow this matter to be reported, and for members to proceed to the Chamber for the vote.

*The committee recessed at 4:28 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:45 p.m.*

**Madam Chairperson:** We will now deal with resolution 12.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,648,000 for Sustainable Development, Finance and Crown Lands, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

***Resolution agreed to.***

This completes the Estimates for Sustainable Development.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Agriculture.

Do we need a short recess before starting with the next department? *[interjection]* I heard a no. Does the honourable—*[interjection]*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Madam Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** We will now resume consideration of Agriculture, and the floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** Owing to the very robust discussion we've had on Agriculture previously, we're going to look to finish off with the minister right now and move on to other matters.

**Madam Chairperson:** Hearing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department.

I will now call resolution 3.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,354,000 for Agriculture, Policy and Transformation, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 3.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$139,214,000 for Agriculture, Risk Management, Credit and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$17,103,000 for the Agriculture, Stewardship and

Assurance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 3.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$19,039,000 for Agriculture, Production and Economic Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 3.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$314,000 for Agriculture, Costs Related to the Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 3.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$552,000 for Agriculture, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

***Resolution agreed to.***

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 3.1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 3.1.

At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

The floor is open for questions.

**Mr. Allum:** I move that line item 3.1(a), minister's salary, be reduced to \$33,600.

***Motion presented.***

**Madam Chairperson:** The motion is in order. Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Chairperson:** Shall the motion pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Chairperson:** I heard a no.

**Voice Vote**

**Madam Chairperson:** All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**Madam Chairperson:** All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The motion is accordingly defeated.

\* \* \*

**Madam Chairperson:** We will now deal with resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,482,000 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates for Agriculture.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of Committee of Supply is for the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage.

Does the—do we need a short recess before starting with the next department? *[Agreed]*

Then we shall call a short recess. The committee will recess.

## JUSTICE

\* (15:00)

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

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume the consideration for the Estimates for the Department of Justice.

At this time, I invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

Could the minister please introduce her staff in attendance?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes, I have—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Honourable minister.

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** —David Wright, who's our deputy minister. We have Maria Campos, who's our assistant deputy minister of finance and admin. We've got Greg Graceffo from Community Safety, as well as Shauna Appleyard from Community Safety as well.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Minister, and we'll just introduce the staff when she gets here.

Okay, as previously agreed, questioning from this department will proceed in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I'm not going to ask a question, but I will have—I do have a response to the member's question that she—that we left off with last time. So I thought I would start by responding to that and it may initiate some more questioning on her part.

Section 718.2(e) of the Criminal Code requires judges to take the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders into account in sentencing, especially to look at all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances. The Supreme Court laid out principles for this section in *R v. Gladue*, 1999, SCR 688. This decision directed judges to look at alternative sentencing options and to consider broad, systemic and background factors that affect Aboriginal people generally and the offender in particular unless consideration of Gladue factors is formally waived by the offender.

Although courts have been required to consider Gladue factors since the 1999 Supreme Court decision in *R v. Gladue*, the Ipeelee decision of March 2012 further compels such consideration and has resulted in a substantial increase in requests for what is commonly referred to as Gladue reports. In Manitoba, Probation Services completes Gladue pre-sentence reports when ordered by the courts.

In October 2013, the Gladue pre-sentence report policy format and content—sorry—was changed. Probation Services undertook a comprehensive consultation process that included representatives from the judiciary, prosecutions, defence counsel and Community Safety Division's indigenous staff members—for example, probation officers, correction officers, managers, et cetera, who expressed an interest in participating.

The revised policy for Gladue pre-sentence reports now includes a greater focus on the systemic and background factors, the individual's connection to spirituality and community and the community resources available that could be considered as alternatives to custody.

\* (15:10)

A Gladue guide was created to help staff guide the interview. The Gladue guide contains themes and ideas to be explored with the subject of the report. As each individual is different, the direction—areas to be explored and expanded—of the interview will vary.

Many of the ideas are formed in statements rather than questions so the interviewer can decide the direction the interview should take, with each subject, based on their responses. The intent is the Gladue guide will be used as a tool to assist the writer in providing a subject with opportunity to have a voice and letting the court know their story, their unique, personal circumstances. The resulting Gladue pre-sentence report and assessments, recommendations is an opportunity for the subject to take ownership and responsibility in developing their own case plan, which may include resources suggested by the individual.

It is also important to note the amount of training and quality assurance that are now a part of the Gladue pre-sentence report process. Probation officers, hired by the community safety division are typically required to have a social work background or some equivalent professional training. Probation officers are also provided with specific court report writing training in accordance with probation services policies on report writing, which includes risk assessment training of two days for the LSCMI risk assessment tool for persons 16 and older and one additional day for the YLS/CMI risk assessment tool for persons 12 to 15.

Pre-sentence report—Gladue pre-sentence report training is four full days in length. The training includes information about Gladue factors throughout the entire training. The training focuses on probation services, obligation to produce objective, balanced reports which include verified and 'corroborative' information.

Each report prepared by a probation officer is required to be reviewed and approved by the probation officer's area director, manager or designate.

