

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

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

Vol. LXXII No. 43A - 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 23, 2019

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Man.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	Ind.
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen, Hon.	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
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
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	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Deputy Government House Leader): We would like to move to Bill 206, The Planning Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider Bill 206 this morning—

An Honourable Member: Second reading.

Madam Speaker: —second reading of Bill 206 this morning.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 206—The Planning Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: So I will now call Bill 206, The Planning Amendment Act.

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): I move, seconded by the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Piwniuk), that Bill 206, The Planning Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martin: In light of the tragedy that unfolded this weekend in Sri Lanka with 300 dead and some 500 injured, I wonder if there is leave of the House that we have a moment of silence to acknowledge the hurt of those that have—that are still healing.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to have a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

Please stand.

A moment of silence was observed.

Mr. Martin: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues.

I think events like this weekend's tragedy brings in perspective the freedoms that we have here in Manitoba and Canada when it comes to democracy. While there are many, many instances while we on both sides of the House will disagree with one another's agenda, that's where it ends in this Chamber.

And we see all that vividly this weekend what happens when those disagreements turn into more than that and turn into hate and that hate manifests itself in terms of terrorism, and the magnitude of what we saw this weekend in the Easter attacks is simply horrifying, Madam Speaker.

This is, I think—I believe this is the third opportunity I've had to bring forward this very, very minor amendment to The Planning Act. I think it's fairly straightforward. I think all the questions have been addressed by members opposite.

There's a discrepancy in the act in how it treats individuals that live outside the Perimeter to individuals that live inside the Perimeter in terms of the number of days an application development permit may be held up for. Outside the Perimeter it's 125 days, while inside the Perimeter it is 90 days. This act would eliminate that discrepancy between rural Manitobans and Winnipeggers.

So I have asked all members of the House to give this bill consideration to pass on and allow the public to speak on it.

Thank you.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Good morning to everybody in the Chamber.

I'd just like the member to maybe clarify whereas he mentioned this is the third time that this particular bill has come forward, or some variation of it, before this House, yet he calls it a minor amendment. Why is it that we are spending our time once again, private members' hour, debating this bill?

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): You know, Madam Speaker, as I said earlier on, I think the backdrop of what happened in Sri Lanka gives us pause to appreciate the democracy that we have here in Manitoba. Again, I—to paraphrase the member from Point Douglas, recently she indicated that we are all simply just vessels in terms of promoting legislation from our constituents and from our communities.

To that end, that's what this is, no different than the multitude of the private members' bills, both minor and major, that were brought forward during those 17 years, and I would hope that he would support this bill this time.

Mr. Wiebe: Right. Well, I can appreciate the member is concerned about democracy all of a sudden, and I'm happy to have that debate here this morning in about how this government seems to treat our democracy here in Manitoba.

But I guess what I'm trying to get to the bottom of—and this really just leads from the comments I'm reading from the last time I got up and spoke to this particular bill or some variation of it. Why is this being brought forward as a private member's bill when the member sits in the government? He has access to the minister. I would imagine the minister would be in agreement. Maybe he isn't. Maybe that's part of the problem.

Could he explain why is this coming during private members' business—hour?

Mr. Martin: If my honourable colleague is suggesting that private members' hour should be abolished for government members, then he is free to run on that in the election. I, for one, see it as a valuable part of the Manitoba legislative system and the parliamentary system as a whole.

So, again, I would ask the member to take a look at the bill on its merits and ensure that those living outside of the Perimeter are treated the same as those living in the city of Winnipeg.

Thank you.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, I'm not trying to trip the member up here. I am simply asking why is this process coming forward. Three times this has come

forward for private—during private members' hour when this is a bill for an amendment that could very easily be done by the government.

If it's a priority for him, it's a priority for his constituents, why is he bringing it here to this part of the legislative process rather than getting the job done?

Mr. Martin: Oh, Madam Speaker, I'm a little bit disappointed that the honourable member feels that no legislative business gets done during private members' hour. I think that's a disservice to the many private members' bills that were brought forward and passed on both sides of this House during their 17 years.

So, again, this is part of the process. This is part of the democratic process. This is part of the legislative process. If the member chooses not to support the bill, that is his own choosing.

Thank you.

*(10:10)

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to commend the member from Morris for bringing forward this piece of legislation, and I'd like to see—ask him why he feels that, as he stated in the—in his opening remarks, it's a non-partisan issue. This is a bill that will definitely reduce some red tape, and why he also sees that all sides of this House, this Chamber today, should support this bill.

Mr. Martin: Well, I thank my colleague for that question, Madam Speaker.

We have members of this Legislative Assembly who represent both urban and rural areas. I see the member of Flin Flon this morning; his constituents would be under the 125 days. While his colleague, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), his constituents would be under the 90 day time frame. I find that discrepancy unwarranted. It's a minor amendment and I think ensuring and—a level playing field between residents on either side of the Perimeter is a valid action for this Legislature.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, once again, then, the private members' hour can work—and, in fact, we saw it just work the other day with Bill 228, and we had the gallery full, full of constituents who came out to support that bill. We had—we forced the government day after day after day to finally let this bill move forward, and yet they obstructed right until the last minute.

Now, once again, the member has the opportunity to bring this forward in a way that would actually get the—accomplish the tasks that I think his constituents are probably begging him by this point, calling every day saying why hasn't this passed.

So I just ask the member, why is he choosing private members' hour rather than simply bringing it forward as a government bill, or with the consent of the minister, and getting the job done?

Mr. Martin: Once again, Madam Speaker, if the member from Concordia wishes to disband private members' hour for government members, he is free to run on that platform. I, again, feel it's a valid component of the legislative system.

We saw a number of examples during their tenure, I can—one off the top of my head, the member of Minto, it was a very, very minor amendment to gift cards they had forgotten about in terms of malls versus individual retailers. Again, very minor amendment, it could have easily gone through the minister.

The member for Minto (Mr. Swan) pursued it as a individual—as a private member's business and, again, it received unanimous support of this House because they recognized—we all recognized the validity of that proposal.

Mr. Wiebe: Other steps that are usually part of the process if you want to get legislation passed during this time is talking to your colleagues, speaking to other members of the Legislature, asking the opposition or the government—whichever the case may be—to get on board, to say this is something that we can all support.

The reason I bring this up, Madam Speaker, is because the member is trying to put his name forward in a new constituency, a constituency that is begging for some representation on the Concordia—or on the Seven Oaks hospital. This could be an hour that we could be debating that issue.

Why is the member bringing forward this for a third time rather than standing up for the constituents he hopes to represent by standing up for—against the closure of the Seven Oaks hospital?

Mr. Martin: Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) has already declared me the winner of the McPhillips in the next general election. I appreciate that vote of confidence.

However, as it stands today I am the MLA for Morris. My job is to represent the people of Morris; I am doing that today and, as well, as all residents outside the Perimeter, including those that members opposite represent.

Mr. Ewasko: It's too bad that today, a day after the Easter weekend, that the member from Concordia once again is continuing to play absolute gutter politics, as he usually does, when he stands up to mention any questions. Again, in regard to the Bill 206, The Planning Amendment Act, which is brought forward by the member for—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —Morris (Mr. Martin), we do—this is a democratic building, Madam Speaker, and we do have the opportunity as private members to bring forward legislation, and it's too bad that the member from Concordia is, again, bringing a partisan spin.

I would like the member for Morris to expand on who he's consulted in regards to this bill.

Mr. Martin: Actually, I thank the honourable colleague for that question.

This is actually, again—to paraphrase the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith)—we are simply just vessels bringing forward legislation on behalf our communities and constituents.

In this case, it was brought forward to me by the Association of Manitoba Municipalities in—during one of the many meetings that we and all colleagues have had. This had been mentioned as something that had been on the books, actually, for a number of years and for a variety of reasons hadn't been proceeded with.

So I offered on their behalf to bring this bill forward and to ask all members to support the levelling of the playing field for those that live in the city of Winnipeg to those that live outside the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I'd just like to put a couple of words on the record and ask the member—I know that the bill has been before the House a number of times and actually the municipalities really look forward to getting this done because the extra 45 days that are involved or 30 days waiting could eat up the whole summer.

Is there some particular reason that this wouldn't pass today?

Mr. Martin: Well, I thank my colleague, the member for Emerson for the question, and we need to, as a Legislature, allow the democratic process to unfold today. Private members' business is a valid part of our system here in Manitoba. I look forward to hearing the discussion.

If members opposite have proposals or amendments they would like to bring forward in relation to this very minor amendment, they're welcome to bring them forward. I'm willing to hear them out and listen to—and hopefully bring this onto committee and hear from Manitobans.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, once again, I'm, you know, baffled here that the member hasn't been able to get this done in the three years that he's been here sitting on the government's side. Maybe he can just share some of the phone calls he's received from members of AMM and other rural folks who are saying that they're—this is a priority. Maybe he can share: What are they asking? Are they asking him why hasn't this gotten done? Why—what is the holdup? Why is this being brought forward in private members' hour rather than being brought forward as a government bill?

Can he share just the frustration that he's hearing from folks who this is affecting?

Mr. Martin: Well, and again, I thank my colleague, the member for Concordia for that question. And, yes, I have had conversations with the president of AMM who, coincidentally actually happens to be a reeve in my area.

