

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 10, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I have a leave request on House business.

Could you please canvass the House for leave for the following items: (1) that today's oral questions continue until we have reached the end of question 12 in the rotation; (2) the House's adjournment hour for today be 7:30 p.m.; (3) that the House not sit tomorrow, and that all provisions relating to tomorrow, October 11th, 2019, in the Sessional Order be passed by this House on September 30th, 2019, be considered and resolved today, immediately following the Sessional Order provisions for today; (4) that the deadline time in section 15 of the Sessional Order be 5:30 p.m. rather than 30 minutes prior to adjournment; (5) that when the report stage amendments to Bill 22 are moved, the sponsor be allowed one minute to speak to each amendment, and; (6) that the Opposition House Leader be allowed to table a list of ministers to be questioned in concurrence today, to be in effect for today only.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee Reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to table the following reports: pursuant to The Statutes and Regulations Act, a copy of each regulation registered under that act after the last regulation tabled in this House and more than 14 days before the

commencement of the session; Annual Report of the Residential Tenancies Commission for the fiscal year of 2018-19; the Annual Report for the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority for the fiscal year 2018-19; the Annual Report for the Victim Services complaints for the fiscal year of 2018-19; the Annual Report for the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba for the fiscal year 2018-19; the Annual Report for the Legal Aid Manitoba for the fiscal year of 2018-19; the Annual Report for the Manitoba Horse Racing Commission for the fiscal year 2018-19; and the Annual Report for the Public Guardian and Trustee of Manitoba for the fiscal year 2018-19; and finally, the Annual Report for the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission for the fiscal year 2018-19.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): I'm pleased today to table the following reports: the Accessibility for Manitobans Act Annual Report for the year 2018-19; the Social Services Appeal Board Annual Report for the year 2018-19; and Manitoba poverty—Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy Annual Report for the year 2018-19.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): It's my pleasure to rise today in Assembly to table the Public Utilities Board 2018-19 Annual Report. I'd also like to rise to table the Public Service Group Insurance Fund: benefits summary, auditor report and financial statements for the year ending April 30th, 2019; also like to rise in Assembly to table the report of amounts paid and payable to members of Assembly for the year ending March 31, 2019.

As well, table the insurance and risk management fidelity bond crime insurance, as well as tabling today in Assembly the report to the Legislature pursuant to section 63.4 of The Financial Administration Act.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'd like—

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on a point of order?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, we have had lots of discussion about the budget, but the government and the Finance Minister still has not tabled the description of the Estimates of revenue. We've had the Estimates of Expenditure many years

ago. It would be highly unusual not to have—to finish the session without having the Estimates of revenue tabled and it wasn't among the list that the Minister of Finance just tabled.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate to the member that what he is raising is not a point of order as it is not a departure from the rules of the House. So, respectfully, the member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Ms. Squires: I'd like to table the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission Annual Report for 2018-19.

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I am pleased to table the following annual reports: the Annual Report for the Centre culturel franco-manitobain for the fiscal year of 2018-19; the Annual Report for the Manitoba Arts Council for the fiscal year 2018-19; and the Annual Report for The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the fiscal year 2018.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

International Day of the Girl

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Today we celebrate a significant occasion for girls across the globe, the International Day of the Girl.

It is critically important to continue opening doors for girls because we know girls are growing up environments that can have detrimental effects on body image, mental health and self-esteem. We see girls dropping out of high school sports, not wanting to pursue activities and not wanting to speak up in class.

While there are some who believe the glass ceiling has been shattered, the reality is we still have a long way to go.

* (13:40)

Madam Speaker, a recent study by the Plan International Canada found that one third of Canadian

women under the age of 25 have struggled to afford menstrual products. Half the population menstruates for 40 years of their lives. Studies have found that women feel that their periods prevent them from fully participating in social activities and up to 70 per cent say they have missed school or work because of their periods.

Imagine missing work or school because you don't have pads or tampons. Girls need information and support and access to these products. That is why this year, our government is putting together period packs for those who get their periods and might need some assistance. These packs will be distributed to women's resource centres across the province for distribution to these girls.

We are hoping that these period packs will help destigmatize getting your period and celebrate it instead. The girls who need these products have infinite possibilities and I am so pleased to celebrate International Day of the Girl in Manitoba, and I welcome all of you to support girls in Manitoba so that they can achieve their potential with support and dignity.

I'd also like to acknowledge that October 18th is Persons Day.

On October 18, 1929, Great Britain announced their decision to the question of, does the word person in section 24 of the British North America Act include a female person? Their answer was as follows: The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours. And to those who would ask why the word person should include females, the obvious answer is, why should it not?

The Famous Five, Manitoba's own Nellie McClung and four other prominent Canadian women—Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Henrietta Muir Edwards—not only won the right for women to serve in the Senate but also helped pave the way for women to participate equally in, and contribute equally to, other aspects of life in Canada.

Persons Day reminds us all that women's voices matter. When women step forward and make themselves heard, the changes they create benefit us all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): While the 1929 Persons Day ruling advanced the mainstream women's movement in Canada, indigenous women and other women of colour were paving their own way to political power right here in Manitoba.

In 1920, Edith Rogers, a Metis woman from Norway House, became the first woman ever to be elected to the Manitoba Legislature.

During her tenure, she improved laws and benefits for the welfare of mothers and children. These were policy areas that were largely ignored when women were not represented in the House.

Tomorrow is International Day of the Girl. It's a day to reflect on global policies that affect young women and girls.

According to the World Bank, the best way to eradicate global poverty is to educate and advocate for the well-being of girls. When we promote the education, safety and health of girls, we're helping to create a new reality and a new future where there is substantive equality between men and women.

Young Manitoba girls are not immune to many of these same inequities experienced by girls globally. Child sex exploitation is a significant problem in this city and in this province. We are only just beginning to understand the severity of this terrible reality.

Let's commit to invest in the safety and education and rights of girls. This is how we can break the cycle of discrimination and violence, and this is how we can promote and protect full enjoyment of human rights.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise today on International Day of the Girl Child, which is recognized every October 11th.

In 2012, the United Nations declared this momentous day to recognize the need for greater opportunity for girls and to bring awareness to the impacts of gender inequality.

This year's theme is GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable.

Madam Speaker, women around the world and right here in Manitoba are less likely to be employed full time, more likely to earn less than their male peers and are underrepresented in the trades and leadership roles.

We need to empower girls from a young age to move away from persuasive gender inequalities in

society. Girls should be encouraged to pursue their dreams and to call out injustice whenever they encounter it. Governments should invest in improving the quality, relevance and gender responsiveness of teaching and learning.

Now, Persons Day, Madam Speaker, is recognized each year on October 18th. October 18th, 1929 was a crucial day for the participation of women in institutional politics. On that day, 90 years ago, *Edwards v. Canada*, otherwise known as the *Persons Case*, determined that women were eligible to be appointed to the Senate of Canada.

It has been 90 years since some Canadian women were given the ability to participate fully in politics and affairs of state. It is important that we are clear that indigenous women were not given this privilege until 33 years later. Persons Day stands as a reminder that all women's voices matter.

Madam Speaker, we must continue to honour the work of those who came before us and fought for the right for women to be recognized as persons. Without these tremendous women and trailblazers for equality, many of us would not be standing here today.

As a society we have come a long way, but we have many strides left to make. I'm thankful to work with so many women in these Chambers who work tirelessly to break down the barriers and claim our place as equals.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gorilla Jack Safe Parcel Service

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): Madam Speaker, I rise to shed light on an issue impacting too many people today.

Porch pirating is a phenomena that is taking place all over North America, costing individuals and businesses thousands of dollars. Parcels are often taken from porches, landings and entryways; thieves helping themselves to packages before the rightful owner can make it home, in some cases even trailing couriers.

With the holiday season just around the corner, porch pirates will be busy preparing for their peak season. However, members of McPhillips are too familiar with this form of piracy and are looking to help.

A local business has taken it upon themselves to come up with a solution. Today I want to recognize

Bernard, Martin and David, the owners of Gorilla Jack, a fitness supplement store. This has been operating at 1665 Main St. since 2002.

The brand has seen much success and is expanding into clothing and apparel. These young entrepreneurs have always had a very strong core value within their brand. Being friendly and kind are two of the most important values within their business model. Bernard and his partners feel that all their clients deserve to be treated in the same way that they treat their best friends.

Gorilla Jack has opened their doors as a safe drop zone. People in the area who are looking for a secure location can have their packages delivered to Gorilla Jack for safekeeping until they can pick it up.

Gorilla Jack is offering this service to anyone at no cost. All they ask is for a \$1-minimum donation, and each month the money raised from the safe drop zone will go to a different charity in Winnipeg such as Siloam Mission and Main Street Project.

Winnipeggers can send Gorilla Jack a Facebook message or give the store a call to let an employee know a parcel is on its way. As Bernard noted in a recent interview, and I quote: The holiday season and Christmas season is coming up, so presents are being delivered, and if we can do a little to help a lot, why not?

I want to take this time to recognize these young men for their outstanding community service they're offering. Thank you for taking the initiative to support your community in more ways than one.

Keewatin Tribal Council Anniversary

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): On March 15th, 2019, marked 40 years since Keewatin Tribal Council was incorporated. Just two weeks ago, KTC had a three-day celebration of its 40th anniversary. This was from September 24th to September 26th.

The first day's celebration kicked off with a meeting facilitated by the chief. On the second day, KTC hosted an open house in which community members took part in information sessions and enjoyable barbeque. A band was responsible for the evening's entertainment and the celebrations finished with a staff dance and dinner.

KTC has been instrumental in various communities in the North. Its mandate is to promote and advance, protect the interests of the 11-member First Nations it serves, and it is intent to maintain, strengthen, enhance and lobby and defend the rights

for northern Manitoba's First Nations peoples within its jurisdiction.

This organization has lived up to its community and lives up to beyond its mandate. It works—it has hard-working staff and volunteers that have tirelessly served its communities through organizing medical transportation, facilitating healing and reconciliation for residential school survivors.

* (13:50)

KTC staff and volunteers have actively implemented youth suicide prevention strategies and continuously provide advisory services. It has also been throughout involved community outreach and being a service provider.

Some programs under its advisory service include First Nations government, financial management, economic development, social development, and comprehensive community planning.

Today, I honour KTC's dedication to serving their communities, and I am truly thankful for their efforts. KTC, your exceptional service has not gone unnoticed. I applaud you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson.

Ms. Adams: Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to add the 11 names of the communities served by KTC into Hansard.

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

Communities served by Keewatin Tribal Council: Barren Lands, Bunibonibee, Fox Lake, Gods Lake Narrows, Manto Sipi, Northlands, Sayisi Dene, Shamattawa, Tataskweyak, War Lake, York Factory.

St. Amant Centre

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I am proud to rise today to recognize and honour an amazing organization in the heart of my constituency: the St. Amant Centre. The centre is a not-for-profit organization that provides programming and resources for over 1,700 Manitobans with disabilities, and their families.

St. Amant helps provide enhancements to the quality of life and self-determination for the thousands of individuals and families that St. Amant serves each year. Programming includes a large residence for complex-care, more than 100 community sites and homes, a community child centre, as well as

programming for families who care for individuals with disabilities at home.