Mr. Chair, I probably will go beyond my allowable 10 seconds left, and I'm just wondering if there would be leave to just finish off quickly.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is there leave to finish off?  
[Agreed]

Okay, go ahead, Minister.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** The system is designed to ensure the quality and objectivity of the reports and is part of the general oversight and accountability framework that governs probation officers by virtue of their status as government employees. The approach to Gladue pre-sentence reports is provincially consistent. Probation staff from across the province

receive the same training and utilize the same format and policy. Training provided by the department is meant to enhance probation officers' understanding of systemic and background factors.

Compiling a Gladue pre-sentence report requires extensive efforts as probation officers are required to contact extended family members and explore to a greater degree appropriate community alternatives to custody. The judiciary and other justice stakeholders have communicated that they are generally very satisfied with the current Gladue pre-sentence reports. This includes feedback provided via representation from prosecutions and defence at a regular judge-prosecutions-defence and probation services liaison committee.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Miigwech for that. I really appreciate that overview in respect of what's happening in the department on that. So I appreciate you getting back to me on that, miigwech.

So I will move on in respect of just asking the minister, as she would well know, that advocates and correctional staff have been asking for many, many years, for a new jail in Dauphin, and so we're just wondering what the status is in respect of the jail for Dauphin.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, I want to thank the member for the question, and I think, certainly, right now, there is still an ongoing review of what is needed with respect to capital projects in Manitoba. But what I will say is that we're trying to take measures to hopefully reduce the number of people in our correctional facilities, and we're planning to do so by sort of a three-pronged approach. One is enhanced restorative justice programs as well as preventative justice, block by block and so on; I think we talked a little bit about this the other day, as well as our responsible reintegration initiative as well.

And so what we're trying to do with all of this is, over the long term, is try and reduce the number of people in our jails. And in doing so—so if we're—if we've got this kind of approach, what we're trying to do is, you know, it's still a part of the factor in terms of the long term in capital planning for the government. But we're trying to look at other ways to reduce our incarceration rates.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So does the minister have an idea of how long that review process is going to take place so that the department would have a definitive yea or nay in respect of that capital project?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I don't think we have a definitive date as of yet. It's certainly still on the table as far as we're concerned as a department. But what I will say is that we're trying to find ways to reduce the number of people in our jail system.

So, if over the long term that is the case, and that is what we're able to achieve, then that will factor in as part of the capital planning process.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So—and I get that the, you know, preventative programs and restorative justice and diversion and all of that is a part of your overall analysis in respect of the need of a capital project like a Dauphin jail.

So, since you became minister, has there—have you done an analysis on whether or not those numbers have actually decreased for that area in respect of those individuals that would use the Dauphin jails? Or are you compiling those numbers to start looking at your overall analysis that would feed into that capital project review?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I want to thank the member for the question. And, of course, it does go back to our wanting to divert people into programs that they need prior to entering the system, so things like restorative justice, preventative justice programs, as well as the responsible reintegration initiative, as well, which is primarily set in order to reduce recidivism rates. So we need to try and find ways to integrate people back into society so that they're productive members of society as opposed to reoffending in some way or another. So we're trying to find the programs and services and so on that they need in order to reduce those recidivism rates and reduce the number of people coming back into the system.

So, over the course of all of the implementation of this since we came into office, we track those numbers on a regular basis. This, of course, didn't happen overnight, and we've had a situation over the last number of years where we've had a significant increase in incarceration rates over the last 10 years, and we recognize that we need to do things differently. So we're trying to find programs that are actually working.

\* (15:20)

So we've seen incarceration rates increase; we've seen crime rates increase. We're spending more money in the system but we're not really getting the value for the money that is being 'spense' because we're not reducing the number of people who are

entering into the system. And so that's the challenge that we're faced with, so we've started to move forward with this programming and we will continue to monitor it and the kinds of results that we get, and it is our hope that we will be able to eventually, over time, be able to reduce the number of people who are incarcerated.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So—and again I think that—well, in respect of, though, if we're specifically talking about the Dauphin jail, because from what I understand is the project was ready to go and was committed and all of that. So I know that that's been put on pause in respect of this ongoing review of capital projects, and I know that you're trying to marry it with, you know, preventative programs, you know, responsible integration, restorative justice, but at what point is the department going to make a decision? Because those numbers will take time to decrease the number of folks that end up in our correctional facilities.

So at what point does the department say, okay, well we've got to make a decision? Because you could be waiting for years for those numbers to decrease and, you know, the numbers decreasing are also, you know, dependent on—wholly dependent on the type of supports that we put into those programs. So do we put in additional dollars into restorative justice so that we have the infrastructure to divert more and more people from correctional facilities?

So, again, you know, my question is in respect of Dauphin jail and so how long do we kind of do this review when it certainly is going to take us several years to get those numbers down?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** And I thank the member for the question and certainly, you know, I think our objective is to try and work within our means to start off with and see how we can find better ways to find programs that are working and providing the real results that Manitobans expect.

And, certainly, we have an objective to try and reduce our incarceration rates and, by doing so, I've talked a little bit about how we plan to do that through restorative justice and preventative justice and through the responsible reintegration initiative. And so these are how we're trying to reduce the number of people in our correctional facilities.