He has asked the question: Why the delay? I have indicated that he needs to talk to members opposite, the NDP caucus, to find out why they are unwilling to support the treatment of individuals that live in the city of Winnipeg versus those that live outside the city of Winnipeg and move forward with this amendment to The Planning Act.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): As I said, I begin this morning just once again a little bit perplexed as to the method to the madness of the member opposite when bringing forward this particular piece of legislation. And what I found helpful to do—because, of course, when we spent this weekend—of course,

spending time with our families and appreciating Easter—we also—we look back.

We did some research. We knew that this was the priority for this morning, and so we looked back on the Hansard. I needed to know; I needed to get to the bottom of this and find out exactly why this bill was coming forward, how it relates to one that was brought forward before this and before that, as well. And so we had our crack research team spend the weekend poring through the volumes of Hansard, researching and trying to get to the bottom of this.

So I do have that Hansard here in front of me, Madam Speaker, and I read through some words that were put on the record by the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), the member for Minto (Mr. Swan). I put some words on the record at that time and, really, you know, it actually sounds a lot like the speech I'm giving right now. It was a lot of confusion then and it's a lot of confusion now. So all that research was done and it's still confusing to me.

Now I did hope and—actually we had a bit of a different tone from the member from Morris today, and it might have been the Easter weekend. It might have been time that he spent with family or just out in the sunshine, made him a bit more of a reflective member than we're used to hearing in the Chamber. And so I thought, okay, well, we've got an opportunity to actually talk about this in a substantive way to find out a little bit more detail: Why is this, once again, why is this coming to the Legislature in this fashion?

And I hoped that he would take that opportunity, explain a little bit about the process, a little bit about, you know, his struggles, maybe within his own caucus to get this moved forward with the ministers, with the front bench—maybe that's one of the frustrations he's feeling.

* (10:20)

We thought maybe there was, you know, there was another reason. Maybe this is so complex that this is really the time that we need to bring it forward to have a full debate. Maybe we could ask for leave this morning. We could spend the entire day talking about this. Well, no, he didn't offer any more depth to this. He called it a minor amendment, said this was simple and should be something that, you know, anyone could get done if they were worth their weight as a Legislature—as a legislator.

But, no, he didn't offer that. So then we have to sort of dig a little bit deeper. What is really going on

here? Why is this member prioritizing this over, as I said in my questions, you know, as—you know, the perspective member for a constituency that's going to be directly affected by a hospital ER closures, specifically the closure of the Seven Oaks ER?

You know, this would be a great time, if you've got some pull in the government caucus this would be your time to say, Mr. Premier, I would like to spend the morning talking about this issue because I have strong feelings about it. Did he do that? No. So why did he bring this forward? Why did the member choose this bill, once again, to come forward?

Well, you know, it's been brought up a few times, I think, by members of the opposition. I think it's been talked about maybe a little bit in the media. It's certainly being talked about in the public, but I think what it comes down to is that this government has no legislative agenda. They are out of steam and that is a big surprise. It's a big surprise to Manitobans because when the government was elected with, you know, as they say, the largest mandate, you know, in a hundred years or in the history of mankind or whatever it was—[interjection] The freedom caucus is applauding that. I'm not sure that adds a little wrinkle to the dynamic between the government and the freedom caucus.

But they are without an agenda. They are without items to talk about.

As I said, now, you know, I would say that the members of their communities would probably come forward and say, well, you know what the No. 1 issue for me, of course, is health care. I think you should bring that forward. You should bring that forward and talk about the struggles that we're feeling. You should talk about the front-line workers who have been laid off. You should talk about the front-line workers who are there are working mandatory overtime. I know it affected my family this weekend and our family plans because of health-care workers in my family who had to work all weekend through Easter. So this is a real issue. Maybe that would be something that they could bring forward in legislation or otherwise.

Maybe education, Madam Speaker, you know, maybe it's the K-to-12 review which is giving people pause, concern, worry that this government is using this review, once again, as a cover for the cuts that they really want to make in the education system. Maybe they—maybe it's post-secondary students who want to talk about the rising tuition and the lack of accessibility to post-secondary education, how their

universities are struggling because they are not getting the same kind of funding. It's not the same kind of capital funding or operating funding. Maybe these are some issues that could be brought forward. Maybe these are pieces of legislation that could be brought forward by this government to be debated in a substantive way here in the Legislature.

But have they done that? No, Madam Speaker, in fact, what they're doing is they're bringing forward the same piece of legislation three times—three times—and, again, the member says, well, this is a priority.

In fact, I heard the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) say that he's heard, as well, that there is a—some urgency to this. There's urgency to this. There's a building season coming up. I would imagine we're almost in it. The ground is starting to thaw, so it's time to get shovels in the ground and get some stuff done and, yet, here we go, a government who obviously isn't prioritizing this legislation, no prioritization at all.

So, when the member puts on the record, he says he's hearing frustration from AMM, he's hearing frustration from his constituents, I wouldn't be surprised at all. If I was his constituent I'd say, what have you done in the past three years? What have you, as a member representing my community, done to address issues like this? And the member has no answer. He couldn't even stand up and say he has an answer.

Now, he mentions, you know, this is an opportunity, private members' hour. It is an opportunity to bring forward anything that's a priority to your constituents, and you would imagine that that would be something that you'd be able to get through.

But the problem is is that the member didn't come to other members of the Legislature. He didn't say, well this is something I heard from, you know, a constituent in my area. This is a priority for me. I want to make sure that this gets done. Can I have your support? That's something that happens all the time.

I tell the students—when they come to this Legislature I always tell them you're going to see question period, a lot of conflict, a lot of theatre, you might say, Madam Speaker, but behind the scenes there's a lot of work that gets done to make sure that when it's an issue that's important to Manitobans that it does get done.

I know that we did that under Bill 228 brought forward by the member for Fort Rouge, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), who brought forward a bill from the community and said this was a priority. I know we went, we reached across the aisle, we talked to other members. We talked to independent members in the Legislature and we said this was a priority. Again, even at that point had to force the government's hand to get it done.

But the bottom line is, Madam Speaker, none of that was done, so why is this being brought forward? Well, as I said, it's being brought forward because this government is out of gas; they have nothing else to talk about. They certainly have no record that they can run on except for closing hospitals, cutting education, firing front-line workers, and they have nothing that they can talk about to be proud of.

They want to talk about eliminating red tape and making things easier. Well, they haven't actually done that, Madam Speaker. They—even the one thing that they want to stand up and talk about in the next election, and I welcome that conversation, I hope that they do bring that forward. I'd be happy to talk to my constituents on the doorstep. I haven't brought—it hasn't been raised with me, on the doorstep yet. It's kind of surprising. Instead people want to talk about Concordia Hospital, about the ER closure, about all the other issues I've been talking about, but maybe that is something that some constituents want to talk about. I'm happy to have that discussion. And when I do, I'll be happy to say that, instead of prioritizing a piece of legislation that potentially would make it easier for things to move through the process in rural Manitoba, that this government would not prioritize that. They would not put this forward as a government bill and they wouldn't move it forward.

You know, we had, I think, one of the thinnest legislative agendas that we've ever seen in this province, and, in fact, the government refused or wasn't willing to call forward much of that legislation until the 11th hour, and we had that experience last Thursday and Wednesday. You know, Madam Speaker, that's not the way that we usually do business here in this Legislature. Usually, if it's something that the government is proud of, they will bring that forward in a way that allows for debate but they didn't do that.

So, you know, I put this once again to the government. If somebody could just stand up and explain to me— maybe I'm just not getting it here—

why they can't get this done. Why they can't move this forward in a way that actually, you know, gets the job done and instead are bringing it forward in a way that is simply eating up time that could be talking about important issues, issues that Manitobans are begging us to address. They're begging the government members to stand up, put on record exactly why they think closing the ER at Seven Oaks is a good idea, exactly why closing the ER at Concordia Hospital is a good idea, why they think longer wait times is a better idea. Why do they think that education should be cut? Why are front-line workers being laid off and why are they working more and more hours? Maybe that would be a substantive debate that we could have and I welcome that.

Here this morning, Madam Speaker, we have, once again, a member who just can't seem to deliver for his constituents, and that's a real shame.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, here we go again.

First off, let me just acknowledge the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) who has, as he indicated, gotten up several times to discuss this bill, which I think we are on bill—this is the third time that the member from Morris has attempted to bring it forward. And it is always a curious thing, on this side of the House, every time we see a member opposite attempt time and time again to bring forward a bill, which, when you are in government and have the privilege of bringing forward government bills, if the government was really all that committed, they would simply bring this as a government bill.

We've seen that, Madam Speaker, with the conservation officers bill, where the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) has again brought his bill, I think, three times now to the House. So it really does beg the question how committed their boss is to things that they feel are important.

It doesn't make sense to us on this side of the House that their boss doesn't seem to be at all concerned with how it appears or what it would look like or how it even makes members opposite feel that they have to, you know, keep going back to their boss and ask if they can bring their bill forward again, and he says, well, yes, you can bring it as a private member's bill because I have other priorities like spending time in Costa Rica for eight weeks of the year. Those are my priorities, though—my priorities are not The Planning Amendment Act; my priorities are not the conservation officers and, you

know, robustly supporting those officers because we know that the cuts—my priorities is to ensure that the legacy that I put in my premiership is that I have cut and I've pillaged everything that made Manitoba a great province, i.e., our health-care system; that's my priority.