Each year the St. Amant Foundation, St. Amant's fundraising body, brings the Riel community and all Manitobans together to raise funds to support new and inspiring ways to help each and every person achieve their potential. These events include the St. Amant Party every November, two summer charity golf tournaments and the annual Gift Wrap and Coat Check event at St. Vital Centre.

I had the privilege of attending their signature event on September 28th. The Free the Spirit Festival is an amazing family event, featuring music, a walk, 2- and 5K runs as well as many activities for kids. Several hundred people attended this wonderful day and helped raise over \$150,000 for St. Amant.

Previous fundraisers have helped raise funds for the construction of western Canada's first sensory pool in 2012, and in 2014, the new St. Amant Spirit Cottage opened to give our most vulnerable citizens and safe and fun place to enjoy nature.

In August, our government awarded St. Amant a Community Places grant for an accessibility upgrade to their main doors to ensure that the facility remain accessible for all.

In so many ways, the St. Amant Centre is the heart of the Riel community. I look forward to working with the saint—with St. Amant as they continue to be a leader in the field of developmental disabilities and autism.

And I'd like to welcome so many people from St. Amant Foundation and the centre, as well as many of their wonderful residents, here into the Chamber; and I'd ask my colleagues to help me in honouring them.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Sustainable Development.

Ms. Squires: Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of all my guests who are here today to be entered into Hansard.

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

St. Amant Centre staff: Sally Bader, David Bernardin, Francine Deroche, Robert Edwards, Noreen Fehr, Donna-Marie Franczyk, Janet Franczyk, Ken Kustra, Shirley Labossiere, Toby McCrae, Juliette Mucha, Raymond Spyker, Matthew Swirsky, Carol Tokendum, Gimmi Vaccaro.

Homeless Population

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, this weekend is Canadian Thanksgiving. I know we all have much to be thankful for. I'm thankful for the love and support of my wife, our children, our families and friends, our staff, our supporters; even our opponents.

I know that—I wish you all a very happy Thanksgiving. Joyeuse Action de grâce. *[Happy Thanksgiving]* I'm very grateful for what we have, because, while I think we are all very lucky, many Manitobans are not.

I'm sure that many of us likely arrived at the Legislature today coming over the Osborne Bridge. There, a few hundred metres from here, is a homeless encampment. It's one of many across the city and across the province.

It was in the news the other day because there was a fire there because someone knocked over a candle. Now the river is rising and there is a change in the weather.

I visited the other day and spoke to a couple of people living under the bridge. The first was a senior citizen, who the community there calls Granny. She's been living in tents for a few months. She was in a rooming house but felt it was unsafe—even less safe than living in a tent under a bridge.

She told me about how hard it is for people to get their basic needs met. It's hard to get water to drink when you're homeless, because we don't have public water fountains anymore. It's hard to find a washroom, because there aren't public washrooms, and businesses generally don't want to provide water or facilities to people who are homeless.

When she applies for a place to live, they want to see her bank account to show she can pay her bills, but that's not something a senior citizen living under a bridge or a parking lot can do.

I also spoke to a man in his 30s who used to be a registered nurse. A series of bad breaks and traumatic events—the death of friends, a theft of a financial nest egg—left him homeless. He talked about the hatred and abuse dealt out to people on the street, his frustration and his hopelessness and that the love of his dog is the only thing that kept him alive.

There's a saying that poverty is the greatest censor; the voices of people who are poor are not heard and they may be shamed into silence by others.

There are things we can do as individuals. We can and should donate to homeless shelters warm socks and gloves, toiletries. Main Street Project has a list on their website. But as legislators we should all recognize that there's much more we can and should do to ensure that everyone's basic needs are met: shelter, water, dignity and the recognition that people who are poor—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Brooklands Active Living Centre

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Today I rise to express my admiration for the work that the folks at the Brooklands Active Living Centre do every year for seniors in the Weston and Brooklands communities.

This non-profit charity aims at providing a healthy environment for seniors to socialize and have hot meals together, to access educational and recreational services such as cooking classes, bingo, bowling, curling and even political debates.

In addition to providing these weekly activities, these inspiring folks at the Brooklands Active Living Centre achieved a minor miracle. They were able to build a beautiful seniors co-op across the street from the centre.

After six years of tireless fundraising, they raised \$200,000 and, in partnership with all levels of government, they built Westlands at Oddy. This seniors co-op is modern, fully accessible, affordable and tastefully decorated. It has 36 spacious units for roughly 60 seniors that currently reside there. This place is close to home for these seniors who have for the most part lived their whole lives in Weston and Brooklands communities.

The seniors co-op is a model for the type of affordable and dignified housing everyone should be able to enjoy, especially in the later years of our lives.

Then-MLA for Wellington, Flor Marcelino, secured provincial funds for the building while then-city councillor Scott Fielding secured the lot from the City at the cost of \$1.

I would like to thank a few members of Brooklands Active Living Centre who are here today. Thank you for your vision, thank you for your weekly commitments of time and service, thank you for sharing thousands of hot meals with old and new friends alike. More power to you.

To my fellow MLAs, please join me in welcoming to the Chamber Alice Steinke, Elsie Picklyk, Rick Collins and Flor Marcelino.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Fall Flooding Update Flood Control Measures

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, we know that the top concern for many Manitobans today is the unseasonable weather; rain, snow and wind are causing real concerns for people right across our province.

Top of mind for many is also the prospect of flooding in Manitoba. We acknowledge that the Province took the unprecedented step of activating the Floodway in the fall, and with more rain and snow in the forecast the need for additional flood control measures may be necessary.

In times like this clear and effective communication with families and those in need is necessary.

With that in mind, I'd simply like to ask the Premier to update this House as to what the most current forecasts predict and what other actions the Province is considering in light of those conditions.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I thank the member for the question.

Before I respond, I did want to use the opportunity, Madam Speaker, because this would be the last opportunity before the federal election, to wish all federal leaders and their parties the best of luck, to say thank you to the 84 fellow Manitobans who have decided to put their name on the ballot, vying for our province's 14 federal seats, and to wish all candidates and their supporters safe canvassing in these inclement circumstances we've been prevented with—presented with, and also to say that as a government we are very much attuned to working with whoever Canadians select in the best interests of Manitobans.

* (14:00)

As we do in times such as these, Madam Speaker, we're—with the weather producing challenges, and as it does for Manitobans, we are responding accordingly with the best interests and safety of Manitobans in mind.

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

Mr. Kinew: It was just a few days ago that the Province issued warnings for Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg and also for the Dauphin region. Past experience has shown that high winds can exacerbate high water levels. I'm reminded of the fall of 2010 which, in addition to preceding record floods in some areas in 2011, also saw the weather system called the weather bomb hitting the Gimli area, which did create localized flooding and many challenges for the local residents at that time. So some of these past experience—recent experiences are top of mind today.

I'm curious to know which steps the Premier is taking to help protect communities around the lakes with the potentiality of flooding this fall.

Mr. Pallister: Well, Madam Speaker, I can assure the member that we are certainly working in close co-operation with all agencies of our government and others, as well as in close co-operation with the local governments. And the minister has been affirmative in his proactive approach to communication along all river routes and lakeshores to ensure that our partners at the local government level are well apprised of the situation and that we are, as has been the case too often in the past, I think, better prepared to respond accordingly as part of a cohesive team.

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

Mr. Kinew: We know that southern Manitoba has been hit with dramatic levels of rainfall, and we acknowledge that the Province has activated the Floodway.

Typically, that is used to deal with water flowing down the Red River, but what—again, going back to 2011, we know that it was many of the water systems upstream from Lake Manitoba, like the Assiniboine and the Souris, which were hardest hit in the following year.

So with those, I guess, recent experiences in mind, I'd like to ask the Premier whether other flood control measures are being contemplated at this time, including, you know, the Shellmouth Dam, the Portage Diversion and the Fairford water control structure.

Mr. Pallister: Well, the member is right to raise the issues of preparedness today, Madam Speaker, because in addition to the inclement weather circumstances that we've had to face in the past, damages were compounded by a lack of preparedness under the previous administration, as best evidenced by the maintenance of higher water levels on Lake

Manitoba prior to the '11 disasters that exacerbated the damages and the claims that caused people to have to be removed from their communities for their own personal safety, and that created hundreds of millions of dollars of damages.

So good that we raise the need to prepare, but even better that we are actually preparing to do better at protecting Manitobans by lowering lake levels in affected water bodies, and by working very diligently on making progress on the outlet on Lake Manitoba, for example, so that we are able to better protect those communities that have been, in the past to some degree, most damaged by the circumstances of high water levels.

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

Manitoba Hydro Staff Reduction Safety and Reliability Concerns

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): At times like these many Manitobans also want to know that the Manitoba hydro grid will be reliable. Cold weather out, you want to ensure that the lights and the heat are on inside your homes.

Now, we note that Manitoba Hydro has been proactive in that they have taken certain steps earlier this week in anticipation of the weather that is arriving here today. We heard about some of those steps, but we'd like to ask the Premier for some additional updates.

Can he update the House as to the preparations Manitoba Hydro is making in light of this weather system and what may be to follow?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, I appreciate—it gives me the opportunity to raise on behalf, I'm sure, of all of us in the House and all Manitobans, our thanks to the front-line staff at Hydro that is dealing with outages as we speak, that is dealing with the inclement circumstances as—for example, when snow accumulates on transmission lines wires begin to vibrate. When they come into contact with one another we can have outages that affect literally thousands of people in the province.

So we thank our front-line Hydro workers for their work and we thank the experts at Manitoba Hydro, who we have great respect for, for addressing the needs to keep us in the energy loop that we take all too often, Madam Speaker, until the lights go out, for granted.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, Madam Speaker, we're very proud on this side of the House to stand up for those Manitoba Hydro workers and, to be frank, we are concerned about steps that this government is taking to undermine those workers and their jobs.

After already demanding many cuts to jobs at our most important Crown corporation, we would note that the Premier has announced his intention to pursue further job reductions at Manitoba Hydro. We know what Hydro thinks about this, and I'm quoting here. They say, we believe that further staff reductions would significantly increase the risk of public and employee safety, of system reliability and as well as our ability to provide reasonable levels of service to our customers, end quote.

Why is the Premier committed to staff cuts that would put public safety and Manitoba Hydro's reliability at risk?

Mr. Pallister: Well, what puts Hydro at risk and what has put it at risk is hardly trimming at the top of the organization, Madam Speaker. Hydro is—remains very top-heavy in its structure, and protecting front-line workers is what the people on this side of the House are about.

And the fact remains that the jeopardy that Manitobans face in respect of Hydro is a clear result of NDP manipulation and mismanagement over many, many years, and so we continue to clean up the mess they made.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, Madam Speaker, we know that the outgoing board members that walked out on the Premier noted that the Premier did not have sufficient interest into day-to-day important decision-making that Manitoba Hydro does, and that was the very reason that they exited en masse.

Now, on a day like today, Manitoba Hydro is truly important to many, many Manitobans. Again, we want our homes to remain warm, and yet even as we gather here, some 3,200 Winnipeggers are without power. Contrast that with the plan for further cuts, further job cuts at Manitoba Hydro, that that Crown corporation says will lead to the system being less reliable and potentially even impacting public safety.