So it will take time. Some of these programs are fairly new in terms of the review that has been taking place and the direction that we're going in, and so, having got—it's taken a long time to get us to where the stage where we're at right now and we're just

trying to do things to better deliver these services for Manitobans in a more efficient and effective way.

And so that is our approach for right now, and then, over time, if we can reduce, you know, the number of people in our jails, then we'll review; we'll have a look at what that means in terms of our overall jail capacity at that time.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Well, I'm not sure if there was a clear timeline on there, because that's not what I heard. I just heard that you're going to continue to support restorative justice, and so—but I guess one of the things that I'd like to know as well is while I—I know that there was land that was donated by the City of Dauphin, and so I'm wondering what happened in respect of that land.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes. The way things have been restructured in our government is that everything to do with buildings and so on owned by the government have been consolidated into the Finance Department in the Accommodation Services area.

So, with respect to the specifics about land purchases and so on, I mean, that would be best asked to them, or if it was donated, and I'm not privy to all of the information on that side, but certainly, Accommodation Services would probably be better to answer those questions.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So I know that according to the annual report there was a 13.5 per cent increase in applications for legal aid services from last year, but that there's been no increase to funding for Legal Aid Manitoba. Why is that?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Just while we're getting the details of that, I did promise to get back to the member with respect to the year-over-year numbers from the previous year, so I could, in fact, give that information to the member now, if she'd like.

So I believe it was for the adult facilities, so in Brandon Correctional Centre it was 325. In Dauphin correctional centre—73; Headingly Correctional Centre—828; Milner Ridge—552; The Pas—183; women's—234; and—[interjection] Sorry? Oh. I—so this would include numbers—we used to house some of the federal women's correctional, and that was nine people, as well, and the Winnipeg Remand Centre at 307. So for a total of 2,511.

\* (15:30)

**Ms. Fontaine:** And just to be clear, that was for—and I can't remember what day I asked that question, but

that was for the exact day, but last year the previous year?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, it was for October 26, 2016.

**Ms. Fontaine:** I don't know how much more time you need in respect to the Legal Aid question or?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** The member will recall that there was a significant number of increases in immigration and refugee matters last year in Manitoba—and refugee claimants—and there was a significant increase in that area specifically. It was about an 81 per cent increase over the previous year. So that overall 13.5 per cent the bulk of that may have been attributed to that.

**Ms. Fontaine:** I'm sorry. I don't understand that at all and so maybe just walk me through that.

You're saying that—again, and just for clarity—clarification. So the annual report there was a 13.5 per cent increase in applications for Legal Aid services from last year, right? And then my question why—is why was there no increase in funding for Legal Aid to reflect that increase in respect of applications.

So I'm not sure. I'm a little confused in respect of the 81 per cent and—so I'm not sure if that really answered my question.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Sorry, I misunderstood the original question. So we will—I'll just endeavour to take that under advisement and get that information for the member.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So we're probably going to close off really soon. So I just want to make sure that you'll get me that even though we're closed off.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, I will endeavour to get that to the member.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So how many private bar lawyers issued a certificate to Legal Aid Manitoba for formal representation in 2016-17?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I will endeavour to get that information to the member, as well. I—my apologies, I just wasn't sure where the line of questioning was going to go today, so I just want to make sure that we get the accurate information to the member, and I will endeavour to do so.

**Ms. Fontaine:** The next several of my questions are on Legal Aid. So perhaps what I will do, because I'm assuming that you won't have the information, so what I'll do is I will just read out my questions, and

then, because there'll probably be about five now, and if you wouldn't mind getting that information, then, if that works—okay.

Okay, so I'll just read them out and then I'll go on to a couple of other questions, and then I think that that's going to be it for today, or forever or 'til next year.

So the questions that I have are: Does the minister believe—and this is, again, in respect of certificates for Legal Aid Manitoba for formal representation—so does the minister believe that this is enough to keep up with the growing demand for Legal Aid services? So that's (a); (b) Is the department actively trying to recruit more private bar lawyers to provide Legal Aid services? And then, what poverty law initiatives has Legal Aid Manitoba engaged in in the last little bit? So I'll leave those questions with you. If you wouldn't mind getting back to me, that's great.

So—sorry, just a minute—so can the minister explain the \$439,000 reduction in Corporate Services?

\* (15:40)

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Primarily, this was as a result of streamlining and creating efficiencies within this area of the department, and there was a manager—a managerial position. The member will know that we've undergone a review of senior management and we're looking at creating efficiencies and starting at the top, and this was one position that was eliminated, and as the result of that—in the way of an FTE—and as a result of that, the rest is sort of streamlining and creating efficiencies within that area of the department.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Sorry, just to be clear; this is one position: \$439,000?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** No, it was—it's—the total amount is a result of the elimination of one FTE plus, as a result of that and the restructuring within that area of the division, it created some other efficiencies within the department which, of course, is an important thing for our government. We're trying to find better ways to deliver services to Manitobans. So we don't anticipate—the division does not foresee any changes to service levels as a result of this. It will just reassign all duties related to this position to ensure that there are no gaps in service delivery within the department.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So the one position—the FTE managerial position—is part of that 439, so—I mean I don't know how much that manager made, but certainly I would say maybe there was \$300,000. Like where does that \$300,000—and I know you keep saying you're streamlining other things, but how did that occur?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** That specific position was \$109,000, and, as a result of the restructuring within that area of the department, we were able to create further efficiencies and streamline the delivery of services within that area of the department.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Okay, Miigwech.