* (10:30)

And so members opposite have to go to their boss—yet again, like the member for Morris (Mr. Martin)—hey, boss, could you mind if I bring The Planning Amendment Act again, is that okay?

Well, you know, and I think that I would suggest to the member for Morris—and this is just a gentle suggestion—that I think that the—his boss is just humouring him with The Planning Amendment Act because I don't think he has any intention of ever letting it go forward because he simply just doesn't care about the member for Morris. That's what I would interpret by the fact that the member for Morris has had to bring this piece of legislation—*[interjection]*

And I know that people are tired. They're tired of hearing this as well. Like, not only us getting up here time after time, the members 'offosite' are yawning and they're exhausted of having to sit here and pretend that they're interested in the Morris for—the member for Morris's bill, The Planning Amendment Act, and they have to, you know, clap every time he gets up. But they're tired too. We're all tired of talking about The Planning Amendment Act because we know, again, member—Madam Speaker, we know that the members are exhausted. It's been—it was—and I don't know why they're tired; we just had a long weekend, but they're so tired. And for, you know, for folks that want to come back and read Hansard, I think it's important for people that want to come back and read Hansard that they know that at this moment on this day, members opposite were so tired of debating The Planning Amendment Act at 10:31 a.m. on April 23rd, 2019, several members on the government's side yawned in response of the member for Morris's bill. That tells you where we're at.

So I would suspect, Madam Speaker, that—*[interjection]* Oh, hello, to all the beautiful students that just came into the gallery. And the students won't know, but let me tell the students who are watching their democracy at play that this is actually the third time we are debating the member for Morris's bill, and the—*[interjection]*—in three years. I think that that's important for the students to know

that this is the third time in three years that we are debating the member for Morris's Planning Amendment Act. And I think it's also important to point out to the students that it is really an example of the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) lack of concern or lack of commitment to his members in his caucus that some of the poor members on the other side have to repeatedly put forward their private member's business.

So I know—and let me just put it on the record here in the short time that I have left. I know that I'm very proud to sit and stand with a caucus and be part of a caucus that every time we have ideas for private members' business the support is there from our leader, from all of our caucus members, if you want to bring forward a private member's bill about abortion and making sure that abortion providers and women that are—women and girls that are seeking abortions are safe, that they don't have to go through protesters who are protesting against a woman's right to choose what she wants to do with her body, this caucus supports that. And I think that that is important for students to know, that the NDP support private members' bills.

And even myself, Madam Speaker, as you know, as everybody in the House knows, I love dogs. I care about animal welfare and my caucus has supported me in bringing forward private members' bills that look toward the welfare of animals in Manitoba and they have supported that. And that's really important to belong to a caucus that supports you, that not only supports you but lifts you up and actually wants you to shine as well.

I could tell you, I wouldn't be happy if I had to be part of a caucus that every time I wanted to bring forward a bill that I believed was important, they would say, yes, okay, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), yes, bring it forward—or no, we're not going to let you bring it forward, but let's attempt it year after year after year. It wouldn't be something that I would think would be very encouraging and would actually deflate me as a member of a caucus.

And so as we just saw, we know that members opposite are tired. I don't know how the member for Morris is feeling. I would feel pretty dejected that this is the third year in a row he's bringing forward The Planning Amendment Act and, you know, I don't know if that has, you know, impact on how he sees his leader and whether or not, you know, he thinks that he would do the job better at some point. I'm not sure but it is—I think that we can all agree in

this House that we are charged with a sacred responsibility of bringing forward legislation that impacts on Manitobans and the way that they are able to live their lives and the way that they're able to have opportunities afforded to them.

And, you know, I would suggest that the member for Morris, and again, who, as the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) brought up, you know, is trying—is attempting to jump ship from Morris and go into McPhillips now but perhaps it's in his best interest to just stay in Morris because here's one of the things, Madam Speaker: I can tell the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) that he can't expect to be the MLA for McPhillips and sit by while Seven Oaks closes under his watch as the MLA. No one is going to appreciate that. No one's going to vote for that. And so, I don't know, I think the member for Morris should just stay put, stay where he is, do the work that he wants to do, sit by while his boss just, really, just gets rid of the infrastructure that we have here in Manitoba for our health care. He would probably do far better just to stay in Morris than attempt to try and be the MLA from McPhillips because I can tell the member for Morris, people in that area care about the closure of Seven Oaks, and like the member for Concordia, who repeatedly gets up to talk about the Concordia ER closure, and like the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and myself, who get up to talk about the closure for Seven Oaks, that's not going to go over well with voters and constituents in that part of the city.

And, let's be honest, Madam Speaker, voters are going to know that the member for Morris voted in favour, has sat back, has applauded every single time his boss has gotten up here and talked about the closure of Seven Oaks. He's clapped; he's voted for it. Voters are not stupid. They know what's going on.

So I know that we're all tired talking about The Planning Amendment Act. I know that. It's been a long weekend. I think that we were all really, you know, pumped about coming into the Leg. today and doing some important work, but again, year 3, we're doing The Planning Amendment Act.

So I just want to say to the member for Morris, I'm sorry that he has to repeatedly get up and bring this forward in the House. Hopefully, next year—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to continuing on with this debate, I just have a couple of things.

At this point, I understand that we have students here from Miles Mac collegiate, from the constituency of Elmwood, and we'd like to welcome you here to the Manitoba Legislature.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And as we proceed with debate, I would just ask members that in the contents of the debate, I would ask members to please try to stick to relevant comments about the legislation.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): We have spoken to this bill before. In principle, it seems fine—the idea that most—that municipalities will have a shortened period in which to approve projects. The question is—part of the question is the importance of this bill.

One is that it seems that most municipalities, I believe the member for Morris has said that most municipalities are already achieving the 90-day time frame so this bill may not actually make that much of a difference.

The other, of course, is that of all the bills that could be brought forward in terms of—or made a priority, either by members of the government and by this Chamber, when it comes to municipalities, there are a number of other bills that have—that are of importance.

Last year we were approached by rural—the municipal councillors, who'd faced serious harassment. We prepared a bill, put it forward, it was voted down. The government recognized the importance of this—of the issue, adopted the bill, but that's not the bill that we're seeing moving forward. We're seeing The Planning Amendment Act.

*(10:40)

There are lots of other issues. I've spoken with many people. I've spoken with reeves, councillors, mayors in rural Manitoba, who are extremely concerned about this government's approach to infrastructure which, again, might be a more important and useful thing to talk about, that, basically, they feel—felt they had the rug pulled out from under them by the changes to the roads and bridges act all of a—that municipalities were in the middle of their planning, and all of the sudden found

that they would be missing half of the money that was supposed to be allocated for roads and bridges.

We even had a message from a constituency that said—and I know that the government has promised \$10 million to be spread across over 100 municipalities, and the difficulty is that that money, frankly, doesn't go that far. One of them pointed out that if you were to pave at highway grade you wouldn't actually—they wouldn't actually have enough funds to pave the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) driveway.

And, finally, the issue that—the \$1.1 billion in infrastructure funding—in matching infrastructure funding from the federal government, that's been left on the table, all of which is usually part of a three-part funding plan that would ultimately benefit municipalities, not just the city of Winnipeg, but rural municipalities. Although about \$500 million of that was dedicated to transit—there—there's transit in Thompson. There's transit in Brandon. There could be new transit in other jurisdictions and municipalities. So there is the question of priority.

I did just want to 'annotate', I mean, we—in principle we'd want to support private members' bills. I know that that was a challenge that my colleague, the MLA for River Heights, faced when he was an independent member, that over many years he would introduce bills which would not even find a seconder. So that's—so—I—the fact is that this—

And I recall an article in the Free Press by—I believe it was Mary Agnes Welch—saying that private bills are an area where good ideas—private members' bills are an area where good ideas go to die. Because good ideas are put forward by members which are then—end up not being supported or end up being voted down. If we're lucky, the government of the day may vote it down and take the idea and claim it as their own, which is exactly what happened with the municipal harassment act.

So, again, in principle this is a fine idea. There is the question of whether there are—but there is the question of whether there are more important municipal issues to be talking about, and I think, absolutely, there are. There are more important issues that'll have a far greater impact on municipalities that should be a priority for this House.

So, I mean, the—in terms of priorities, in terms of the things that'll make a big—a really big difference for rural municipalities in Manitoba, there are many,

many other things we could be discussing and should be discussing.

That being said we will support this bill through to committee.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I'm never shy about standing up, making my views known. It's kind of a shame that we have to stand up and talk about the same thing over and over and over and over again.

Clearly, it's not a priority for anybody in the government and, clearly, the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) is particularly out of other ideas because this is the third time we've stood to debate this particular change that clearly his own government could care less about, otherwise, it would have happened already.

You know, when the member from Morris was having his opening comments he talked about what people in Flin Flon are thinking, and I can certainly tell the member from Morris I have not received one call about the number of days it takes for the planning amendment to change.