The question is simple: Why is the Premier ignoring Hydro's own advice, and why is he forcing

staff cuts that put the reliability and safety of our hydro grid at risk?

Mr. Pallister: Well, it wouldn't be the first time that the non-critically thinking opposition party member would try to blame a government for the weather, Madam Speaker, and here it continues today.

The member says that trimming Hydro at the top to make it more attuned to what it used to be under Gary Doer is a danger to the front line. We don't agree. In fact, we think quite the opposite. We believe that a well-run Hydro organization would be a strength to the people who work in it and a strength to the people of Manitoba.

However, I must remind the member that expert opinion by former Premier Ed Schreyer who was not, of course, a Progressive Conservative, Madam Speaker, was that the NDP made a colossal mess of Hydro and that not one of them knew anything about how to run a hydro monopoly.

IV Drug Use and HIV Contraction Harm Reduction Strategy Request

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): As we sadly revealed yesterday, for the first time injection drug use has become the most likely mode of contracting HIV in Manitoba. Advocates are calling for greater harm reduction resources in Manitoba to stop the spread of HIV and help those dealing with mental health and addictions get the support they need.

Will the minister commit to funding more harm reduction initiatives so those dealing with addictions can access the resources and supports they need to combat the addiction and stop the spread of HIV?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, it's been well established by now that when the NDP talks about the need to address these issues, we know that they are bereft of any ideas except for one. Their one idea when it comes to addressing actual mental health and addictions issues is to create meth injection sites to facilitate giving more meth to users. We disagree.

* (14:10)

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

Mrs. Smith: Madam Speaker, 82 new patients were diagnosed with HIV, including one case of a mother-to-child transmission. These are cases that can be prevented. PrEP can prevent the contraction of HIV of

up to 86 per cent, and those who are at higher risk of acquiring HIV would benefit by having it readily available and accessible.

Will the minister commit today to covering the cost of PrEP so that we can reduce the spread of HIV and prevent spreading of HIV from mother to child?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, for hours and hours and hours we sat in the Estimates process with the NDP critic for health care, and time and time again I solicited from her the opportunity to provide answers, to provide input into the good investments we're making in mental health and addictions. And after hours and hours, that member had not one idea to offer.

What has our government done? We have presented a whole-of-government response, our Safer Streets, Safer Lives Action Plan designed to get real results, to really create impact and resource for people who need it in mental health and addictions.

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

Mrs. Smith: Contracting HIV is preventable. In 2019 we should not be seeing these numbers of HIV increase.

We need a government that is willing to take action and fund more harm reduction initiatives and make life-saving medication more accessible for those who are high risk.

The time to take action is now, and this government is failing.

Will the minister look at the facts and implement a truly comprehensive harm reduction approach to injection drug use in Manitoba and commit to funding PrEP today?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, the member is mistaken. This government is taking action. This government is taking action in the form of our Safer Streets, Safer Lives Action Plan, acting on the advice of the VIRGO report, acting on the advice of the Illicit Drug Task Force, acting on ideas that were articulated in the alliance report.

And what are we doing? We're creating things like supportive housing units. We are expanding the use of flexible withdrawal management services across this province. We're adding capacity in the Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine model, and there's much, much more to come.

They took no action. We are taking that action to get better health care for all Manitobans, including mental health and addictions.

Child-Care Centre Safety Compliance Unit Vacancies

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): Madam Speaker, in 2018 there were no licence orders in daycares made across the province, and in this year the only orders given were the result of daycares reporting incidents themselves, not the proactive measures of the Province.

This is really concerning. Imagine if suddenly there was no food inspector violations being reported across the province.

The department should be making proactive investigations to ensure child-care centres are safe.

Why is the minister not taking this seriously?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): We do take the issue of safety for all Manitobans very seriously, Madam Speaker, and—including those in child-care facilities.

I'll remind the member opposite that it's our government who is in the process of cleaning up a significant mess left to us by the previous NDP government. We have committed to more than 3,100 new child-care spaces, and more to come with all the new schools that we're building as well in Manitoba.

Thank you.

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

Ms. Adams: Madam Speaker, the compliance unit should be doing proactive investigations in daycare centres; they're supposed to be making unannounced relicensing visits, yet the vacancy rate in the compliance unit is approaching 20 per cent. There are zero licensing orders made in 2018, and for this year there were only three as a result of self-reporting.

Why are there no vacant positions posted on the government's job bank? Why is the minister putting our children at risk?

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, we are not putting children at risk, and I—again, I want to thank all those who work in our child-care facilities for the incredible work that they do on a daily basis to look after our children. It's very important to take that into consideration.

These numbers are a positive sign. We recognize that we're moving in the right direction.

I know members opposite don't like the numbers and they're trying to find, you know, something in the grassy knoll within these numbers, Madam Speaker, but it's simply not there. The numbers are the numbers. They are improving, and we're ensuring the safety of all of those children in our facilities.

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

Ms. Adams: Madam Speaker, in fact—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Adams: —there has not been a job posted in this unit on the job bank in years—years, Madam Speaker. The compliance unit's vacancy rate is approaching 20 per cent. There is not a single licensing order made in 2018. The minister thinks she can simply explain this away, but the reality is her cuts are putting our kids at risk.

Why won't she fill these important positions and ensure our child safety at daycare centres?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, the member opposite likes to talk about years. Let's talk about the years that the NDP government was in power where the child-care wait-list more than doubled under their watch, Madam Speaker.

We're in the process of cleaning up a significant mess that was left to us by the previous NDP government. I will take no lessons from members opposite.

Manitoba's Economic Forecast Conference Board's Findings

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Alicia McDonald from the Conference Board of Canada recently provided an update on Manitoba's economy. Under the Pallister government she says that the labour market is weak, wages are weak and retail spending is soft. She says, quote: We think we get the final—when we get the final numbers for 2019 it will show Manitoba's economic growth was quite weak this year. End quote.

It's clear that the Pallister's government's cuts have had a real impact on our economy.

Is this minister listening to people like Ms. McDonald and the Conference Board of Canada? [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): The member is completely wrong on this issue. I can tell you quite conclusively that the Manitoba economy is expected to grow by 1.4 per cent and over 1.5 per cent—by the way, the 1.4 per cent is exactly the same as the Canadian average.

From Conference Board—we take nine different agencies to produce our estimates of what the economy will grow. The Conference Board makes up one of them and, by the way, the Conference Board has been wrong on most years in terms of the Manitoba economy.

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

Mr. Moses: As important capital projects that began under the NDP come to end of construction, there simply is nothing to replace them. It's not surprising to us, as we've seen this House or government cut capital spending by hundreds—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —of millions of dollars each and every year. The result, says, Ms. McDonald—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —is that there is, quote, a lackluster job growth in this province, weak wage gains as well.

Is this minister listening to the Conference Board and what they have to say?

Mr. Fielding: I can tell you, Madam Speaker, the member is completely wrong in these issues.

Let me bring some facts to the table. In terms building permits, they are supposed to go up by over 15.6 per cent year over year, Madam Speaker. Housing starts are supposed to increase by over 22.5 per cent. That's built on over a 30-year high over the last two years in terms of housing starts. We are leading the nation in private sector capital investment where businesses are growing and prospering here in the province of Manitoba, and I can tell you today I looked at the revenue numbers. We're right on track for things like revenue growth since September.

So I can tell you our economy is strong and resilient and we'll continue that, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Moses: This minister could have chosen a different path, a more modest path to balance, as they first promised. They could have renewed investment

in our roads, schools and hospitals. But, instead, their austerity is hurting our economic growth.

As the minister knows, 10,000 people left Manitoba last year for other provinces and the Conference Board is projecting a very poor economic performance for Manitoba this year.

* (14:20)

Will this minister and the Pallister government take these projections to heart and consider a different path that invests in the future of Manitoba? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, if that different path the NDP is advocating for is a return to billion-dollar deficits, no. If that different path the NDP is advocating for is a return to tremendous excessive growth in red tape for small business, no. If the NDP's path is to return to accelerated tax hikes on Manitoba families and small businesses, the answer would be no. No.

Actually, we're first in Canada, Madam Speaker in business productivity growth in the service sector, the manufacturing sector, capital spending investment in mining, oil and gas, capital spending on machinery and equipment and exports to the United States: No. 1.

The NDP had no—there were no signs of steady growth in Manitoba, just steady growth signs. Now we don't have the signs. We have the growth instead.

Lifelight Air Ambulance Service Delivery Concerns

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): The government's mismanagement of Lifelight has created a terrible situation for both patients and workers. First, earlier this year Lifelight faced staffing issues because of the government's looming plan to privatize Lifelight. Then because of their lack of consultation with Lifelight staff, workers walked off the job for two weeks, leaving this vital service offline.

Now they have grounded the government-owned planes, compromising service delivery to Manitobans.

Why is the minister depriving Manitobans of access to timely quality care?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, Madam Speaker, this is another issue that was discussed widely during the Estimates process. I only wish that that member could've been there for that very, very significant

exchange in which we were able to explain that there's been no change to the Lifelight delivery of service.

All we've done as a government is do exactly what eight other provinces, including NDP provinces, have done, and that is trust the private sector to fly the planes.

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

Mr. Bushie: Madam Speaker, in July, Gord Jebb had to wait 12 hours to be transported to Winnipeg, on a Lifelight, where he later died. This came just days after the government chose to ground the government-owned Citation jets and rely on privately operated planes.

This is clearly not a better way to do business for Manitobans when it continues to put the lives of Manitobans at risk.

Will the minister commit to restoring Lifelight to a public service today?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, talk about putting Manitobans at risk.

When we explored this issue we discovered that for years and years the NDP operated the basics, going directly to market with no minimum standards, no safety standards, and we have finally, in this province, been able to put in place a system that will ensure that the flight staff, the medical staff and the patients are all kept safe every time those planes are in the air.

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

Mr. Bushie: This summer Doctors Manitoba wrote a letter to the minister outlining concerns with the use of privately operated planes. They're slower, lead to more delays in triaging, delivering and receiving critical care when patients need it most. Those delays can result in adverse effects on patient outcomes, as we clearly saw in the care of Gordon Jebb. Sadly, it cost him his life.

It should concern the minister that those working on the front line in these planes have raised these concerns.

Again, I ask: Will the minister commit to restoring Lifelight to a public service today?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, this province is doing what provinces that have PC leadership, NDP leadership, Liberal leadership are all doing. They are focusing their emergency air transfer

service in a way that goes to the market and asks fundamental questions about costs but also, then, about standards and thresholds for safety.

These are positive developments and ones that will ensure that this flight service continues to operate well into the future. They have an ideological bend that disallows them to see what the benefits of our move may be, but I can tell you that our moves are consistent with other jurisdictions right across Canada. We're interested in getting better results.

Provincial Out-Migration Manitoba's Economy

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Recent Statistics Canada numbers show the number of people leaving Manitoba is the highest in decades, twice the departures that were seen under the NDP. We're exporting more people than ever.

The independent Parliamentary Budget Office showed that Manitoba, like many provinces, has seriously cut infrastructure funding by hundreds of millions of dollars. The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce has flagged the export of our young people and citizens as a serious concern. These are all due to decisions made by this government.