So, according to the annual report, there was a \$1,737,000 reduction in other expenditures which includes a reduction in training. Is this a reduction in training for correctional officers or other correctional facility staff?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Could I just ask the member to clarify, is she looking at a specific area within the Estimates book on that? Is there a line that she could refer to?

**Ms. Fontaine:** In my notes here, it says page 35.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** So this isn't an actual budget reduction. It was just what was achieved as a result of the great work that the Department of Justice is doing in this area of the department for finding efficiencies from within that area of the department.

**Ms. Fontaine:** So has there been any training that has been cut from anywhere in the department?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No more questions? Okay.

So we'll agree to go on to the resolutions for the Department of Justice.

Resolution 4.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty—*[interjection]*

We'll start over again. Resolution 4.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$48,164,000 for Justice, Criminal Law, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 4.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$47,447,000 for Justice, Civil Law, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 4.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$420,560,000—[interjection]—sorry—exceeding \$420,516,000 for Justice, Community Safety, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 4.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$62,899,000 for Justice, Courts, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

\* (15:50)

Resolution 4.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,764,000 for Justice, Consumer Protection, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 4.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,730,000 for Justice, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 4.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,429,000 for Justice, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

The last item to be considered for the Estimates for this department in item 4.1.(a), the minister's salary contains a resolution 4.1.

At this point, I request that all ministerial—okay, the floor is open for questions.

**Ms. Fontaine:** I move that line item 4.1.(a), the minister's salary be reduced to \$33,600.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Chairperson:** The motion is in order. Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Question. The—shall the motion pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no.

**Voice Vote**

**Mr. Chairperson:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Chairperson:** All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Chairperson:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The motion is accordingly defeated.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Resolution 4.1: RESOLVED that be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding four million, two hundred and three—okay, sorry.

RESOLVED that her—to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding four million—okay.

Resolution 4.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,203,000 for Justice—okay, \$4,203,000 for Justice, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2018.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Justice.

The next set of Estimates will be considered by the section of the Department of Infrastructure.

We shall briefly—shall we briefly recess the—allow the ministers and critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department? [Agreed]

So we'll recess for at least five minutes.

*The committee recessed at 3:54 p.m.*

*The committee resumed at 4:01 p.m.*

## INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is now consider the Estimates for the Department of Infrastructure.

Does the honourable minister have the—any opening statement?



**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Good afternoon, I'm pleased to be with everyone in the Chamber today to discuss Manitoba Infrastructure's priorities for the upcoming year.

Investments in strategic capital stimulate the provincial economy, generate employment and increase household and business incomes. In addition, infrastructure and infrastructure renewal projects boost productivity over the long term, further strengthening the economy. Our government is committed to investing in strategic infrastructure: roads and bridges, flood protection, hospitals, schools, universities and colleges as well as municipal projects and other infrastructure.

In addition to our direct expenditures on infrastructure, we're working to remove barriers to private investment in public infrastructure through public-private partnerships and to maximize the cost-sharing opportunities with our federal and municipal partners. It is important that the investment decisions are made in the context of stimulating the economy. They are good for the public good, but are also financially sustainable over the long term.

With this in mind, all infrastructure investments will continue to be scrutinized to ensure the best value for money. Manitoba Infrastructure is continuing its focus on roads, bridges and water management in planned investments throughout the province for 2017-2018. The highway capital budget is \$502 million in 2017-2018. Once highway preservation and maintenance is included, the overall budget for highways is \$645 million.

The water control capital budget is \$60 million for 2017-18. This budget could be expended—this budget could be expanded depending on the level of federal participation. Manitoba Infrastructure's contribution to this budget holds our team accountable to each other and the citizens of Manitoba, and we're actively reducing redundancies and spending money as efficiently as possible. We're holding to the commitment we made to Manitobans.

Our department leads in forecasting, monitoring, emergency management and flood response. We have and will continue to make good flood mitigation investment choices. The investment in flood mitigation in years past, such as community ring dikes and flood diversion channels, have paid off in reduced damages again this year. We have worked with rural municipalities, land owners and other government departments to identify worthwhile mitigation projects. We will be continuing this path

in developing and implementing other new flood mitigation works.

Strategic choices made by the leaders and staff at Manitoba Infrastructure have minimized the damages caused by this flood, reduced the amount of lands, businesses and people affected by flood and kept Manitoba open for business, travel and trade and trucking during this flood.

With this new budget, we are continuing to invest in flood protection through construction on the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin outlet channels, a project which begins with starting to build the access road. The department efforts will be focused on design, consultations with indigenous communities, land acquisition and environmental regulatory approvals. Construction of the channel is scheduled to begin next fiscal year, pending the progress of the consultations, environmental licensing and land acquisition. Manitoba will also continue work to seek regulatory approval to allow operation of the existing Lake St. Martin emergency outlet channel as an interim measure should it be required.

Continuing to build community flood protection works in partnership with local municipalities and the federal government, these projects are happening in East St. Paul, Arborg, Moosehorn and Elkhorn, and we're completing a project at Duck Bay.