I can tell him what I have heard a lot about. I've heard a lot about how come we don't have a doctor in Flin Flon? Maybe the member for Morris could get on his government's case to try and do something about that instead of changing the number of days it takes to do something. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: Some of the other things I've heard about, Madam Speaker, that certainly weren't what this member from Morris has brought forward: you know, when I travel up to Lynn Lake, which is part of my constituency, not once have I heard anything about The Planning Amendment Act. But I have heard about, oh, why won't the government do something with our road? Perhaps the member from Morris would like to make some suggestions about upgrading the condition of that road for people.

I've heard from people, not just in the far reaches of my constituency but all over about the cell service in our constituency. You know, once upon a time, we had cell service all the way up No. 10, now it's here and there. Once you get north of Thompson, it's not there at all. So maybe the member would like to bring forward a private member's bill about having adequate cellphone service for all people in the province of Manitoba.

No, that's not what he does, Madam Speaker. What he does is keeps coming back to the same thing that didn't pass. This is, what, his third year of trying to get it passed because it's such a high priority that even after it didn't pass the first time, the government didn't jump up and say well, gee, this is something really important, we better do something about that. After it didn't pass the second time, the second year, his government didn't say, gee, member for Morris, we better help you out here. This burning piece of legislation that you want to get passed, we better get on the bandwagon and do something about that. But, Madam Speaker, they didn't do that because clearly it's not a priority of the government and it's clearly not a priority for anyone.

So, again, I mean, I want to talk a little bit about what the member from Morris said, that people in Flin Flon—and I'm not sure how many people in Flin Flon he talks to in the course of a week, a month, a year, his life—but I can tell you that people call up my constituency office, they call me at home, they stop me on the street and we talk about things that are important to people in that constituency.

One of the things that comes to mind is people were concerned about some cross-border issues and how it affects their ability to conduct business. So, you know, I took it upon myself. I arranged meetings with the minister of municipalities. We sat down and had a good conversation about some of those issues and he was going to get on it and see what he could find out. Well, Madam Speaker, I can tell you that was two years ago and here's what I heard from him since then— that's right, absolutely nothing.

So, the only priorities that this government seems to have are to see what they can cut next.

Let's talk about northern patient transportation. It's a big issue in Flin Flon. It affects people that are traditionally supporters of the NDP, but I've got more and more people that were traditionally supporters of the member from Morris's party that are coming to see me that can't get to see a doctor because they've cut northern patient transportation services, they've cut how people can access health care in the city and that goes across the board, Madam Speaker, for people that can't get the kind of care they need.

You know, the member from Morris says this is a priority. Well, it's been a priority apparently in his mind for three years—nobody else's.

But here's what—another thing that's a priority in the North, and that's seniors homes. So let's talk about how many seniors homes the—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I would again just remind members that we are speaking specifically in debate about a certain bill so I'm going to ask the member to pull back his comments into the relevance related to this bill and I would ask his co-operation in doing that.

Mr. Lindsey: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for that. Certainly, it's hard to talk about the importance of this particular piece of legislation in my community or the communities that I have the honour of representing because clearly it's not a priority in those communities.

* (10:50)

So, in some communities, maybe it is. So what's the priority of reducing the amount of time that people have to respond to things? The government wants to talk about open and transparent and all the rest of that, Madam Speaker but, really, this diminishes the amount of time that people will have to become aware of a change in their municipality. It reduces the amount of time people will have to study the impacts of what those changes will be in their municipality. The member from—I forget where he's from—*[interjection]*

No. Anyway, the member from Emerson—I'm sorry—talks about the, you know, we need to shorten this time because we're already into the construction season in some places—certainly not in Flin Flon, Madam Speaker; there's still quite a bit of frost on the ground. But, if the priority was to speed things up so you could actually, you know, have more time in the short construction season, well, maybe start planning sooner. Odd concept—you know you've got x number of days, so instead of starting the plan sooner, the government suggests, well, we should just reduce the number of days.

That doesn't make any sense, Madam Speaker, and that's the problem with this particular private member's business that the member brings forward, is it's not a priority for anybody. But it just flies in the face of openness that the government talks about, that that's really—I guess all they do is talk about it, they don't actually believe it. If somebody wants to build something, I'm sure they don't just think about it for 90 days; I'm sure they just don't think about it for 125 days; I'm sure that a lot of planning goes into whatever it is—whether it's somebody going to build a

new hog barn, I'm sure they just don't wake up one morning and say, I think I'll build a new hog barn tomorrow. I'm sure that they put a lot of thought and planning into the financial aspects of it; they put a lot of thought into where it's going to go; they put some thought into what it's going to do to the environment.

So why shouldn't people that may be affected by that have the amount of time that they need to respond to that plan, because clearly the proponent has had time to think about what they want to do? Now it's time for people that are going to be affected by this change, that they need time to look at what's going to happen to them, what it's going to mean to their community, what it's going to mean to their environment. So really, the reason this private member's bill hasn't passed three times—and hopefully three times and it's out—is because it just plain doesn't make any sense, Madam Speaker, and it's not required; it's just taking up time in this Chamber that we could be debating more important things like health care, like education, like all these other things that are happening.

So it's too bad that this member is—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): It gives me great pleasure to stand up in the House today and put a few words on the record regarding Bill 206, The Planning Amendment Act.

Well, I just want to put on the record that, you know, this has come before this House three times. You know, clearly this isn't a priority of this government. That member for Morris (Mr. Martin) sits on that side and actually has the capacity to go to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and say, this is a priority for my constituents in Morris; this is a priority for the municipalities. But has he done that? No, it's come before the House three times—three times, Madam Speaker. Obviously, it isn't a priority if it hasn't passed yet, so what I say to the member for Morris is maybe he needs to go back and do some more consultation and actually listen to the community and hear what the priorities are, like our Sikh heritage 'buided'. That was clearly from the community; that was clearly the voice of the community speaking and telling us what their wants and needs were and bringing that voice of democracy to this House. *[interjection]*

And I hear the member from Radisson speaking up, and maybe he can get up and speak to his Premier about Concordia closure. You know, I don't

hear him making that a priority it this House. You know, health care in Manitoba is clearly the No. 1 priority.

You know, we want to ensure that Manitoba municipalities are strong and prepared for the future so that they, too, can grow their local economies and help create good jobs. But when you see health care diminishing right across the province here in Manitoba at the hands of this government, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, where are people going to go live? Are they going to choose to live in the rural areas because there's no health care or are they going to come to the urban areas? Are they going to come to Winnipeg? Of course they are, because, you know, this government doesn't—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —prioritize health care. They don't think it's a No. 1 priority in Manitoba—*[interjection]* And I hear the member from Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) 'chirring' up and speaking. Maybe he can also talk about—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —health care in Manitoba, because he lives in Lac du Bonnet and I know that the Pine Falls hospital was closed for quite some time and that there's also a meth crisis in his community. I don't hear him getting up and talking about that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

I'm going to remind the member again, in terms of relevance related to the specific bill that is on the Order Paper for debate. I would ask members to try very, very hard to work on their comment as it relates to the relevance of the bill.

Mrs. Smith: Well, Madam Speaker, these are all relevant to our province of Manitoba, and when we see the relevance of this bill coming forward when we could be debating about, you know: the closure of these hospitals; when we could be talking about how our Premier continues to pick fights with AMM, how he continues to say, well, we—we're giving these municipalities enough funding. You know, they don't just don't know to manage it. Here's basket funding. You have more than enough to fix your roads. You have more than enough to take care of your communities, but yet, you know, they underfund communities, and then who do they blame it on? They blame it on the mayor. They blame it on the federal government for not giving them enough money.

So, Madam Speaker, this is all relevant when we think about what's happening here in our province and we have a bill before us that's not—clearly not the priority of Manitobans, because if it was a priority of Manitobans the member from Morris would have had this gallery full of people supporting this bill. But I actually don't see anybody in this gallery that's come forward, that's supporting Bill 206, The Planning Amendment Act.

So, you know, I would say to the member he needs to go back and do some more consulting. He should also meet with his Premier and make sure that this is a priority of his government as well; and, I mean, there's so many other things that are important here in Manitoba that we could be debating, but are we? No. We're talking about The Planning Amendment Act for the third time.

And, Madam Speaker, I want to bring to your attention that the last time this was brought forward was last May, almost a year ago. So is this a priority of this government? If it was, it would have been brought back a long time ago and we wouldn't be debating it a third time. I'm sure that there's more pressing things here in Manitoba that this government can be working on, but are they? No.

They don't seem to think that meth is a crisis, that health care is a crisis, and, you know, this bill basically shortens things from 125 days to 90 days. Well, that also shortens the amount of time that people have to actually know what's going on in their community. People, like the member from Flin Flon said, take longer than 90 and 125 days to plan any project.

So, you know, I don't see the relevance in reducing that time from 125 days to 90 days with planning, because planning takes days and days and days and months and years. You don't just get up and say, hey, here's my project and that's it. You know, as a former educator, you know, I worked with kids that had projects that went on for a whole year. You know, they want to make sure that they're doing a good job—[interjection]—and I hear the member from Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) here again, chiming in on this. And maybe he can get up. I didn't hear him. You know, he asked a couple of questions. He had his time to get up to debate this. He would have got up. He also lives in a—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith:—rural area. Maybe this isn't the priority for him, either, you know.

So I'm sure, you know, he hasn't had calls from people calling him. I certainly have had no calls to my office. I haven't had anyone from AMM call me and say, hey, the member from Point Douglas, you know, can you support this? This is a priority—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have four minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 9—Respecting Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions.