Does the Premier accept responsibility for his choice to slow Manitoba's economy, or is the NDP still somehow controlling his actions?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, I think the member is prescient in his observations about the NDP controlling actions. I expect the federal election to prove that. I expect Justin Trudeau will be controlled largely by the NDP in a couple of weeks.

But, sadly, that isn't happening here, and it never will because of the fact that, Madam Speaker, the changes the member says that are entirely due to this government have been happening regardless of government in power in this province for decades upon decades.

But here is the positive news the member missed. Our population growth is the second highest in Canada: 17 per cent—17,000 new population in our province year over year, and that's good news.

Madam Speaker, it's never good news to have anyone leave the province, but it is good news to have more people coming back.

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

Insurance Broker Compensation Public Service Wages

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Technology has changed so that MPI can sell insurance and provide services basically without brokers. There is a report that said brokers were being paid for little or no work. One report to MPI's board said that it could save nearly \$250 million over five years. Clearly, this is a loss for brokers. The government has intervened with MPI so brokers can continue to make money, apparently, even if means higher Autopac rates.

On the other hand, this government is amending their previous labour bill so that it can assure that public servants like nurses, teachers and care workers face a wage freeze.

Why are higher Autopac rates to 'paraid' brokers more a good thing, while a raise for teachers or workers who care about—care for people with disabilities a bad thing?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Not accepting any of the premise of the member, I can simply tell him that under the NDP government previously, in the last 10 years of their duration of a government, the insurance brokers received increases in commission that were triple the rate of inflation, the most significant increases in the history of MPI.

While zero progress was made, Madam Speaker, in terms of online availability of MPI products, apparently a deal was cut by the previous NDP government to give \$250,000 a year to the insurance brokers, which they used—which they used—to hire high-class entertainment like k.d. lang to come to their annual general meeting and entertain.

This left the people of Manitoba in constant craving, Madam Speaker, of being able to buy insurance online.

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

Provincial Nominee Program Career Eligibility Inquiry

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has played an enormous role in our economy. It is because of this program that our population, our demographics and our economy has prospered the way in which it has.

Madam Speaker, there has been some recent confusion for those eligible to apply for the program.

I was hoping that over the next week the minister responsible for Immigration could commit to providing us a list of current eligible careers in which people are being encouraged to apply with to Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): I certainly appreciate the question.

The member was right in much of what she said. The Provincial Nominee Program is a tremendous program. It has been a leader in Canada and has really ensured that Manitoba's at the forefront of bringing economic immigrants to Manitoba, building our economy, increasing our capacity within our province, but really bettering our province overall.

Certainly, there have been some questions regarding the issue of truck drivers in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, and the concern about qualifications of those coming from other countries. I can tell the member that on September 11th, right after the election, 22 companies were notified that the Provincial Nominee Program was processing—or, pausing the processing of their applications until we can ensure that there are no concerns with the qualifications of the truck drivers.

* (14:30)

Provincial Finances Debt Reduction

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Madam Speaker, our PC government has earned the largest back-to-back majorities in our province's history, thanks in part to our commitment to fix Manitoba's finances after 17 years of reckless NDP mismanagement.

In the past few weeks Manitoba has received much good news: S&P has moved our economic outlook to positive, we've made a major contribution to our rainy day fund and the provincial deficit continues to shrink. This is a much different reality than what would have occurred under the NDP.

Can the Minister of Finance please tell the House what Manitoba's accumulated provincial debt would have been had we carried on with the same reckless path as the NDP?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): The member is exactly correct. Under the NDP, 17 years, the debt doubled under the NDP government as well as it having record deficits. It seems the NDP were more interested in paying moneylenders in Toronto and New York City, than putting money into the pockets of Manitobans. If the NDP stayed in office,

their reckless spending would have increased the debt by over \$5 billion. That means that interest costs payments of over \$183 million, Madam Speaker, would have gone for debt-servicing as opposed to health, education and social services.

What S&P has talked about in past little while, if our credit rating does go up and it's being deemed as positive, Madam Speaker, it's going to save Manitobans \$140 million over the next number of years. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

French Language Services Santé en français Budget

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Madame la Présidente, je suis fier de poser ma question à la ministre responsable des affaires francophones. Je souligne que les services pour les francophones ne sont pas une priorité pour ce gouvernement.

Translation

Madam Speaker, I am proud to ask my question to the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs. I would like to point out that French language services are not a priority for this government.

English

All government departments are responsible for ensuring public services are available and accessible to all Manitobans in French. Santé en français helps to reduce language barriers for francophone Manitobans in the health-care sector, but this past fiscal year Santé en français has seen their funding cut by more than \$200,000.

Why is the Pallister government cutting funding to an organization that helps provide equitable quality of care for all Manitobans?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente, pour la question. Notre gouvernement va continuer à soutenir les services francophones au Manitoba.

Translation

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the question. Our government will continue to support French language services in Manitoba.

English

We're very proud to continue to stand up for francophones in the province of Manitoba making

good investments. We just signed the Canada-Manitoba Agreement on French Language Services to provide benefits for community service organizations and help in getting good positive outcomes whether it be in health, social services or many other areas of the community that require services in French.

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

Bureau de l'éducation française Budget Reduction Inquiry

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): French language services keep undergoing cut after cut under this government. The francophone community does not forget that this government cut the assistant deputy minister role from the bureau d'éducation française.

The minister isn't listening to what the community is saying and is allowing this—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —important agency to fall into disrepair. Last year alone the bureau d'éducation française had their funding cut by \$700,000, and the minister's budgets don't really mean much. He underspent the budget for the bureau last year by over \$1 million.

Why is the minister cutting and underspending the budget for the bureau d'éducation française?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): We, of course, remain committed to BEF within our department. They're an integral part of ensuring that French language services are provided and French language education is provided.

We've demonstrated that in many ways. I know that when DSFM heard about the additional new schools that we committed to in the campaign they were over the moon with excitement, Madam Speaker. They were so happy, particularly with the school in Transcona which they've been trying to get for many, many years but the NDP denied.

I certainly hope the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), when he has the opportunity, votes for that school and actually stands up for his community, Madam Speaker.

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

French Language Services Government Record

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Madam Speaker, here's the Pallister government's record: they've cut

translation services for Manitobans by over \$1 million, they cut the assistant deputy minister role for BEF, they cut funding to Santé en français and now they've underspent and cut funding to the BEF by over \$1 million.

Why are French language services such a low priority for this government?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): I'd like to just point out that the member's preamble was completely false.

What our government has done is provided vitality to the French language—to French language services throughout the entire community, throughout the entire province. For the first time in the province's history, we have French language services reports from all departments and all Crowns. We've enhanced supports to the community. We invested in a community child-care centre at the university of St. Boniface. We have helped build more DSFM schools in the province of Manitoba, including the expansion of École Noël-Ritchot and a new DSFM school in Transcona.

Our government is providing direct supports to the community in ways that were neglected for years and years under the NDP.

Agricultural Crown Lands Corporate Leasing Concerns

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Madam Speaker, the Province used to ensure that those renting Crown lands lived in the province and were actively working the land. The Pallister government has changed that. Now out-of-province absentee corporate landlords can now snatch up as much land as they can rent.

The minister is set on turning our cattle country into a serfdom in the service of Alberta corporate—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Brar: Why has the minister sold Manitoba out?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): Well, I thank the member for the question.

Of course, as the weather changes outside, nothing changes inside the Chamber. Unfortunately, members opposite don't understand the real value of trade.

Now, we have been very clear on our position regards to the western—New West Partnership. Maybe the member opposite would take a read at that

agreement, something the previous government refused to do. We're prepared to do those.

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

Mr. Brar: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the minister takes his bidding from Alberta, so perhaps he hasn't read his own regulation changes. They allow absentee out-of-province corporate landlords the ability to snatch up all the land they want, and now Manitobans stand to lose their land and their farms should they be outbid at the end of a 15-year term. This is a radical departure from how land is rented in the rest of Canada.

The question is: Why has the minister sold Manitoba beef producers out?

Mr. Eichler: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question, and the member could be farther from the truth.

We've been working with Manitoba 'beese' producers each and every week to ensure we get these regulations right. We understand the beef producers have been very supportive of our path forward. And, of course, it's going to help our young farmers to be able to read-lease some of those Crown lands that's been locked up for a long time.

Also want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving and remember where their food comes from. It comes from the very farmers we're talking about.

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

Mr. Brar: Madam Speaker, the minister is just wrong. He should have gone out and talked to the thousands of beef producers impacted by this change, not just taken directions from his friends in Alberta, and he should know these changes rip the heart out of the family farm in Manitoba.

Will he stop what he is doing, return the point system and actually talk to producers about our Crown lands system? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, the changes in the system will protect family farms, Madam Speaker. This member doesn't seem to understand this will assist family farms in keeping land—Crown land—available to subsequent generations, in fact, and make sure that those actively farming that land are able to continue to use it as part of their farm unit.

But this is a continuation of the NDP's complete lack of faith in anything to do with the private sector and is why, Madam Speaker, the Auditor General of Manitoba pointed out that this was a government previously that would not shop intelligently. It would offer untendered contracts to its personal friends. Rather than—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

* (14:40)

Mr. Pallister: —go to the marketplace and shop, Madam Speaker, it hired more people to do buying, at great expense to the taxpayer. This is a political organization bereft of understanding of the benefits of competition that befall to all of us in private sector and across the province, even insofar as giving total control over their leadership selection process to four public sector union bosses instead of letting their own members have a say.

Health Sciences Centre New Children's Heart Centre

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Our PC government is committed to delivering better care sooner for all Manitobans. This includes investing in and streamlining the services provided to children and youth so they can get the care that they need more quickly, leading to better outcomes. After all, every child deserves to live a healthy and a happy life.

Recently, our government was part of an exciting announcement that will deliver state-of-the-art cardiac care for our youngest Manitobans.

Can the minister please share the details of this announcement with the House?

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

Earlier this week the First Minister, myself and colleagues were at the Health Sciences Centre along with the Price family to take part in the announcement for the HSC's new leading edge Children's Heart Centre at the Children's Hospital. It's a \$2.3-million investment from our government for a state-of-the-art project that includes cath lab improvements so that Manitobans who used to have to go out of province for smaller procedures can stay right here in the province.

Better for health care, better for the families, better for the children, this investment is another way in which our government is taking action to improve

our health-care system so that all Manitobans can experience better health care sooner.

Overdose Incident Case Concern Inquest into Death

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Many Manitobans, I'm sure, were surprised to hear the tragic news out of Brandon. The death of overdose-high overdose of a young woman at the house of a senior public servant who works at the City of Brandon. We know that many people lose their lives to addictions every year; this does seem to be, however, an extraordinary case. We do not want to pre-judge it in any way, but it does seem to put the Brandon police force in an impossible position to be investigating an incident at the home of someone who sits on the police board.

Why is it that only after the story broke we are finding out the Attorney General called in the RCMP?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I do appreciate the member asking this question, and it gives me an opportunity to advise the House of the actions that we have taken recently pertaining to this particular file.

I will say the Department of Justice learned about the circumstances the last week of September and then last Friday, October 4th, I, as the Attorney General, requested that the RCMP conduct a review into the circumstances surrounding the death of this individual and the subsequent investigation of the Brandon Police Service.

So, Madam Speaker, we do look forward to the outcome of this particular review.