Continuing to protect a number of properties through the individual flood protection initiative, we're also partnering with the federal government to produce flood-risk maps for communities along the Whitemud River and along the lower Assiniboine River.

Drainage of our provincial land is always a concern. This year we are improving the capability of the provincial drainage network with several projects. A number of major drain rehabilitation projects, including Manning Canal; the RMs of Hanover, Ste. Anne and Taché; also Grassmere drain, which is the RM of West St. Paul; and Friedensthal Drain, which is the RM of Franklin.

Major crossing replacements on main drain, RM of Franklin; and East Outside Drain, RM of Portage la Prairie.

We're also in the dam rehabilitation and safety improvements at St. Norbert dam, Fairford Dam and continued 'realitation' on Shellmouth Dam and the Assiniboine River control structure of the Portage Diversion.

Rehabilitation of critical segments of the Assiniboine River dikes and design of a number of other flood protection dikes: Manitoba Infrastructure is continuing to implement the recommendations from the 2016 Auditor General's report. Bridge safety and renewal efforts include: major projects such as replacement of the 1st Street Bridge in Brandon, rehabilitation of the Winnipeg River bridge on PR 314 and the PTH 59 and 101 interlane-interchange.

Other projects include bridges on PTH 1, a number of bridges near Dauphin, PTH 75 at the Plum River, and a number of projects in northern Manitoba.

Continuing flood recovery project in south-western Manitoba: Manitoba Infrastructure, in partnership with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, is carrying out a comprehensive review to find ways to improve the disaster financial assistance program. Many Manitobans rely on this program to assist them in rebuilding their lives after disaster.

Meaningful public and stakeholder engagement will be key to understanding how to improve this important program. The review will result in a modernized DFA program, an updated disaster financial assistance regulation and a reduction in red tape. In addition, with our Association of Manitoba Municipalities partners, we are focused on improving emergency response and recovery capacity in municipalities through enhanced training and sharing of best practices for community 'preparedness.'

Manitoba Infrastructure is working to increase the response capabilities of the provincial government to disruptions, major emergencies and disasters through the provincial Business Continuity Planning program and by developing an improved crisis action co-ordination plan.

The Government of Canada is responsible for railways and ports and is leading the dialogue surrounding the future of the Hudson's Bay rail line.

Meanwhile, Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization has been leading a multi-stakeholder process to ensure Churchill has the critical supplies on hand during the rail disruption. Manitoba, in partnership with the Government of Canada, has increased the availability of food and grocery subsidies to lessen the impact of the rail outage on the cost of basic necessities. Manitoba has worked with Stittco energy to ensure an adequate supply of

propane is in Churchill to meet the winter heating demand. Manitoba continues to work with stakeholders to consider solutions for safe, compliant fuel storage in Churchill. The fuel resupply ship is scheduled to arrive in Churchill on November 1st.

\* (16:10)

In our planning and policy development work, Manitoba Infrastructure remains committed to serving the motor carrier industry while ensuring road safety for the travelling public. Following a review of Manitoba's carrier profile system, we are working with industry to ensure that its process for the management of carriers is fair, transparent and easy to understand. It is anticipated the time frame for full completion and implementation will range from one to three years.

Mr. Chair, I still have a considerable amount I did want to mention that the department is doing, however, I seem to have run out of time. Perhaps in future questions I could indicate to the committee some of the other stuff that is being undertaken by the department.

Thank the committee for the opportunity to give at least some of my opening statement.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you to the minister.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening statement?

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** No, we don't. We just want to get into questions.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Under the Manitoba practice, the debate for the ministry's salary is the last item considering in the department of Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration for the line item 15.1.(a), contained in the resolution to 15-resolution 15.1.

At this time I would invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

I'll ask the minister to introduce his staff that's in attendance today.

**Mr. Schuler:** First of all, we have Doug McMahon, assistant deputy minister of Water Management and Structures. Doug, would you raise your hand. That's Doug. Leigh Anne Solmundson Lumbard, assistant deputy minister of Corporate Services Division. Lee Spencer, assistant deputy minister of Emergency Management and Public Safety.

And I would like to thank them for joining us today in this very exciting time in every department's life.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, I see that the—does the opposition have any staff in attendance?

**Mr. Maloway:** We do not.

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

**Mr. Maloway:** I propose we follow a global approach.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Is it agreed by the committee?  
[Agreed]

Okay, we'll go with a global discussion.

Thank you, and the floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Maloway:** I'd like to congratulate the minister on his new appointment, and I have a number of quick questions for him, so if he could just, you know, deal specifically with the issue rather than, you know, feeling obligated to take his full 10 minutes to respond to each one of them.

First of all, I'd like to ask the minister if he could just update us on Freedom Road the—as to where it's at, like, how much construction has actually been done on that?

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, thank you very much. And, first of all, I would like to thank my new critic, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), for his congratulations, and I'd like to extend them back to him. He and I go back a ways—[interjection] Not long enough, he says, and I—you know, he would actually have outlived me in this Chamber except that he decided that he couldn't handle the pressure of the Legislature, so he went to the easy House; he went to Parliament and wanted to live the good life there, short-lived as it was. [interjection]

It was short-lived, but he's back and great to see him back. And I'm glad that he's got amazing advice sitting to his left. That would be the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino). So, between the two of them, I think this is going to be a very tough 45 minutes.