The resolution before us this morning is the resolution Respecting Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan, brought forward by the honourable member for Swan River.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I move, second by the member from Thompson,

WHEREAS climate change is real and Manitobans all have a role to play in protecting the environment while growing the economy; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's Climate and Green Plan continues investments in renewable energy, while encouraging Manitobans to reduce energy consumption; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government has acknowledged that the Provincial Government's Climate and Green Plan is the best in Canada; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government has made exceptions for other provinces and not imposed a carbon tax upon them; and

WHEREAS an increasing carbon tax is not a climate plan but rather an escalating tax plan, which takes money off Manitobans' kitchen tables and threatens jobs and economic growth throughout the province; and

WHEREAS in addition to the Climate and Green Plan, the Provincial Government has established a \$102-million Conservation Trust to protect and enhance natural infrastructure in the province; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government values the need to invest in a green economy, increasing exports of green energy, and increasing support for sustainable farming practices; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government's "one size fits all" carbon tax achieves none of these goals.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the Federal Government to respect Manitoba's investments in a green economy, and its Climate and Green Plan and not impose an unfair carbon tax on Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, Manitoba is rich in natural beauty and wetlands, forests, grassland, and pristine lakes and rivers. Ottawa plans to impose a one-size-fits-all carbon tax on one of the world's most diverse countries. This is wrong for Manitobans and it's wrong for the environment. We are asking Ottawa to respect this diversity and respect Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan.

The Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan focuses on four pillars of cleaner water, conservation of natural areas, effective steps to address climate change and strengthening the economy.

Manitobans have spoken and our government has listened to what dimensions are needed in a sustainable, long-term plan to maintain the assets we value and a legacy we want to pass on to future generations.

Madam Speaker, I've treasured the outdoors all my life and shared that value to youth in my 35 years as an educator. The Duck and Porcupine mountains have many of these pristine lakes and rivers and a diversity of wildlife that are under the pressure of society.

We want the future generations to enjoy these natural beauties Mother Nature has to offer. With these privileges we have responsibilities, and Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan gives Manitobans the opportunity to show we are leading the way as stewards of our environment. We continue to oppose the imposition of the federal tax scheme on Manitobans and are moving forward with our Climate and Green Plan without a carbon tax.

We were elected to fix Manitoba's finances so we can leave more on the kitchen tables of

Manitobans. Manitoba's invested billions in clean energy including hydro, solar, and wind energy. Manitobans, consumers and businesses want to see certainty, and the federal plan provides great uncertainty.

Manitobans have spoken and our government has listened. Manitobans want to address climate change but do not want Ottawa's carbon tax. We believe we already have one of the best green plans in Canada, and we believe Ottawa doesn't have the right to impose a carbon tax on a province that already has a green plan.

Ottawa's acknowledged that our plan is the best in Canada. The recent Conservation Trust announced is an innovative, forward-thinking approach to invest in local projects that'll conserve and enhance natural infrastructure and support the implementation of our best-in-Canada Climate and Green Plan.

When you get organizations involved in a diversity of projects, this leads to a lot of innovative ideas and innovative projects. The projects recently submitted by over 30 organizations will involve many of these innovative ideas of the public working together for a common cause to ensure Manitoba remains Canada's cleanest and greenest and most climate-resilient province.

Conservation districts, grassroots groups, wildlife conservation and agricultural conservation have all been involved in these projects. These will focus on restoring and enhancing natural areas to reduce flooding, improve water quality, sequester carbon, protect habitat and safeguard our soils. With partnerships including matching funds, the first round of grants of over \$2.2 million will lead to more than \$7.5-million worth of work. Now that's value for money and value for our green plan.

The new Manitoba-Minnesota transmission project will not only create jobs and generate revenue here at home, it'll have a significant impact in reducing emissions worldwide. In December 2018, announced the selection of Efficiency Manitoba's first CEO. Through the new Crown corporation, Manitoba aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2.7 million dollars over-ton over 15 years.

As a result of a failed effort of the NDP over the past decade there has been little change in Manitoba's greenhouse gas emissions. The NDP conducted no economic or scientific analysis in setting the 2008 and 2015 targets. This is the same

when they refused to release the University of Winnipeg report in anaerobic digesters showing their ineffectiveness.

Our green plan is about achieving results for the environment while respecting Manitoba's economy. If the Liberal Party could have their way, they would put Ottawa Justin Trudeau first and Manitoba families last. Our plan puts Manitobans and our environment first and puts money on the kitchen table of Manitobans while working toward a solution for climate change.

I ask that all parties in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the federal government to respect Manitoba's investments in a green economy and climate and green plan, and not impose an unfair carbon tax on Manitoba.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period up to 10 minutes will be held. The questions that may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked to a member from another party; any subsequent questions must be followed by a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I wonder if the honourable member could explain to the House the difference between counting climate emissions the way his government has compared to the rest of the world. The rest of the world does it based on a total annual basis; his government has chosen a selective cumulative basis. Does he understand the difference, and why did his government choose the one that it did?

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Thank you for the question.

Manitoba has put forth a plan that is set for Manitoba. It's a fit-all plan for Manitobans and our—it's a plan where Manitobans are going to benefit and not one that is—where the other provinces are going to get these different buyoffs. It's a made-in-Manitoba plan; it's a plan that is fit for these that's going to benefit our economy and our environment.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I appreciate the comments from my colleague this morning.

I would like to ask if he could spell out for this House how many years the former NDP government had to take action on climate change.

Mr. Wowchuk: I thank the member for a great question.

After 17 years there was inaction. The Auditor General's report spoke of the inaction that occurred and the inefficiencies and the inactiveness that was performed over 17 years of the previous government.

* (11:10)

Mr. Altemeyer: Could the member tell us how large Manitoba's annual total greenhouse gas emissions are and what they should be by the year 2030 if his government was actually listening to the scientific recommendations from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change?

Mr. Wowchuk: Honourable—or the Deputy Speaker, one of the things that we seen by the previous government, they had the opportunity to meet targets in 2008 and 2015 and they failed miserably on both accounts, so we will take no lessons. Our plan is going to meet targets; it's going to be good for the environment; it's going to be great for the economy; it's going to put money on the kitchen tables of Manitobans and not take it away. And all the other plans of the—again, the Auditor General speaks on the failures and inadequacies of the previous government.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): I want to thank the member for Swan River for bringing forward this resolution. I think it's a good resolution to discuss and I look forward to putting more comments on the record as we proceed through the hour.

But my question for the member is: I have heard quite a number of different quotes for how high an effective carbon tax would be. You know, I think the member for Wolseley might have his idea. Certainly, the Prime Minister seems to have his own idea.

But, can specifically—can the member for Swan River tell us how high of a carbon tax the leader of the opposition, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), would like to charge Manitobans?

Mr. Wowchuk: He would like to charge and he's made comments on \$300 per ton. Can you imagine the amount of money—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wowchuk: —that that is going to take. Every month Manitobans have roughly \$200 left on their kitchen tables. A tax of that nature would definitely—would definitely—hurt our economy and all the families in Manitoba. It is not placing Manitoba's

families first; it was placing Manitoba's families last with that type of a charge.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Could the member say how much the government planned to charge for a carbon tax and compare it to what the current level of carbon tax is right now?

Mr. Wowchuk: The—there—one of the things here about the carbon tax and the Liberals is the Liberal—the Liberals in Manitoba are following—they're being dictated by Ottawa on the carbon tax. That carbon tax is one that is going to have escalating values. Manitoba does not want to impose a carbon tax of this nature that is going to, year after year, escalate, take more money out of the pockets of Manitobans and leave less on the kitchen table. Unfortunately, the member opposite sits there, and we find that the—they are being really dictated—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up—*[interjection]* The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Micklefield: I'm wondering if my colleague here could attempt to explain the rationale of the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) following the dictates of his federal Liberal cousins in Ottawa.

Why does this member, I believe, the member for St. Boniface, seems to follow so closely the unfortunate dictates of the federal Liberal government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau?

Mr. Wowchuk: Well, you know, it's hard to understand the rationale. The Manitobans do not understand the rationale on why this is—why the Manitoba Liberals are not standing up for Manitobans but are being dictated by their, as they call it, cousins in Ottawa. And this is one of the things that, if they believe in Manitoba's green plan, they believe in a way to stand up for Manitobans, and not being dictated by Ottawa and being at the end of a puppet string.

Mr. Altemeyer: The honourable member bringing this forward has been unable or unwilling to answer my two previous questions on climate change, so let's shift to a different topic. I'll give him a couple questions and see if he can answer any of them.

Why did this government go turtle and sell Manitoba's interests downstream to the Americans by stopping all legal efforts to block potentially very destructive water diversion projects in that state? This government just completely gave up after

decades of a successful opposition blocking those projects.

And why also has this government gone against the Walkerton recommendations that says water infrastructure needs to be tested on a regular basis?