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

Mr. Lamont: This was one of three fatal drug overdoses that were not reported to authorities.

There are many unanswered questions about this young woman's death that relate to health, justice and especially addictions. We believe the chief medical examination—Chief Medical Examiner should have an inquest into her death.

Does the minister agree, and, if not, why not?

Mr. Cullen: As I pointed out, we look forward to the outcomes of the RCMP review of the circumstances around here.

I know I did receive a letter from the Liberal Party requesting me to get the Chief Medical Examiner

involved. I will table for the House and for the members the legislation pertaining to calling an inquest, and it is up to the Chief Medical Examiner to call an inquest, not the Attorney General.

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

Violent Crime Statistics Lead Exposure Link

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Manitoba has a disturbingly high level of violent crime. Under the present Conservative government the violent Crime Severity Index has risen by more than 30 points to reach 169.8; no other province has seen anything comparable.

Manitoba may have a large increase in crime under this government because the government has done little to address poverty, homelessness, mental health or addictions. Alternatively, as I table, increasing evidence links violent crime to lead exposure, and lead exposure details have been covered up for years in Manitoba.

Will the government ensure action is taken rather than more study and stall?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, Madam Speaker, while the member's reading the information pertaining to the Chief Medical Examiner, I will also send him over a copy of our Manitoba's Policing and Public Safety Strategy. This strategy was developed in consultation with police forces across Manitoba and stakeholders.

Now, we know we are taking the collaborative approach by working with police agencies across the province. We know what the NDP platform is: the NDP platform was to get rid of the RCMP here in Manitoba.

That is not our approach. Our approach is a collaborative approach, and we're working through this strategy. We're working with all stakeholders to provide public safety to all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

The honourable member for River Heights?

Mr. Gerrard: On a matter of privilege, Madam Speaker.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, on a matter of privilege.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I will be very brief because we want to get to Estimates, but I do need to raise this now because it relates to a matter that we found out only earlier this afternoon.

This deals with, as I quote from—it's Marleau and Montpetit on page 86: The privileges of a member are violated by any action which might impede him or her in the fulfillment of his or her duties and functions.

Madam Speaker, we heard just earlier today that the government will not be tabling the Estimates of revenue for the current fiscal year. This has been an important part of—for the last 20 years of the budget process. The failure to provide the Estimates of revenue by the government impedes our ability as MLAs to know a critical component of the financial affairs of Manitoba.

I therefore move, seconded by the MLA for St. Boniface, that this matter be referred to a Legislative committee.

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'm sure the member opposite just simply doesn't recall; however, the Auditor General, I understand, had recommended that the statement of revenues be included within Public Accounts. That's available on page 92, and it was tabled by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) previously.

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

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I also have a very brief statement for the House.

As the House is adjourning today for several weeks, I would encourage all honourable members to remove the contents of their desks now.

I would further encourage members to recycle as much of the material as possible. The blue bins here in the Chamber are designated for recycling of

Hansard only, and any other material you would like to recycle may be placed in the larger recycling containers in the message rooms located just outside the Chamber.

Petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): We have an amendment to the Estimates order.

In accordance with section 2(b) of the Sessional Order passed by the House on September 30th, 2019, we're advising of the following changes in the Estimates sequence: (1) in the room 254 section, move Executive Council to the bottom of the list, followed by Sport, Culture and Heritage. This change is permanent and is signed by myself as the Government House Leader and the Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine).

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that in accordance with section 2(b) of the Sessional Order passed by this House on September 30th, 2019, we are being advised of the following change in the Estimates sequence: in room 254 section, Executive Council will be moved to the bottom of the list, following Sport, Culture and Heritage, and this change is permanent.

* (14:50)

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business.

Pursuant to rule 78(4), the following ministers are called for questioning in the next sitting of Committee of Supply to consider the concurrence motion: The Premier (Mr. Pallister); Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Friesen); Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson); Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding); Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Wharton); Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton); Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen); Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke); Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen); Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Goertzen); Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires); Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler); Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler); Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox).

These ministers will be questioned concurrently, and I table this.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) that pursuant to rule 78(4), the following ministers are called for questioning in the next sitting of the Committee of Supply to consider the concurrence motion: Premier (Mr. Pallister); Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Friesen); Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson); Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding); Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Wharton); Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton); Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen); Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke); Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen); Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Goertzen); Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires); Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler); Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler); Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox).

And these ministers will be questioned concurrently.

Mr. Goertzen: Could you please resolve into Committee of Supply.

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

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

AGRICULTURE

* (15:10)

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

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

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): I do want to welcome my new critic and welcome to this Assembly. And, of course, this process of Estimates is one that's of critical importance.

Of course, we have to go through and talk about some of the things that's happening at Agriculture—or has been happening—since first getting this appointment in May the 3rd of 2016. Though we've seen significant investments in Agriculture and a lot of value added. I would invite the critic to look at my statement of what Agriculture looks like from the Premier. And, of course, more of it is value added. And we've taken that very seriously.

We've seen investments—significant investments—not only from our companies that's born and raised in Manitoba, and of course new investments from outside in a continuum of expansion of existing business. Of course, Richardson's, Cargill, Paterson Grain, Parrish & Heimbecker, to name a few that are head offices here in Winnipeg. I'm pleased about that.

Also, we have the addition of a company called Roquette located in Portage la Prairie. The original investment was in the \$400-million estimation of investments, creating over 300 new jobs in Manitoba.

I invite my critic to take a drive out to Portage, go past Simplot first, which they had a recent expansion as well, which was doubling production, of \$460 million, which means an increase of 18,000 acres of new potatoes that's going to be processed at that plant.

Of course, Roquette had a choice, same as Simplot did, but they were looking at different parts of Canada. They chose Manitoba because Manitoba is open for business.

And a new government, we're proud of the fact that they picked Manitoba, and, of course, with our green energy and ability to be able to grow good crops and, of course, our farm families are resilient to—they respond to needs of whatever processes that they have for their disposal. So they're going to be processing peas or organic peas. And I'm proud to say that the original estimates were 20 per cent of peas would come from Manitoba. The rest would come from Saskatchewan or other parts of the provinces. I have to say that they're very pleased that they're acquiring roughly 60 per cent of their peas now in Manitoba. As a result of that, they will be up in production by September of next year.

Simplot's in operation now. Certainly, we have some challenges on our hands with the weather.

Last year we didn't have enough potatoes, so they brought potatoes in from Idaho and, of course, we hope we get our potatoes off this year. We had

about 5,000 acres of potatoes that did not get off last year, which was significant.

And we know our insurance programs—that the member is well aware of, working with the Department of Agriculture. Some of them meet the needs, some of them do not. So we're hoping that we don't have to rely on those for our producers, but, certainly, have enough potatoes for the additional processing capacity.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention some of the others. One is Merit foods of which is a new canola pea processing plant that will be up and running by this time next year is their goal. They'll be locating in CentrePort which I'm very excited about. They're actually building as speak, as we sit in this committee room. They're very passionate about getting it up and running.

And, of course, recently as last Wednesday we had the announcement of Paterson GlobalFoods which will be processing oats and, of course, that will go out as a finished product. That's going to be in the CentrePort area as well, just off Highway 6 and the Perimeter.

So we're very excited about the opportunities for our farm families. Reaching more value-added not only in that sector but others.

We have launched our protein strategy which I am bullish about with plant protein and animal protein. We will ensure that all markets are available to us. We do want to be known and on the path to celebrating that we will be the protein supplier of choice. Manitoba's positioned well in regards to being in the middle of Canada. We can ship products to the south, east, west and over the top. I believe that Manitoba will meet those goals.

We are the first province or state to celebrate a memorandum of understanding with the protein strategy, and we are leaders and we'll continue to be leaders in agriculture.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the confidence that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has in the Ministry of Agriculture in the Province of Manitoba.

Today I'm proud to announce how confident the farmers are, their businesses, their clients and I'll share it with the—my critic: somewhat confident, 65 per cent; very confident, 13 per cent; not very confident, 16 per cent; not at all, 3; don't know, 3. So 78 per cent of our farm families believe that

Manitoba agriculture's in good hands. And I give my staff and colleagues full credit for that. I'm certainly—I'm pleased with that, but I can tell there's more to do.

We have some challenges, absolutely, but we know that our job is to ensure we have the right programs in place for the right time. Do they meet all the needs of our farm families? No, they don't. But, certainly, one of the problems that we have in agriculture is that under the CAP agreement all 10 provinces have to agree to any changes. So other than that we're on the hook for those expenditures, and I know that we'll probably get into some of those discussions with my critic as we get ready to go. But certainly it's an opportunity for us to get together and discuss those.

So, in our last FPT meeting which was held in Quebec City, we left clear instructions that we want a review of those products. Some of those are better management practices, best management practices that will be sitting down with our federal colleagues from across Canada in Ottawa probably, or Toronto, we haven't really nailed it down but probably Ottawa—in mid-December. And we hope to try and make better changes to make sure that those programs we have in place meet the needs of our farmers to make them sustainable and make them whole.

*(15:20)

I do wish my critic well in our debates and I'll maybe stop there. I know Agriculture has had some good years. This year might be a bit of a challenge, but certainly in 2017 we set high records. We had farm cash receipts of \$6.5 billion, which is substantial. And the Premier (Mr. Pallister) likes to say, when Manitoba farmers have a good year, Manitobans have a good year. So we're hoping for the rest of our crop to get off. We have some time left, but certainly the next four or five days will be a challenge.

So I'll stop there, Mr. Chair, and turn it over to my critic.

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

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): I welcome everyone in the session, and for me this is a very good opportunity to be here. And I've been part of this family, Manitoba Agriculture, and we have worked in the same department, me, Ralph, and all the colleagues would be

joining us, but now we would be working together in a different combination. And it feels good that all the learning I had for all those years working with Manitoba Agriculture is going to help all of us and the Manitoban farmers to do better in the coming years.

So I'm very excited to work together, and I hope we would be working hard to uplift our farmers and agriculture in particular and Manitoban economy in general, so let's join hands to make the life better for all Manitobans in general and the producers in particular.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the critic from the official opposition for those remarks. Just to remind, like, it's like in the House where you can't use people's names; you have to use their positions, like minister.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 3.1.(a), contained in resolution 3.1.

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

Mr. Eichler: I know my critic probably knows most of my staff, but for the procedures I'll certainly go through it.

I'm pleased to have my deputy minister, Dori Gingera-Beauchemin; Leloni Scott, assistant deputy minister in stewardship of assurance; Maurice Bouvier, assistant deputy minister, production economic development; David Hunt, assistant deputy minister of Policy and Transformation; Ann 'Friebie,' 'lexeclive' financial officer.

And, of course, my political staff, Thomas Gilbraith, who tried to meet with you yesterday; he was going to invite you to a briefing. Unfortunately, that didn't happen, so here we are; we'll—I'm sure we'll get into that here very shortly.

That's my staff, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for those introductions and we welcome his staff here.

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

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Global discussion.

Mr. Chairperson: Is that agreed that we will proceed in a global discussion? *[Agreed]*

Thank you. It is agreed that questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner with all resolutions being passed once questioning has concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Brar: Just curious to know about the vacancies. Can the minister provide me with the vacancy rate overall for the Department of Agriculture and, in addition, can he also provide me the vacancy rate for each of the five divisions of this department?