**An Honourable Member:** Member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin).

**Mr. Schuler:** Oh, yes. The member of The Pas is also here—great to see the member for The Pas and member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

I would like to answer the member's question in that Manitoba's committed to working with Shoal Lake No. 40 First Nation, Canada and the City of Winnipeg to build the Shoal Lake 40 access road. Three funding partners have agreed to a budget of \$40 million for the project, with Canada contributing \$20 million while Manitoba and Winnipeg contribute \$10 million each.

Manitoba Infrastructure has applied for a licence under the Manitoba environment act and is in the process. Manitoba's undertaking indigenous consultations on the project and not just with our First Nations, also with the Manitoba Metis Federation.

Manitoba has proposed to put out a tender for construction of the second component, and I am very pleased to let the committee know that the on-reserve portion is now complete. And it also includes as far the bridge over the creek, right at the furthest edge of the reserve, and we are now ready to start looking at a tendering process for the off-reserve process.

I would like to point out to the member—I'm sure this is going to be painful for him, but I will still have to do this. It's what we do here. What the member for Elmwood couldn't accomplish in 17 years, we basically accomplished in 17 months.

**Mr. Maloway:** I want to congratulate the member for doing in 17 months what we couldn't get done, according to him.

We're interested in results, Mr. Chair, and I would like to know when this project is going to be completed.

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, again, as stated, we already have—the on-reserve portion is now finished, including the bridge over the last waterway. We have moved this project along substantially. We are now looking at a tendering process for the—our—off-reserve portion as soon as everything has been completed.

I'm sure the minister—or, the member should know that we always make sure that we are consulting all the way through. It's very important to make sure that we have a robust consultation process.

I'd like to point out to the member for Elmwood that our government, through the minister of Aboriginal and northern affairs, that we've gone and

put out a document on consultation. We've been able to settle on a lot of issues which have been hanging for a long time, sort of like the hanging chads, and we've gone through and started to consult with our First Nations and are trying to resolve these issues in a very respectful way.

\*(16:20)

So, for instance, the previous government decided on this project that although it was moving on—along fairly nicely, they decided to bring ESRA into the mix, which further complicated it, bogged it down, and they lost the momentum.

Our government got into office; we removed ESRA from the mix, re-engaged with our First Nations, and we moved the project along to where it is. So we are now finished with phase 1 and we are ready to start the process of tendering for phase 2.

**Mr. Maloway:** That's not what I asked. I just asked when does the minister expect to complete the entire project. What's the target date?

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, I thank the member for that question. Again, we're always very careful to pick exact dates, as he knows that there are things like weather events; there are unforeseen circumstances. I would like to point out to him it is no different than Keeyask, which is now 18 months behind, partially due to NDP mismanagement, also partially due to things that are found when the construction starts.

So we are very careful to put an exact end date on it, but we already have the on-reserve portion complete, and we are now ready to proceed with the off-reserve portion to get it done. This has been a long time in coming, and we know that a lot of individuals have been waiting a long time for this.

So we are on top of it and we are making this one of our priorities.

**Mr. Maloway:** Minister, a simple question: What is your target date to complete the project? Is it, like, you know, a decade from now or is it a couple years from now? Surely, you must have some idea of—I recognize that projects, you know, rarely get done on time. The—we got all kinds of examples. You know, when you start digging in the ground, you find things that you didn't know were there. Plessis Road Underpass is a really good example of that where problems came up and completion dates were put off.

Surely, he can give us an idea now of when this project should be complete, and we accept that there

may be some, you know, delays in it. I just want to know what his projection is right now for a completion date. Surely, that is not that difficult a question to answer.

**Mr. Schuler:** We have made it very clear from the day we assumed office that this was a priority. Thus we negotiated with our other partners to get this moving. I would like to point out to committee that the off-reserve status is subject to the environmental licensing portion, which hasn't yet been received, so we don't have the environmental licence and with consultations.

However, we would like to see this proceed. It is a very active file, and I would say that probably the best time to have this completed would have been, let's say, 15 years ago or 10 years ago or five years ago. None of that was done, so what we are going to do is endeavour to get it done as soon as we get the environmental licence and all the consultations are done.

But I'd like to point out to the member that we are pushing this file very actively and we would like to see it done as soon as possible. People have waited a long time for this project.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, clearly, the minister doesn't have a clue when he's going to finish the Freedom Road project because he's just dancing around each question I answer—ask.

I would like to—the member for The Pas—my colleague, the member from The Pas, would like to ask a question, I believe, on Freedom Road as well.

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** Thank you to my colleague, the member from Elmwood, for providing me this opportunity.

In regards to the construction of Freedom Road, I'm really interested in hearing about jobs within the community, especially when this community has sacrificed for many, many years what they have provided for the city of Winnipeg in terms of water, drinkable water.

So what I want to know, the investment and jobs within the community regarding training and employment, is there a current percentage of Aboriginal employment within this community? I'm thinking about in spirit of representative workforce; and with phase 2 and what other phases that are happening, is there going to be current recruitment regarding Aboriginal employment with this specific

project, especially within the communities and surrounding communities?