And where is The State of Lake Winnipeg report that was due last year, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Wowchuk: Well, we had a rash of about 40 questions there and that's the typical for the members opposite in having many questions but no answers. We have—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Wowchuk:—seen time and time again that we, when we look at something, it's all about value for money. You can have all these ideas—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wowchuk: You can have all these ideas but it is following through and seeing these ideas through are completed, something the NDP never did. They had all these ideas; what did that do? It took money out of the pockets of Manitobans off of their kitchen tables and put this province—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up. *[interjection]* The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Lamont: Yes, my question is—I know that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has said that he's only pulling one page out of the 76-page plan.

Can the member tell me how many pages there actually are in the Climate and Green Plan?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River—*[interjection]* Order. Order.

Mr. Wowchuk: I mean, Manitoban's plan reaches out. The trust plan that the \$102 million that was just announced took in about—or in excess of 30—or, 40 projects and 30 organizations. They had a broad diversity. It was a made-in-Manitoba plan. The plan was set up so that all facets that is going to benefit the economy and the environment would come about and it would benefit Manitobans to put more money on the kitchen tables and also enable us to have—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Teitsma: My question for the member—although really, it should be a question for all members; we all

need to ask ourselves about our commitments to fairness, about our commitments to equity. And, specifically, I think there's concerns with the federal Liberal government—which, clearly, the member for St. Boniface and his caucus seems to blindly support—they've made exceptions for other provinces. They've made exceptions for other provinces and they've given exemptions in certain ways for carbon taxes on them.

Can the member just talk about, for a moment, how unfair that is that Manitoba's being singled out and that these other provinces are, you know, arguably, should be treated—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Wowchuk: Thank you for that great question.

Manitoba has the best carbon plan in the country. It is a plan that is going to benefit the environment, it's going to benefit the economy. Unfortunately, all members opposite do not want to support Manitobans. They want to tax Manitobans to the max, they want to take money off the kitchen table and they don't want to look at the long-term future of sustainability and for us to be stewards within our environment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for question period has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The debate is open. Any speakers?

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Listen, before we get into—well, there isn't any substance here. Before we get into the clarification of where the truth lies, let me just say something positive about the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) who's brought this forward.

* (11:20)

Far be it for any of us to embellish what might be on our bios as MLAs, but I was very pleased to read that he actually has quite an extensive history in his local community, particularly when he was an educator, bringing a lot of additional environmental content and work to his classroom and to his school and to his community, and I want to commend him for that.

The true tragedy of the matter is that his actions, positive though they may have been, are being undermined by the very government which he now

supports, and the core problem for this Conservative government and the core problem for a lot of governments is they mistakenly believe that the economy comes first and the environment comes second. That's fundamentally 'unfactual' and not true.

If you think about it, the modern economy only emerged fairly recently, in the last few hundred years. How on earth did the environment survive, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with no economy to support it up until that point in time? Maybe the dinosaurs didn't exist either but back then there was no modern economy and somehow the environment still managed to survive.

Everything that this member and this government is talking about comes because the environment is providing resources and is absorbing their waste, and this government again has a fundamental flaw at the very core of its thinking. They are still stuck in this myth that the earth has an unlimited amount of resources and can absorb an unlimited amount of abuse, and they are wrong on both fronts. And we are crashing headlong into the limits of what our planet can sustain every single day that every single Conservative government, like this one, continues to ignore the basic science.

This government is going to be hopeless and helpless to resolve the environmental crisis that they are actively contributing to, until they manage to realize that environmental constraints on what is possible and what should be done and what is sustainable has to come first in their thinking. We have to have the economy fit with what the earth can withstand, not the other way around.

Point No. 3: I've got some good news for a member who actually claims to believe in, quote, value for money. His Premier (Mr. Pallister) has launched a truly frivolous lawsuit, jumping on the right-wing extremist language of the premier of Ontario, the premier-elect in Alberta, premier in Saskatchewan. And that lawsuit is completely without merit. It is based on one principle and one principle only, and that is that this provincial Conservative government, the Pallister government, has a plan for climate change. That is a myth; they do not have a plan for climate change and, in fact, their own data proves it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And here's the good news for the member—bad news for the planet, but there's a silver lining here, if he's willing to listen to it. In the Conservative Pallister government's first year in office—first full year in office, which was 2017—what do you think

happened to climate emissions in Manitoba under this government, which claims it has a plan to address climate change? Did emissions stay the same? Were they steady, as they had been for four years in a row? Did they go down, perhaps? Did climate emissions go down under the Pallister government in 2017? And I will point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what they're supposed to be doing: driving emissions down dramatically. We have to cut emissions in half by 2030 or my kids, his kids, anyone who has grandkids, are going to inherit a future—*[interjection]*—that none of us, none of us will be proud of. *[interjections]*

The United Nations Intergovernmental—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —Panel on Climate Change has way more Ph.D.s in climatology than the entire Tory caucus put together. If they can come up—if they can find a panel of climatologists who are willing to say that, no, no, keep raising emissions, don't pay attention to emissions reductions, I would be very, very surprised at that. And that—the reason is because those scientists don't exist.

The MLA for Thompson can deny that climate science is real. I wonder if he's the secretive Tory MLA who was revealed a couple years ago. They didn't put a name to it, but they said—yes, they quoted a Conservative MLA, who didn't want to be having their name attached to it, that said, they don't believe in climate science. Maybe it's the MLA for Thompson. I don't know. Would anyone be surprised? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: It would be a bit of race, really—a race to the bottom.

But here's the good news for anybody in the Tory caucus who wants to save some money: Emissions in 2017 skyrocketed at a rate that had not been seen for years, after emissions in Manitoba were steady at about 21 million tons. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski) can write this down—or Swan River—because he didn't know the answer to the question when I asked him earlier: about 21 million tons per year. What happened in their first full year in office? It shot up by 700,000 additional metric tons of carbon equivalent in a single year.

That means your government doesn't have a plan for climate change. That means you don't have to do

the lawsuit. You want value for money, go talk to the Premier, (Mr. Pallister), point this out to him and suggest—politely, if you like, or not, your call—and say there's no reason for us to be spending thousands of dollars on a lawsuit which through our own actions we've already undermined the only reason for it in the first place. It's your own track record. It's your very own track record in black and white: 700,000 metric tons more in a single year—and, unfortunately, tragically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's probably going to get worse. Because 2017 was when this government started launching its austerity measures in complete and total contrast to what they had promised every single Manitoban in the election: that there would be no cuts; there would be no layoffs; and that's all this government has done since coming to office.

What did they do in January of 2018? That's when bus fares went up. Now, increasing bus fares, even if I'm a Conservative and I'm thinking that money matters, if something increases in price, oh, that means people are not going to be able to access it as often, right? Have I got that right? Are you with me so far? Okay, so what do they do? They want to address climate change, so they cut funding to municipalities not just to Winnipeg, clear across the province. Bus fares go up in Winnipeg. In Brandon they actually had to cut bus routes. They had to cut bus routes. Imagine if you were reliant on that bus route in Brandon to get yourself around—maybe you're a student, maybe you're a single parent, maybe you use the bus to get to work, and now you can't. What's going to happen? Well, you might be forced to go buy your own automobile or come up with some other way to get yourself around. That is called increasing emissions. That was in January, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And then the solar subsidy at the end of March ended, cancelled flat out. Nobody else in the world has cancelled a solar subsidy all at once cold turkey. It—and it—go ask the solar. If you don't believe me, go ask the solar companies yourself. They will tell you the same thing they told me. If you want to reduce incentives for solar, you phase it out over time.

Wait, wait. Isn't that, what, business-friendly? You actually let people know what you're doing? You say, this is going to change a little bit, but we're going to give you time to adjust? That would be the appropriate thing to do. They cancelled it flat outright. That was in April.

Also in April, Power Smart—you remember that? Power Smart, the program that actually worked because it actually existed and helped businesses and institutions and individual Manitobans reduce pollution, reduce energy consumption, and save—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —money?

Yes, I know, the MLA for Thompson doesn't want to hear this. That's all right; that's what denial looks like.

That's when they cancelled the Power Smart program's ability to even advertise publicly, to tell people what they could do; what services were still available. Efficiency Manitoba still hasn't brought in a single new initiative.

And then in October, the four electric buses that we had on the roads in Winnipeg—yes, using electricity that is made here, 99 plus per cent of it, without any use of fossil fuels, didn't have to import that diesel fuel, didn't have those diesel emissions—they got rid of them. Did they replace them with anything? No. Toronto, Montreal, San Francisco, Chicago, New York—they're all ordering electric buses, from where? From Winnipeg. But we can't get them here because of this government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): It is my pleasure to rise and to talk on this resolution. I know that the members opposite clearly have some beliefs, I guess, we would call them, passionately held, perhaps. I know they said something about being hopeless and helpless, and I believe that label does apply to them.

*(11:30)

And, in any case, what we're here to talk about today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the resolution that my honourable colleague has put forward about our Climate and Green Plan and how it needs to be respected, because really, this morning we're talking about respect.

You know, and the member opposite, the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), as so many of his colleagues like to take a pattern of division, like to take an approach to trying to play people off of each other or to pretend that one thing needs to be done or else the other thing will necessarily suffer.

And they create these false dichotomies and they do them all the time.

And they did them again; we heard it from the member for Wolseley once again, and that was on the consideration of how to develop a robust economy while respecting the environment, and he pretended to say that you had to prioritize one over the other because you couldn't possibly do both; you couldn't possibly build a robust economy that is respectful of the environment, but I'm here to tell the member opposite and all members in this House that they are wrong, that in fact you can build a robust economy that's respectful of the environment.