Mr. Eichler: I thank the member for the question. Number of vacancies as of February the 28th, 2019, we had a vacancy of 87.8. Total number of FTAs—FTEs was 384. So the percentage of vacancy was 22.9.

Mr. Brar: This vacancy rate, was it up for the last few years starting 2016? How much it increased or it's the same?

Mr. Eichler: Well, first off, I want to just say this, Mr. Chair, that Agriculture is a very exciting field to work in. And, of course, I'm proud of the fact that 'thirty-three' per cent of my employees are females, and I could tell you they're hardworking, they're dedicated. But the question the member asked was the percentages. So 2016-17 was identical to now; it was 22.9; 2017-18 was 19.5; and, of course, now, to repeat the number again for the record is 22.9.

Mr. Brar: What's the minister's internal target for this budget? How much less these Estimates is the minister trying to spend?

* (15:30)

Mr. Eichler: The adjustment made to the salaries account to allow for attrition and of course staff turnover is a negative adjustment to enable the organization to be more actively display salary requirements and that percentage is 8 per cent.

Mr. Brar: The salaries and the strategy management were underspent by over \$400,000 last year. That means that there were more vacant positions than were remains in this area. Why is the minister not filling vacant positions?

Mr. Eichler: Well, it's a privilege to have somebody that really understands staffing. Having working in the Department of Agriculture, the member knows that we're in a lot of partnerships and it's an ever-changing process.

I mean, we never thought we'd be growing as many peas as we thought we would be growing or the potatoes that we're going to be growing here as well. But, with the ever-changing environment, with the changes of innovation, it's hard to find people that necessarily meet that skill set. And we know farming is always on a change and of course we need to make sure we have the right staff in the right place at the right time so we're able to be able to pick up and help those producers at a time in need.

So, certainly, we want to make sure we get the right staff in the right place. So we do take our staff allowance very seriously in order to make sure we have enough people in time to be able to meet those needs and of course provide the services to our farm families that they need to make those decisions. And I know that the—my critic can certainly understand that, being in the field. And it is a challenge, it is a challenge to find enough folks to be able to be in the position to be able to help our farmers so I know the member understands that.

Mr. Brar: Just a follow-up question, like, what are the positions advertised—and we tried to find people and we didn't get the skill set that we were looking for, and did we call interviews and didn't select people, or we didn't advertise, as you mean that, we don't have any people—matching skills?

Mr. Eichler: Well, as the member well knows, that employees is a long process to make sure that we have the right people in the right place. Of course, we have external advertising that we do. We have a website that people check. I have to say that, and the member knows this, that we have to get the right fit and we have to have somebody that's ready to make change with the change.

And when we talk about big data, that's critically important. We got to make sure they have the right skill set for ever-changing world. I know the other part of it, that everybody—a lot of people have the ability to be able to do the textbook will, if you will, and look stuff up. Do they have the public service ability to be able to meet with the public and converse with them on a one-on-one basis? I mean, a lot of this stuff is now done on computers. A lot—we don't have a lot of drop-in like we normally used to, you know, back in the day of the ag rep, but, you know, times have changed.

And even our insurance models, we had a lot of farmers are buying online. So the skill set is ever-changing. Of course, to find the people for the—those sets are a bit of a challenge, as the member well

knows. But, certainly, when we talk about artificial intelligence and those types of things, certainly it can be a challenge to find that right fit. So we want to make sure that we always have the right staff, and they have to be able to adapt to those changes as well.

Who would have thought that we'd be talking about what we're talking about now, even with tile drainage and the impacts of it and the varieties of tile drainage that are actually out there. Is that the right model? There's a lot of new models that are out there, whether it be storing water—I think we need to talk about something like that as well. Capturing that water, particularly for our vegetables and potato growers, to be able to do that.

Also capturing those nutrients, and the system, is it right to do a back flush with irrigation? So, certainly, again, coming back to your question, finding the right fit for the right person for those position is critically important to us.

And I know the member knows that from his experience working in Arborg. I think you committed for two, two-and-a-half years, something like that. But, certainly, I think you understand the skill set that's critically important to us to have the right place.

Mr. Brar: Just following up on the same point. Just a suggestion that if we have some money that could be better realized, even if we don't find people who are ready to serve on a position that's vacant. There could be some strategies to use their transferrable skills or train them. Because as I have experienced working in the department and talking to people around, there are so many people in this department or some other relevant departments who are underemployed. They are very much qualified, but they are underemployed.

* (15:40)

So I would like to see those human resources being utilized efficiently for future. Let's sit together and think about not underutilizing those human resources. And, if there is a gap between what we require and what is available, let's fill that gap with training or some volunteering our staff.

Mr. Eichler: Of course, I think the member's absolutely right. And we have a lot of staff that probably be our—certainly underutilized from time to 'pime' dependent on their qualification set.

One thing that I know that, that from my age and where I've been, certainly I know I've been in positions that I've certainly felt that I haven't utilized all my own talents either. Some I felt I wasn't qualified

that I was doing as well. So certainly I think everybody has those challenges.

But I just want to use a couple of examples to—for the member, for example, our CVO. We looked long and far to find that CVO. We—actually, he came to us from New York. He's a Canadian. He served well in other countries as well and of course he's a young man and he's living in here in Manitoba, in Winnipeg now. And of course, you know, he's doing yeoman's work. We feel honoured to be able to have him within our department, comes with a vast knowledge of experience as well.

So we have to make sure we get the right person for the job and sometimes they come with some experiences that they will never be able to use them. Especially now as we look at global change, we know that that's something we have to change with and be respectful of. But certainly we know that it's important that we do do that.

Food safety is another one. We're on the cusp of change in that as well. We have to make sure that we have modern food safety in order to ensure that we have the public trust, if you will. Public trust is something that we never want to take for granted. And most people don't really know where their food comes from, so we have an educational component to it as well. That's an ongoing process.

And, of course, when, in my opening comments, I talked about the protein strategy and us wanting to be the protein supplier of choice, which I told you I think we will be. But certainly, do we have the skill sets within the department? And of course that's forever changing. So we're always looking, always looking to be able to look outside the box a bit, if you will, in order to ensure that we have the right people in place.

I think we're doing a pretty good job overall, certainly according to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business; our farm families seem to think so and the business sector seems to think so. So I think we're on the right path, but certainly there's always more to do. And we're ready to make those changes as we go forward in order to ensure that we do have the right staff in place.

Mr. Brar: And, before my next question, I want to appreciate especially the extension programs that involve schoolchildren. We are preparing the next generation so that they know where our food comes from. For example, I would like to mention here Made in Manitoba Breakfast program, and the food

is going to be central. They're doing the great job in connecting with the next generation in schools. That's appreciable.

About the front-line positions, I mean, there are vacancies, but I would like to know how many extension centres we have in the province, and how many front-line positions we have right now, because being in the department I have experienced that the producers had a great challenge when they come to the door, and the door was locked with a sign that in-person client service is not available. So that's what I have experienced in the past.

So why the front-line positions were cut, and what's the strategy to fill those back and serve the producers who need face-to-face assistance for their day-to-day life and extension programs?

Mr. Eichler: Well, I'm pleased the member is helping us with the agricultural side.

Ag in the classroom is a very important part of Agriculture and where our food comes from. I have had the opportunity to help ag in the classroom, been at their annual convention every year. I go to Kelburn Farms on a regular basis to meet with the students and, in fact, I don't know if the member knows, but I'm a little bit of an auctioneer too. So I've auctioned cookies off to those students in order to be able to help them have a little bit of fun at the same time.

As for learning where their food comes from, I don't know if the member's had an 'opportunity' to be part of ag in the classroom, but if he hasn't, I certainly invite him to be part of it. It's one that—we—they do more than just talk about where their food comes from. It talks about how it's grown, how it's processed, and of course we've worked with schools—directly with that.

We work hard to educate not only our urban folks, but some of our rural communities as well. We assume because you come from rural areas that you understand where your food comes from, but that's not necessarily the case. Critically important for us make sure that everyone knows because they become our ambassadors. They become our spokesfolks, if you will, in order to help people understand where their food comes from.

And of course food safety, as I talked about a little bit earlier in my previous question, but certainly to ensure that we have the safe food for them to consume.

And that's critically important, so we fund ag in the classroom \$100,000 last year, which is a significant contribution. But they go beyond that. They raise a bunch of more money. I'm not sure what their total budget is, but certainly whatever they do, I'm happy that they're able to add that to them. But certainly I know the administration has done an amazing job at raising money with businesses and partnerships.

Richardson foods, for example, have been good enough to donate to Kelburn Farm facility. If the member has not been out there, I certainly encourage him to go up and have a look. It's right next to our Glenlea Research Station, which also ties in very nicely with Open Farm Day, which we do the same thing.

*(15:50)

And that's helping educate folks about knowing livestock, livestock handling, livestock processing—those types of things, cereals and grains, what it means, where did the oats come from. Most people think oats is something that you just feed the horses, and it's not that at all. There's a lot more to food that people don't really understand, so I'm glad the member's on side with educating our general population in order to ensure that people understand where their food comes from.

In regards to the second part of your question and our rural offices, there have been no office closures. They're accessible by department services and information's always available in person, by phone, by email. We use Twitter; we use the modern social media websites. Also, I have a toll-free number. Also, we have—we deliver services, including veterinary diagnostic services, ag prime lands, ag environment, food and agri-product businesses development and agri-industry development. And, of course, as we—the evolution carries on within our sector, we're placing less emphasis on planning one-on-one.

Farmers are very resilient. They do a lot of marketing with the decommission of the Manitoba Wheat Board, the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers market their own products now more than ever, so, certainly, farmers nowadays are probably using computer and big data more than ever, so their time is valuable and we want to make sure that they have those services available to them, so we've seen a transition more from one-on-one to more to data-based as we go forward, so I'll talk more about that after the next member's question.

Mr. Brar: Thanks, Minister, for responding to the question.

For schools, as we discussed, that's a good program that we are getting in touch with them to know about where our food comes from, but especially urban communities.

If I talk about immigrants or the people who have never experienced rural life or agriculture, they are—they need a lot of information about agriculture and their food and environment and sustainability.

Is there a plan or do we have people who are experts in the department who are working to—for the awareness of these urban populations and, in particular, immigrant communities who want to know more about food and agriculture and environment in Canada so that that knowledge that we build up together could be helpful understanding the bigger concepts of sustainability, climate change and food?

Mr. Eichler: Well, I thank the critic for the question.

And I'll start with one that he knows well, and that's 4-H. 4-H is an opportunity for our youth. I'm proud to say that my family has three generations in 4-H. My granddaughter got involved a couple years ago. If you look back in social media, which I use a lot to promote agriculture and of course our food and where it comes from, certainly that's an opportunity for our youth to get involved. And that's all throughout the city as well. I know the member's been involved in it. But certainly that's one sector.

But I know I take advantage of a number of events I go to. I was at 95 events last year that I talked about agriculture and promoted agriculture and of course when—where our food comes from. One of the things when I first became the minister, I said, let's share the good news story and where our food comes from. We can talk about all the bad stuff we want, but really we have a lot of great news to talk about in agriculture, and we do that.