**Mr. Schuler:** I'd like to thank the member for the question.

We do know that with the agreements that were signed with Shoal Lake 40 and phase 1, the on-reserve construction, that there was a lot of opportunity for businesses to expand their business. They invested in new equipment. In fact, in meetings that we've had with Shoal Lake 40 they appreciated very much that they were allowed to develop greater capacity and did very good work with other partners on reserve, and it was a large number. They felt it was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars that they felt came back to the community.

This was the first—the first—economic opportunity that they've seen in 17 years and they were very appreciative of the fact that they were consulted, they were respectfully consulted, they were part of the process. The previous government bringing ESRA in, the feeling was that that was not a good choice of the previous government, that it just made the process far more complex.

And our government feels that we should engage with our First Nations, we should ensure that there are opportunities and meaningful opportunities. In fact, Shoal Lake 40 said what was very important for them is that there would be training and that there would be jobs and there would be opportunities that would have a sustainability to them and there would be a long-term opportunity for them, and that's what they appreciated about this. They—I would like to thank my colleague, the Minister for Northern and Indigenous Relations, the work her and her department are doing on consultation and the difference is being felt. They really do feel like they're being involved and treated respectfully and that's what we're going to continue to do on phase 2. And when this road is complete—after 17 years of neglect, it's finally completed—it will bring amazing opportunity to the community, because it's a beautiful country, it's in a beautiful setting and they are really looking forward to opening up their community to economic development.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Maloway:** I'd like to ask the minister about the progress in the—as far as the cloverleaf that's being constructed at Highway 59 and the Perimeter. Where are we at with the construction stage there?

## Report

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255):** Mr. Chairperson, in this section—in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255 considering the Estimates of the Department of Sustainable Development, the honourable member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) moved the following motion: that line 12.1.(a) Minister's Salary be reduced to \$33,600.

Mr. Chairperson, this motion was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

**Mr. Chairperson:** A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

*All sections in the Chamber for recorded vote.*

\* (16:40)

## Recorded Vote

**Mr. Chairperson:** In this section of Committee of Supply—meeting room 255, considering the Estimates for the Department of Sustainable Development, the honourable member of Wolseley moved the following motion: that line item 12.1.(a) Minister's Salary, reduce to \$33,600.

This motion was defeated in a voice vote and, subsequently, two members requested a formal vote on this matter.

The question before the committee, then, is the motion of the honourable member for Wolseley.

*A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 15, Nays 37.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

\*\*\*

**Mr. Chairperson:** This section of Committee of Supply will now continue with the consideration for the departmental Estimates.

I'll ask that the staff of the department come back for the Estimates.

Okay, so if everybody's ready, we'll continue with the floor opening for questions. Is there any questions?

**Mr. Maloway:** I ask the member for an update as to what was going on with the cloverleaf at Highway 59

and the Perimeter and I—he was in the process of responding to that question.

**Mr. Schuler:** I appreciate the question. This has been a project that has been talked about and planned for and discussed for at least 15 years, if not longer. It's a very important intersection, not just because of the traffic. I am told it is one of the busiest 'structions'—sections of highway in the province of Manitoba. It carries not just regular traffic, traffic that wants to—rather than go through the city, it takes it around the city. It also, in the summertime, has a lot of cottage country traffic travelling down it for individuals that want to go to the Whiteshell, that want to go to the Beausejour area and other points, Grand Beach, the South Beach Casino, to mention but a few. It was always a troubling intersection. I'd like to point out also that it is a corridor where fuel from the Esso tank farm also goes down. It's got a lot of heavy transportation. I know first-hand, because I do live very close to that intersection, often trucks would misjudge the turn coming down the Perimeter heading west, and then they'd have to turn north, jog and then go, continue west. And the trucks would keel over and it was a real problematic intersection.

So it is under way. And the—Manitoba Infrastructure is working with the construction company. I've just recently had another tour through the construction zone. It was a little bit behind last year, and that had to do with the rain, because there is a lot of mud packing, or, in our case, gumbo, and it has to be worked, first of all, at site of origin, it has to be tilled, they use discers to till it, to get the moisture component down. When it gets to a certain moisture component, it is then transported onto site, where again it is tilled or disced to get the moisture component down. And there was a real problem with the site last year in that it would be okay if it would rain for a week and then be, you know, it would be dry for three. The problem was that it was raining every several days and they were having trouble with drying out the gumbo.

So they're back on schedule. They made up the weeks that they had lost last year. And they are on schedule from what I understand. They've completed—basically completed the Birds Hill turnoff, which was a disaster in the making, that we didn't have more accidents than there were there, for the amount of traffic that it was taking. If you wanted to come out of the town of Birds Hill and go north, you were almost taking the life in your—your own life in your own hands, because it was that treacherous, especially on a long weekend. What people would do

is they'd go to Henderson, take the interchange on Henderson and the Perimeter, take it all the way around, then get onto 59 and try to head north. So that intersection is basically done.