And I see, you know, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski) is looking at me intently and he reminds me of exactly what this is, because what does he do and what is his family engaged in? They're engaged in farming, and I can't think of a better example in our provincial context of a group of people who care deeply about the environment and know how to show it, and still build and contribute to our economy in significant and increasing ways, and, in fact, are a significant driver in our economy because they're what's attracting so much of the infrastructure investment that we're having to—you know, whether that's a pea-processing plant in Portage la Prairie or all these other initiatives that have come to Manitoba under this government that have been welcomed in Manitoba under this government—the source of those initiatives is farmers like the member for Dauphin and his family and the contributions that they make, and I would ask all members of this House to, just for a moment, recognize and applaud the work of our famers.

So I believe hopeless and helpless was the title track to Mr. Altemeyer's latest LP—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

An Honourable Member: Oh, I'm sorry. My—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Radisson, you're not being recognized, but I just want to remind him first, if you call anybody in this House by their constituency name or their ministerial duties.

Mr. Teitsma: Absolutely. My apologies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That was just a slip of the tongue and certainly the member for Wolseley will appreciate that, you know, sometimes things come out of people's mouths that they don't intend to say.

But, in any case, I think—I think, though, that we can continue to ask question—I know the member for Wolseley and, you know, he points to science; he points to the necessity of understanding at a scientific level, you know, how our climate is being impacted by human activity and by other influencers in our environment, whether that's the activity of the sun or oceans and all other components of our environment.

And I think we have to ask ourselves—and we can even look to examples. You know, the federal government has chosen to begin with a small—relatively—carbon tax: \$20. It's still very impactful to, I think, Manitoba families, but compared to the \$300 proposal put forward by the leader of the opposition, it is relatively small and I think it's also one that, you know, as our own leader has said, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has said, it's kind of like frog in a pond, right? You're going to start with a small amount of tax and you're slowly going to increase it. Well, if the intent is to change—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —behaviour, if the intent is to change consumer behaviour, then the question is, how effective will a \$20 carbon tax be on reducing emissions? I think that's an open question.

We do have some data that we can look at from British Columbia because they've been down this road; their emissions rose. Their emissions rose in the face of a carbon tax. So I think if, in the interests of following science, you know, that should be something that is taken seriously by the members opposite and especially the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer).

And I also, you know, I come from a research and development background and I under—I have an understanding of how research and development companies function. And I can tell you that the efforts of the government opposite to heavily subsidize everything from wind power and solar power, you know, might have an unintended side effect. And that unintended side effect is that the efforts that are being put into at that—at those companies that are being put into the research and development, those are efforts that are noble and, indeed, I believe worthy of support. But those efforts can become distracted by the need to produce what is not yet a fully efficient or as effective of a system as possible.

So what ends up happening is you have a company that, for instance, is making leaps and bounds and continuing the progress of driving down the cost per megawatt of energy produced by solar panels or by wind or whatever technology we would want to throw at them. And rather than support them, the previous governments have chosen instead to tell them please stop what you're doing and shift to production, produce a lot of these goods; please keep your R & D going. But at the same time they have to understand the organizations that are in charge of these—of activities tend to get distracted. There's usually only, you know, one management group in charge—and I speak from experience in research and development companies. When you shift gears into production, it takes away the inertia that you've built up and the speed that you've built up at driving research and development, and even under worse circumstances can actually stifle or even scuttle potential innovations as the focus becomes on producing what is, unfortunately, not particularly economically effective green initiatives.

And so I think it's important to take a very careful look at the way that you want to support a green economy. I believe we've done that, and I look at our \$102-million green Conservation Trust as a shining example of that, because we understand that the challenges that are facing our environment are not going to go away by 2030. They're going to still be here. We're going to continue to need to take initiatives to continue to address challenges in our environment and to support the local groups on the ground that are willing to do that. And that's what that \$102 million grant does, is it not only provides millions of dollars this year in terms of—I believe it was over 40 grants to local communities—but upwards of \$5 million every year forever and that's adjusted by inflation and it'll grow over time. This is an initiative that was done today that is going to have a benefit for generations. And when you talk about the approach that you want to take to the environment that's, indeed, the approach that we all should be taking, is one that's—one that is forward looking. And I believe that our green plan is, indeed, that. It's one that balances the—a vibrant economy with environmental initiatives. It's a green plan.

The federal carbon tax, though, supported by the members opposite, and I think specifically of those in the Liberal context. I get the feeling that that's not so much a green plan as a revenue plan, and if you look at the actual impact on Canada and the impact on our citizens and the way that is—the way that

they're also managing some of the conversations that they're having with certain provinces or, you know, in one province where the Liberals need some extra votes, could really use to—use an opportunity to shore up some seats. They've chosen to provide some kind of an exemption so that, oh, coal power generated in that province, well, that's not nearly as damaging as coal power generated in any other province. Oh, and the fact that we have a province here in Manitoba that doesn't use coal power to generate any electricity, well, ah, who cares about that. They completely set that aside. That's not fair. That's not right. But I think the members opposite and especially the Liberal caucus needs to think clearly about this issue and, if necessary, speak up, speak up to those in Ottawa to let them know that you stand with Manitoba, not with Ottawa.

And so that's my—those are my words today. I thank you for the opportunity to speak and I thank the member for this great resolution.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is important to note that one of the aspects of this proposal, that it talks about respect. It's a word the Premier (Mr. Pallister) likes to use a lot. When he tore up a second deal with the Manitoba Metis Federation and Hydro, he said it was because he had so much respect for it. That's the kind of respect that this Premier has and this government has when often what they are doing is they're—they complain about respect while they're treating people with contempt. And, frankly, if this government and his members spent half the energy getting things done, as they made—as they did, making up policy positions that I don't hold, they might actually achieve something.

* (11:40)

But Madam—Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's October 2017 report into climate change was absolutely scathing about the NDP's failure to set goals, timelines, or take any meaningful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It also noted that this government had no plan either, despite having promised one.

And it said, of the NDP, I quote, it had—I quote: high-level strategies lacking details and estimates of their expected emissions reductions and costs, end quote.

Exactly the same could be said of this government's supposed green plan, because the ideas are exactly the same. Efficiency Manitoba, organics

diversion, electric buses, cap and trade for large emitters.

So it appears that the Premier paid a pretty penny to an Ottawa consultant to doll up the NDP's plan with some posters and keystones. And there's a reason why Manitoba doesn't have a real climate plan, Mr. Speaker, because the Premier walked away from it. He tore it up. He did what he always does; he changed his mind, he picked a fight, and then he played victim.

And I can't speak for the Premier's competence—or lack thereof—as a negotiator, but there's no doubt—there's no doubt that the reason we don't have a plan, and that the federal government moved to impose a plan, was because this Premier abandoned his obligations to our Province.

And, again, this government's greatest environmental accomplishment to date is recycling old reports from the NDP. Again, Efficiency Manitoba, organics diversion, electric buses.

But the climate plan itself, which the Premier and the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) can't even name the number of pages it has—it's 60 pages, four of which are blank, most of which is completely devoid of content, anyway—uses the terms: could, 49 times; considering, 10 times; and, on page 50, a giant asterisk. Because not one action, pillar or indicator is actually defined.

It throws open to the Manitoba public to define all these things. It's passed off as consultation, but really, what it is, it means there's no commitment to do any of these things in this plan at all. And in suddenly opposing a price on pollution, the Premier joins such NDP visionaries as Roy Romanow, the BC NDP; Jack Layton; and NDP-MP Daniel Blaikie, all of whom are happy to side with Conservatives against Liberals, against the planet, and against the planet if they saw a chance for political gain.

But, frankly, the Premier has been absolutely incoherent on this file. He tells a fine tale about co-operation one minute and then threatens to sue the federal government the next. In—last August, he said the feds didn't like his plan. Now he says over and over that they love it. There's zero evidence that anyone has ever said this was the best plan in Canada. But it's something he repeats over and over again. And he's doing the one thing his plan told him not to do, which is sue the government.

They—the PC government paid \$40,000 to Bryan Schwartz—he's a very well-respected law professor.

He's a professor of constitutional law, he's one of the only people who has a—is—the sort of qualifications that he has in Manitoba. And he said, look, there's no doubt the federal government has a right to impose this tax. But the Premier is going to have a lawsuit, because he wants—although he doesn't believe in judge-made law, he doesn't believe in judge-made climate plans.

So we're happy to say we're—that the Liberals are applying to be intervenors in this case, because if we want to make the case to the courts that this—that the Manitoba green plan is not an effective plan. It doesn't do any of what it says.

And one of the most important things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that it doesn't actually measure increases in emissions. It is the one-sided bill. It's as if you were looking at a budget and you were only going to look at spending, or you were only going to look at revenues, and ignoring the balance.

And that's what this plan does. Because it only looks at the way emissions will be reduced, while completely ignoring all the way emissions can be increased. And I will say that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) also says the NDP did nothing, but he wants credit at the same time; the credit for all the stuff they did.

When the Premier of Ontario, last July, said the First Minister was going to be getting rid of the carbon tax, he denied it; and then he did.