And it's not one individual group, but it's all commodity groups that work and promote their products, and of course awareness of their products is very important. I think more and more people are coming to want to understand where they come from, where their food comes from.

Certainly, we've seen, when I go shopping, which is not that often—I don't really have much time, but thank God I've got a wife that understands shopping better than I do, and, of course, you can tell by my body I don't look after it probably the way I should.

But I do want to eat well, and most Manitobans and Canadians want to eat well. People are reading labels now more than ever. So they want to understand what's in their food. They want to make sure that we have the public trust, the best interest of Manitobans, in order to ensure we have safe food and good food for them.

But we also go a lot farther than that, than just the commodity groups. We have events like Great Tastes of Manitoba, which they promote food, and we challenge entrepreneurs with new varieties, new things, new taste for Manitobans.

To the member's point, we're a province of immigrants, me being an immigrant as well. Certainly we're proud of the fact that we have a province that's so diverse. I will share with the member that I've been very much involved with Red River community college who has a great culinary arts program. I invite the member to do his own research. But certainly we had a large number of Filipinos that were there. And they come creative. They made their dishes in Filipino style and some of them have started restaurants now.

I know that different cultures, Ukrainian culture—I mean, one that's been, kind of one of the first immigrants that come to Canada, in numbers anyway. But we are so diverse and we have so many opportunities.

Of course, the Red River Ex does a great job of promoting as well.

Royal winter fair, we have a separate room that's dedicated just for families to be able to find out where their food comes from, learn about livestock, learn about chickens and poultry, all of those things.

Assiniboine Community College does a great job. They're helping people understand about processing. And they established the first processing foods in university level—or community college level. Certainly that's an important one.

The agriculture societies of Manitoba, the Women's Institute, they do a great job. In fact, I've been at every one of their events since I've become the minister. And they do an outstanding job at bringing awareness to food and where their food comes from.

So it's not a one-off. It's all of us together that helps understand where our food comes from. And can we do better? Absolutely. All of us can. And I expect all my members, and all members even on—opposition to do that. And I think we need to celebrate where our food comes from.

* (16:00)

We are an export province when it comes to food. But we've been sending a lot of it out in raw form. And our government's determined to ensure we get more value added, to ensure that we have opportunities, create those jobs here at home, and have a diverse culture to try and meet those needs. And, of course, it's ever-changing as well, so I welcome the support of the member as we go forward and to help carry forward the good news that's in Agriculture.

Mr. Brar: I would like to mention ag in the city; that's also a very good program for the city people to get knowledge about agriculture and its allied fields. But its reach has been associated with it. Its reach is not up to the expectations.

My first question is: Is there a plan to expand such programs to various other parts of the city instead of just getting it done at The Forks?

And my second question, related question, is that there used to be an expert in the department for urban and northern extension, and I think we—that the position is vacant for long. And that creates a great void between the knowledge available and the people waiting for that knowledge. Is there any strategy to fill that position, and are we doing something to fill that gap?

Mr. Eichler: But, of course, we're working hard, you know, and we've been part of this federal government program since the beginning, 10 years ago. It's the same week as ag awareness day. It's at The Forks and, of course, we've been committed to ensuring that it stays strong and stays well.

This is an initiative that's put on by the—by business and, of course, the commodity groups in order to ensure and, in fact, in 2016, according to the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity, 93 per cent of the respondents responded that they know a little or very little or nothing about Canadian farming practices.

So it's really important that we have industry at the table and, of course, those that are wanting to learn about where their food comes from, The Forks is a prime example of where it should be located. I mean, there's a diverse population that comes and goes there, which ties in very nicely, also, with our market, St. Norbert, and Osborne Village certainly has their markets as well, which we're proud to be able to help educate the general public. It's well received and, of course, we invested significant dollars in St. Norbert; just invested more in Osborne Village as

well for those folks to help—have access to food and where it comes from.

And the organic movement is a large part of that as well, and people have stepped up. We have been known to spend very little on our food. We're very frugal as Manitobans, but it doesn't necessarily mean that we don't eat well. Organics, a thing that a lot of people have been working on, and people want to understand exactly how safe their food is, and this is one of those tools in the toolbox.

The member talks also about the 'indigenous' peoples in those communities. Of course, we're in a process of drafting an 'indigenous' engagement strategy. I'd have to commend my colleague, the member from 'indigenous'—she's the minister of 'indigenous' affairs, and certainly she's done an outstanding job in connecting with those communities.

In fact, I had an opportunity to meet with Chief Crate from Fisher River, and I can tell you people like him are leaders that want to make sure their communities eat well, they're fed well and clothed well, but certainly when we talk about leaders and getting ahead of the game in regards to having safe food and affordable food is really critically important.

So we look forward to carrying on with that, and of course the 'indigenous' culture is one that needs to be respected and we've been working hard to try and find ways to be creative. Certainly greenhouses are a part of the process that we're looking at going forward, and that will take significant investments, and we are working with the communities to ensure they do get affordable way.

The biggest problem that we're faced is not necessarily the supply of food, but the freight to get it to these communities in the northern remote areas, and that's something we need to work on together, and I hope the member opposite will help us and have suggestions in that regard.

I know I have worked in the past with Infrastructure to try and find better ways to get our freight up there that's affordable, and that seems to be our biggest barrier. We have access to a lot of food but not necessarily the transportation to be able to get it there, and that has been a real problem for us.

But I can tell the member that we are supporting those efforts of ag in the city, and certainly work well with our ag awareness day, and I invite the member to be involved in that. The Keystone Ag Producers will have their event in November, which I hope the

member comes and learns where their food comes from and what that organization does in order to be able to ensure that our farm families stay strong.

Mr. Brar: Just a follow-up question regarding providing technical support for people as they know extension as helping people to help themselves.

* (16:10)

So, if we build capacity within the communities, whether they're northern communities or local urban communities, to grow their own kitchen gardens, and we can promote local foods and they can enjoy agriculture in their backyards and stuff. But I think the department lacks that technical support as of now.

I would like to know if there's a plan to provide at least one expert for the whole city that can organize trainings or make programs or projects that help people build their capacity to be little growers at their own little farms or homes, so that works as an awareness program and food production program.

Mr. Eichler: Yes, I just want to come back to the position of the leader of the industry of public engagement; a position that has been filled to work with industry and government stakeholders to explore the opportunities and create strategies that support public trust in agriculture.

Of course, the department represents Manitoba on a public trust steering committee at the federal-provincial-territorial Public Trust Working Group. And, of course, it's not one person that is bringing community leadership and food production together.

There's expertise in various positions within our department in order to connect the 'indigenous' communities. And this goes through our government's Northern Healthy Foods Initiative. I invite the member to look at that. Certainly, it's initiative that helps them help themselves.

I know, coming back to my granddaughter, she started growing a garden just a little bit ago—I'd say four years ago—and it's an exercise that we all have to kind of go through. Sometimes you're not as successful the first time, so you learn by your mistakes, whether it be over-watering or under-watering, with the right nutrients at the right time, in order to ensure that we have productive, 'efficient' garden. So it's not something that you can just teach everybody: to be able to grow crops, to grow a good garden.

But, certainly, we do that with the educational component; that's critically important to be successful

in gardening. I know on the farm as I grew up, my first job was hoeing the garden. And, I'll tell you, I learned a lot by hoeing, that it's something you don't really want to do the rest of your life, so you go to school and try and better yourself. But it's one you can take pride in as well. And I know that even my garden, I don't give it the near attention that it probably does, but I can tell you I work really hard to make sure I have the safest food for my family, and I know members of my caucus and members opposite—I have members, too, that take their gardens very seriously.

And, if we can share a little bit of knowledge with our friends to the North, and our immigrants' communities, to help them understand our soils. In fact, I was just at the soil conference last week. We talked about soil conditions. And critically important, soils are all different.

University of Manitoba has a position there that they talk about dirt nerds, and the dirt that we have in Manitoba changes from river gumbo to sal—the Shilo sands that we've know—that grows pretty good potatoes. So, certainly, our soil's diversified, our cultures are diversified. So we need to be able to help those that, wherever they're at, to be able to grow the best food that they possibly can.

Mr. Brar: Thank the minister, for your response. You mentioned 4-H clubs and your granddaughter. My son joined 4-H clubs in turning 16, and that was a wonderful experience. But what I noticed was he was the only guy from my community. There are thousands of people from my community who came from India here. He was the only guy in 4-H club.

So let's work together to strengthen 4-H clubs, and Manitoba 4-H Council to work in the urban populations and new Canadians so that we can integrate and make a big difference, because it's not only about the food, it's about the communication skills and creating future leaders. So thanks for your response on that.

Coming back to the budget, at the beginning of the proceedings, the minister, I believe, said that he has an internal target of 8 per cent. So, just to confirm the minister's aim is to spend 8 per cent less than the numbers on the pages in the Estimates, is that right?

Mr. Eichler: Well, I know the member opposite is trying to help us here in—understand really this is about salaries and benefits, and this is normally about where we are and most departments are like that. So we—this is something that we use to accommodate those of salaries and benefits. Of course, probably the

member opposite didn't realize he would be an MLA his numbers will probably be in there next year. So, if it's up, it'll be your fault not mine. But, anyway, I just mean that it's all jokingly.

But, seriously, the member knows that we have retirements. We have people that leave. We have people that move on for different reason or another and people that just decided it's not necessarily a way of life that they wanted to be. So it's part of the overall accommodation that we have and that is at the 8 per cent level.

Mr. Brar: Regarding policy—policies underspent by \$521,000 attributed to the MacKenzie's as expenditure management. Can the minister share what got cut?

* (16:20)

Mr. Eichler: All departments, we didn't cut anything from the budget. Certainly, we have found ways to manage our expenditures in an efficient way. One is going to be able to help Manitobans get a better return on their investment. So, certainly, we didn't cut anything from the budget but certainly we've found some efficiencies that we're able to utilize in order to ensure that we get the best value for money for Manitobans.

Mr. Brar: Thank the minister, for your response.

The Grain Innovation Hub was underspent by \$333,000, attributed to projects delayed for 2019-2020. So, just curious to know, why were projects delayed?

Mr. Eichler: There's a number of projects. And projects don't necessarily all get completed in one particular year. So we—when we look at these projects, we try and plan them with our mandate.

We work very strongly with the University of Manitoba. I know the dean—we have a new dean there—there's certainly—we welcome him and his team. And his way of going forward, I know that he's very innovative as well.

We are working in partnership with a number of resources in order to help us be innovative, and of course the priorities of government. And we did an MOU with the state of Indiana, and we partnered with the university there. And I can tell the member that we're very proud of the fact of where we are, and sharing the research and innovation.

Also, under the CAP agreement that we signed a number of years ago—this is year 2, I believe—and I've

been very clear, I want 50 per cent of our dollars to go to research and innovation. I've appointed a board that brings recommendations forward for the minister, and I can tell you we've met the mandate of 50 per cent of our research dollars going forward into research and innovation.

And we partner with commodity groups and others that are ready to make those changes. As we get ready to move forward with our protein strategy, and be the protein supplier of choice, certainly our business world, our community, has actually come along with us for that journey in order to ensure that we have the right research, right innovation.

So, while we're not just going to spend money because we've budgeted it, but work in partnership with those organizations. And as we fund them, we want to make sure that we're spending money in the right place to ensure we're getting results that we need in order to meet those initiatives—of course, the priorities of government. So we're on a path that we're hoping that we got aligned well. It looks like we do.