The actual bridge construction, there is multiple bridges at 59 and the Perimeter have progressed nicely. There's also the active transportation corridor, which is coming along nicely. I'm not too sure how far they've gotten because now with the latest rain and snow, that could almost mean it would be the end of hauling mud. I think I saw trucks running still on the on the weekend, but they are back on schedule, and we are hoping that the entire project be done by next fall, so that'd be fall of 2018. There might be some small projects that might still have to be completed in 2019, but those would be ancillary, they wouldn't be part of the major construction. Again, assuming—it's all weather-related—assuming we have good weather, it is a very large project that involves a lot of elements, and I would point out to committee, it is one of the busiest stretches of highway, if not the busiest, in the province of Manitoba, and was a long time in coming.

On the next question, I would like to point something else out to committee, but I've run out of time.

\* (16:50)

**Ms. Lathlin:** I would like to be provided an update regarding Grace Lake Airport within my constituency of The Pas. Back in June, letters were delivered to various stakeholders regarding the closure and basically an eviction deadline for June, I believe, and so obviously there's been numerous deadlines, and the last one we've heard was November 15th. This—as we all know, this Grace Lake Airport provides services for medevacs and also provides transportation further north of The Pas and, most importantly, employment for families in The Pas.

So, as of November 15th, can the Minister of Infrastructure provide me an update about the airport, its services, its jobs and the effects that it will have in my community? Thank you.

**Mr. Schuler:** I thank the member for that question.

As we know, from even some of the events that happened in early fall with a major evacuation event—and forest fires come up quickly—and more so than the fires, I believe, the smoke was a very big issue for a lot of northern communities and a lot of

the evacuations did take place because of the unsafe air quality.

Insofar as the airport that you referenced, I would like her to know that we are still in discussions. We've had a very good discussion on this issue and all sides seem to be on board. We're, again, very careful that we get it right with the consultations. I think that's very important in all of this, that we do our due diligence and that proper consultation takes place. And I would like to assure the member that as soon as we have all our ducks in a row, we will certainly be making an announcement on it. But I would just tell her that as for now, it is still under discussion.

**Ms. Lathlin:** Just recently, there was announcement in Norway House regarding ferry services. Can you please provide an update and just to talk about a little bit more of the announcement and where we're at with that Norway House Cree Nation and the transportation service that is vital there.

**Mr. Schuler:** Could we ask the member to restate the question. For some reason, we couldn't hear the question very well from where we were sitting. So if she would enunciate the question once more for us.

**Ms. Lathlin:** Last Saturday, there was an announcement with the Norway House Cree Nation regarding an upgrade of the ferry services there. I was wondering if he can provide us the announcement and plans for—particularly for that community and that vital source of transportation in and out.

**Mr. Schuler:** I appreciate the question. This is one of these very interesting stories. I think we—on trying to get the ferry up there, we went through several tugboats and a few other things. It seemed to be one of these interesting stories, trying to get the ferry up there, but it finally did get there, and the new cable ferry, the Gilbert Laugher, is now operational on the Nelson River, connecting the community of Norway House and the surrounding area, and the new cable ferry is a critical link, joining the people of Norway House to all of Manitoba.

And I know our Province is very pleased to recognize the commissioning of the CF Gilbert Laugher, and we congratulate the Laugher family on this important recognition. I know that the member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle) was there and represented our government—and again, investments like this new cable ferry, as well as the recently

completed resurfacing of PR 373, are essential to the health and prosperity of Norway House and the surrounding area.

This is a \$3 million, 90-foot long, 15-car ferry which will replace the CF James—and I'm going to have trouble with this name—Apetegon, which has been in operation since 1977. The new ferry is named after Gilbert Laugher, who was born in Norway House in 1928 and was one of the first ferry operators at Sea Falls. Both the community and Norway House Cree Nation were consulted on the naming of the ferry, and we are just very pleased that this has worked out for them.

The family was very excited; in fact, here's a beautiful quote from their daughter, Layette Laugher, who said: This is such a wonderful tribute to my dad, who worked tirelessly for years providing critical service to our community.

Chief Ron Evans from Norway House Cree Nation is quoted saying: I would like to applaud the commitment of our Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government for the work in assisting in the development of our community with the new ferry. This will help us as we continue our community and economic development, facilitating tourists and others to visit the North and our community.

Mr. Chair, construction of the new ferry began two years ago, and it was launched in the Red River at Selkirk in September of 2016. The ferry was moved across Lake Winnipeg to the Nelson River and portaged over land to the ferry crossing on PR 373. It typically runs from April 1st to January 1st and shuts down when the ice crossing opens. It returns to service when the ice crossing closes. The ferry runs 24 hours a day when it is in operation. This is an important investment for the people of Norway House and the surrounding area and will provide reliable access for the community.

We are just really, again, pleased with this. I don't know if the member wanted a little bit more on the P 3–R 373 highway resurfacing, but if she wants, we can get into that a little bit more, but this is one of those neat stories, and like I was mentioning, we had some interesting challenges getting it up there. We did—we get—did get the ferry moved into place.

The community is very happy. In fact, it was the community that decided what kind of a celebration. In fact, they're the ones who decided what the

celebration would be and they were very instrumental in the naming of it, and this is one of those really good news stories. It transcends politics; the community is happy about it and it's just one of those really good news stories, and we would like to congratulate the community and we wish them all the best in future years and I'm hoping, some point in time, I will have the opportunity to be up there and take the ferry across and be able to live it myself.

**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 now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 30, 2017

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