So there's been an endless number of flip-flops. And even in the last few months, the Premier has been talking about the possibility of reintroducing the carbon tax. As it stands right now, the carbon tax in Manitoba is lower than it would have been, had the PCs gone ahead with their promise. It's now at \$20 per ton. The PCs promised a flat rate of 25.

So the fact is that this is a bunch of rather depressing political machinations in order to position themselves as being defenders of Manitobans when really what happened is that the Premier absolutely abandoned his post. He walked away from negotiations rather than see them through to make sure that Manitoba did have a plan. If he were driving a car or truck, he would have simply let go of the wheel and said, well, it's up to somebody else now. That's—it's not responsible and it's not leadership, especially on an issue as important as this.

And I will say that the other aspect of this is this is clearly just pre-election positioning that the Premier, having desperately tried to come up with some reason to call an election, is now coming out with another rationale.

First, he said—and under the conditions of a rare moment of candour—he said that he's played sports for too long and that he's not willing to give any advantage, any minor advantage to his opposition.

So it should be clear that the Premier has absolutely no commitment whatsoever to free and fair elections, and we see that with everything he's done to undermine democracy in Manitoba with changing everything from changing ID to changing campaign finance to ignoring the fixed-date election law and this is just part of it. Because what's happening now is that this is trying to gin up another phony excuse to call an election because we saw it—because, frankly, the Canada 150 excuse is wearing pretty thin. Nobody, nobody believes that—*[interjection]*

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Riding Mountain, on a point of order.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I'd just like to question the relevance of the Leader of the Second Opposition on some of his statements.

Right now we're debating a resolution on climate change and just questioning that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Second Opposition, on the same point of order? No. Okay.

I would say to the honourable member for Riding Mountain on a point of order, it's not a point of order, but he does have a point to the Leader of the Second Opposition that we need to stay on relevance of the debate on the climate change bill.

* * *

Mr. Lamont: I believe this is relevant because what we are—I am talking about the positioning of this bill, that this is being used as a justification. This is yet another—having worn out the excuse of—that the opposition will block the PST, having worn out the excuse of Canada 150, that this government and its members are now going to come up with another phony excuse to call an early election, in violation of Manitoba's election law, and that is going to be to

misrepresent the positions of the—all of my party as well as the opposition on the carbon tax.

They've been totally unafraid to do that and they've been absolutely relentless in misrepresenting our position and, frankly, that's why this—there is absolutely no reason to support this ludicrous and contemptible motion. We have more important things to talk about. This is a bunch of self—it's a self-congratulatory bill that has relentlessly put false information on the record, and, frankly, we have other more important things we should be talking about: actual action on climate change and not the absolutely feeble attempts to pull the wool over Manitobans' eyes. Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): It's always a privilege to speak in this House. This morning is no exception as I consider the resolution put forward by my colleague teammate this morning.

We're discussing climate change. We're discussing the carbon tax. We're discussing the challenges that we all recognize but that we differ significantly on how to address those challenges. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that what we are encountering here is a philosophical difference between political stripes, between political approaches.

You see, it seems to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when you think you are a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail. When you embrace a left-leaning approach, there's no problem that can't be solved without adding another tax onto people's lives. And I want to go on record by stating that there are few things more helpful—sorry, less helpful, than taxing people on their lives.

* (11:50)

The carbon tax scheme is not a tax plan; it's a tax on life. It's not just a tax on carbon; it's a tax on every trip to the grocery store. It's a tax on everyone who wants to take their kids to hockey or ringette. It's a tax on people who drive to work. It's a tax on people who wish to go on a trip, on holiday to—or to go to a wedding in another city. It's a tax on everything.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one might retort back, oh, well, member for Rossmere, you have to accept these things. No, you don't have to accept these things. There are far-flung implications to this line of thinking which must be considered and not ignored. It seems to me that members opposite and members on the left would say that this is not something we

need to consider at any depth, and I would argue it is very much.

If a grocery store owner is now forced into paying a carbon tax on the fuel which brings the products to her store, that grocery store owner has to pass along the cost to the customer. So a loaf of bread which previously costs \$1.50 now might cost \$1.65, thank you to the carbon tax. A jug of milk which costs \$4.50 now costs perhaps a few cents more thanks to the carbon tax, and on and on it goes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as costs rise, the carbon tax begins to take its toll aside from the initial price at the pump. The carbon tax piles on and multiplies itself with every purchase that is affected by fuel costs, by travel costs and by any other costs that are hit by the carbon tax.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the carbon tax affects business owners and this is not theoretical. And I talk about business owners, but business owners' decisions affect people seeking employment. Business owners' decisions affect young people looking for jobs because—and I'm thinking of companies that I'm aware of in my own constituency. I'm thinking of people I'm aware of in my own constituency. These are not people who you would think of as particularly wealthy. They are simply hard-working folks trying to make a living in our Canadian economy and they're bracing themselves for a carbon tax that is going to hit their business and they have nothing that they can do about it because now they're giving a little more of their money to the government.

We believe that is an ineffective approach to grow an economy, that is an ineffective approach to deal with climate, that is an ineffective approach to deal with challenges and become more responsible.

Those businesses are now faced with a choice. Are they going to invest their funds into hiring somebody new? Are they going to invest their funds into expanding what they're doing, perhaps, so they can provide for a few more families, or are they going to give it to the federal government?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're going to give it to the federal government because the federal government has imposed its will without effective consultation, without consideration of some of the challenges that we face.

But in this provincial parliament, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I note, as do many of my colleagues, as do hundreds of thousands of Manitobans that our

opponents on the left of this House wouldn't only tolerate such a carbon tax as the federal government is imposing; they would celebrate such a shameful tax that would shut down the ability of businesses to expand, that would stop the ability of hard-working Canadians to find employment, that would limit the ability of graduates from our high schools to go and get a job. Why can't they go and get a job? The reason is that those companies who would be hiring people are instead paying a tax to Ottawa, or if members opposite would have their way, paying a tax into the provincial coffers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not interested in such a tax scam.

We are interested in conservation. We are interested in responsibility. We are interested in stewardship. We are interested in strategic investments. We don't want to take people out of monies—we don't want to take money out of people's pockets; we want to keep it in people's pockets. We want them to invest that money into our economy. We want them to purchase houses. We want them to purchase cars. We want them to look after their family. We want them to go on trips without thinking twice because the price at the pump is going to punish them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you want to incentivize good behaviour, you do not penalize people. You applaud the good things that they're doing and you give them reasons to continue to do those things.

Manitoba is well positioned to receive applause from the federal government and, in fact, the federal government has applauded our green economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Do we have more work to do? Of course we do, but when you compare Manitoba to other provinces, one would do well to note that we are further ahead than many provinces in Canada who receive convenient breaks from the federal government. We are for conservation, we are for efficiency, we are for investments, we are for exporting our green electricity.

That's the way forward, that's the way to do good things for our economy while being responsible on the climate file, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not slapping people with more taxes as if that is going to stop people from taking their kids to soccer, as if that is going to cause the grocery store owner to somehow reduce the price and just take the money from who knows where—maybe wages, maybe by letting go of

a few people. I don't know; I don't want to think of that.

I want to set an environment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where individuals have the ability to work, where employees and employers have the ability to expand their work, not one where people are handcuffed because they're taxed to death—they're taxed and they're giving more and more of their funds to a government who says, we know how to spend this, we know how to do this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we stand on the side of stewardship, we stand on the side of responsibility, we stand on the side of doing the right thing with the environment so that future generations can enjoy the Manitoba that we enjoy today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recently announced a conservation trust: a hundred and two million dollars. That's an endowment that will exist in perpetuity to support projects that enhance natural infrastructure, and the environmental goods and services they provide to Manitobans. That's over \$100 million from the Province—that's about \$5 million going on to support conservation projects across the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, after nearly two decades of rule by the former NDP government, we have one of the sickest lakes in the world thanks to their asleep-at-the-wheel approach to climate. What kind of record is that? When TV companies are coming from around the world to Manitoba to say, here's what a sick lake looks like—I'm speechless when I consider that people who claim to be green champions leave this kind of legacy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are serious about conservation; we are serious about efficiency; we are serious about celebrating what is good, about incentivizing what can be improved. We're not serious at all about taxing people, and assuming that by threatening them and by taking more money out of their pockets, somehow they're going to change their behaviour. People have to operate cars; people have to heat their homes. We're with the people. We're going to keep money on the kitchen table; we're not going to reach into their pockets and take it.

And that's why we oppose the carbon tax.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I do appreciate the opportunity to stand and debate, for however long we have this morning, this very important issue.

And I just wanted to mention that we had students here in the gallery for periods of time during the debate, and, you know, you only have to speak to students in this province to understand just how important this issue is to them.

In fact, I would say it's the No. 1 issue, and so in terms of a generational change, a push from the people of Manitoba, it's coming from them; it's coming from the young people, and we're only going to see that more and more and more.

And what they're seeing increasingly is a government that's out of step with the rest of the world.

And I would say that, you know, the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) probably going to be quite upset to

understand, to hear this morning that the member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle) actually put on the record, or at least heckled throughout the Legislature so that all members could hear—prove it, is what he said when it comes to climate science. And the Premier's been trying very hard to make sure that Manitobans—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —don't think that their climate—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

When this matter is before the—again before the House, the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) has nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., the House is recessed and stands recessed to 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

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