Businesses is an interesting community all of its own. When we talked about a protein strategy in a group of room, not one business ready want to talk about their own strategy and their innovation going forward. But certainly one on one, they did. And they want to talk about what path they want to take, and that was down the protein highway.

And, actually, we have a number of people in businesses that ought to go along with us on that journey. So as we move forward, we'll see either approvals through the Grain Innovation Hub, or under the CAP programming, of which there's a bucket of money for that one that we go forward to.

So there's different buckets, different pockets that which we take funding out of to meet the needs as best—got to set the business climate as we go forward in these priorities of government.

And, of course, business as they lead their path, whether it be the pulse-growers, the corn-growers—we've seen all different sectors as we go forward. The beef sector is very exciting. Pork sector has world product knowledge around it.

And, of course, we know there's challenges there too, so certainly we will continue to work with those sectors as we go forward.

Mr. Brar: Thanks, the minister, for your response. The minister just mentioned about some research collaboration or MOU with some university. Is it a

research collaboration, or what kind of MOU it is, and which organization you're talking about?

* (16:30)

Mr. Eichler: I thank the member for his interest.

Certainly, two years ago when the Lieutenant Governor Crouch come to Manitoba to ask us if we would join into a memorandum of understanding with the State of Indiana, we jumped at that opportunity. We had the Business Council of Manitoba be involved, the various sectors, whether it be dairy, poultry—they were all there, as our first meeting, and certainly we had that connection, if you will.

We followed up on that. We had a delegation go down this fall which was led by my deputy minister and business council. We work in strong partnership with Purdue University, which I'm proud to say, one of my colleagues, Mr. Helwer, attended university there, and a proud graduate of that university. I know it's—shouldn't say it too loud, but we'll shout it from the mountaintops. But certainly I had the opportunity to work with Purdue University through my state agricultural leaders group, and not that it's about me, but certainly I have a relationship with them for a number years through SARL and our University of Manitoba Dean Scanlon certainly made connection there as well.

We talk about a whole host of things. In fact, we have some 4-H students will be going down here shortly to Indianapolis for the Future Farmers of America award, so some 4-H students will join them.

We talk about big data; we talk about research and innovation, and, of course, there's many different things that we have a lot in common.

When it comes to research I've always said that we don't need to reinvent the wheel; we need to share our data and make sure that we don't necessarily spend money on something that somebody's already done a good job at. And we don't do a good enough job at sharing our data, and I think our corporations, and I know that organizations, especially the national organizations, are starting to share more data.

We have never would have thought we'd have been growing the corn yields that we have now in Manitoba, but that's the research and innovation coming from the agricultural field. You'll get a prime understanding of this yourself because, really, we are growing stronger varieties, higher yielding varieties than we probably ever, ever had, and that's because of

research and innovation, and that's where I see agriculture going in the future.

Of course, farms are getting tighter and tighter for margins, so we need to make sure we get the right yields and the right tools in place to help them do that and help them feed themselves, and of course we know that populations are going to double by 2050. We have to be ready to provide the food to the world to be able to do that.

And we're certainly proud of the fact that we're on the path in Manitoba to do that. I think we're way ahead of the curve when we look at where Manitoba's at. Certainly our farmers are resilient. They adapt to whatever varieties we need to grow. Certainly, soybeans still seem to be our No. 1 crop, even with the challenge we have with China, which I know the member will probably get into a bit later, certainly.

But we know that we do a good job and, of course, canola is a prime crop for us, too, born and bred in Manitoba, proud to shout that from the mountain top too. Dr. Stefansson's a prime example of leadership of Manitobans and, of course, we want to make sure we continue on that innovation, and we're proud to work with agriculture Canada, too, to ensure that we have the programs in place and partnerships with them was of critical importance.

Quite frankly, we can't do it alone as a province, but certainly as a nation we have the ability to connect, and I can tell the member that I've had a good relationship with the Liberal government that we've been working with since I became the minister. We don't know what that'll look like in a few weeks, but certainly whoever's in power we'll work with them, too, to ensure that we do have the right programs and the innovation going forward to meet the needs of our farm families.

Mr. Brar: It's about sustainable agriculture incentives program that was underspent by nearly \$1 million and an underspend of nearly two thirds of the program.

My question is, why is this so badly underspent and what steps is the minister taking to ensure that applications pick up next year?

* (16:40)

Mr. Eichler: Of course, this is a great program. Of course, we did approve \$1.2 million and, of course, farmers are very, very frugal, as well. They want to make sure they get the job done and, actually, we only spent \$983,000 of the \$1.2 million that was approved. So, certainly, they're good stewards of the land. They

want to make sure that they have enough money, and we want to make sure they have enough money to finish the project as well.

But the applications from the farmers are demand driven. So what the uptake is for those actually comes from the farmers themselves. It's the second year for the program. There's a program, to support the sustainability as well.

So the conservation districts is another part of it, and, of course, we just formed the new watershed districts that also are part of that. And we have the BMPs as well. That's funded through that program to help farmers make sure they have the best practices in place for them. Of course, they have the ability to be able to determine what program works best for them.

So we have underspent, absolutely, but most of the projects come in under budget of what they applied for. So we're very pleased that the farmers are good stewards of the land, and they want to make sure they get the right value as well. Because it is a driven by the application.

So, when we receive these applications, we do want to budget enough money to make sure they're not going to be short either. So when they return money back to us that they applied for, that's a good thing. So I'm happy to say our farmers are being very frugal, but they're getting the job done as well.

Mr. Brar: Thank you, the minister, for your response.

Let's talk about Crown lands. It's about the drafting instructions for 2017 and 2019 changes to the Crown land regulations.

So my question here is: Like, did any outside organization provide the minister or the department with drafting instructions for 2017 and '19 changes to Crown land regulations?

Mr. Eichler: The Crown Lands Amendment Act was part of my mandate letter. In 2017, of which we joined the New West Partnership which previous government didn't want to be part of, but certainly we did, and with it come opportunities and challenges—one of those with our Crown lands, in order for us to be part of the New West Partnership. So we set out on a goal, a path, to modernize The Crown Lands Amendment Act.

So we started our first consultation in January of 2018 at Ag Days. I don't know if the member's been to Ag Days or not, but it's right after Christmas, so it's toy land for our farmers, and they go and look at what's new and modern. But, certainly, we had our

first consultation there. I can tell the member that we had several hundred consultations. In fact, we started there. We also started with the Keystone Agricultural Producers advisory council in November of 2018. Also we had town hall meetings, by telephone and fax: of course, meetings in Swan River, Dauphin, Neepawa, Ashern, Teulon, Beausejour, Hamiota, Portage la Prairie, Winnipeg, Brandon, Alonsa, Ste. Rose, Fisher River.

Of course, those surveys we compiled a pile of responses. What happened was is that we had an opportunity for young farmers to be able to access some Crown land. And I know I offered to do a briefing with the member yesterday. We tried to get together my—sent my staff up to meet with you. Unfortunately, we—wasn't able to do it yesterday. I'll still into—I'd sent you an invite this morning, my office did—I hope you got it—along with the Liberal Party; they wanted to be there as well. So I don't know if this'll end the opportunity to discuss it in more detail, but I can certainly tell the member that we had discussions, Keystone Ag Producers have been very supportive, especially on the crop side of things. They've been very much involved in those consultations. The Manitoba Beef Producers were a large part of those consultations as well.

The previous program, the way it was set up, just wasn't working. And we were chasing clients for payments; cost the department over \$1 million a year in expenditures just to collect the money, and that was through CLPA. The new auction system will start this November, which will have land available—small amounts, mind you; there's not much available at this point in time—but, certainly, we look forward to that auction starting in November. So we'll be open and transparent about that. And it'll give the opportunity for those Crown lands that are available to become part of that auction process.

We will be advertising in the local papers there to give them an advantage of when the auction sale's going to be. It'll be on the website as well, in order for us to be able to ensure that people are well aware of the auction. And, yes, it will be part of the New West Partnership, and they'll be allowed to bid. But you have to be in the business of raising beef. This is not land that's going to be available to corporations, if you will, that the member opposite has raised in question period. There will be corporations, but they're going to have to be involved in cattle, all members.

So it's really critically important that they meet the criteria. If they don't meet the criteria, then they

will not have the opportunity to get that land once again. So it'll be taken away from them. Those that die or move on or retire, that land will become available under the new process, which will then help our young farmers have access to it in a timely manner.

And that's what this is all about, is making sure we have Crown lands available for our young producers so they can increase the beef numbers in the province of Manitoba. They also can be part of the community pasture process. This is more than just Crown lands; it's about setting up community pastures as well in order to ensure that a group of farmers might want to come together and develop a community pasture.

So we'll look at those opportunities, but it is to increase the beef numbers, and I want to stress this to the member—I know my time's about out, and I'll get into more details in the next question—but this is about transparency and accountability in order to ensure Manitobans get a great rate for their land that they're going to be bidding on. And I'll get into the formula in a bit too, but certainly it's going to simplify the process for our young farmers, and farmers in general, to be able to access those Crown lands.

Mr. Brar: Thanks, Minister, for your detailed response.

Just a follow-up question, you mentioned several consultations that were done in Manitoba at various locations. Were these consultations done after the changes in 2017, just curious to know, or before?

* (16:50)

Mr. Eichler: As I said in my opening comments and to the question, we started in January of 2018.

They also clued the clients, the ACL clients, 'indigenous' communities, a large part of that, municipalities, the Manitoba Beef Producers, Keystone Ag Producers I already mentioned, Manitoba Bison Association, Manitoba forage grasslands association, Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Northern Association of Community Councils, Manitoba Conservation Districts Association, National Cattle Feeders' Association, the appeal 'tribunal'.

So we've done—in fact, read you for yourself the comments from the Keystone Ag Producers. They in their statement said they've never had consultation like this on any initiatives brought forward by any government, including previous governments.

So I—if you go back and look at my 13 years of opposition, which I thought was way too long, but I can tell you this, that I was ready to go into government the second term, but I didn't quite get here. But I can tell the member this, that if you read any of my speeches, it's about consultation. And I'm bullish about that.

And I'm not going to do anything that's going to hurt our beef producers. I might be in a conflict here, but I can tell you this. I'm determined to grow the beef herd in Manitoba. And this is one of those initiatives that's going to help. And that's why we got the support of our beef producers and our Keystone ag producers.

So I know that member might want to make politics out of, but I'm not. This is about making sure our beef producers are stable and they're whole, and they're going to be able to have Crown land available to them in a timely manner.

Mr. Brar: Thanks, the minister, for your response.

It was not about politics; it was about defects that those consultations were done after—on and after January 2018, and the changes were done—draft instructions were done in 2017 anyways.

My next question is: Can I be supplied with a list of all the organizations that you've consulted, now or even later?

Mr. Eichler: Well, I thank for the member for the opportunity to read this into the record.

So January the 18th of 2018, in Brandon at the Manitoba Ag Days, we consulted with ACL clients.

February the 6th of 2018, we had a consultation in Winnipeg with Manitoba Beef Producers.

February the 14th of 2018 in Portage la Prairie, we had consultation. The following organizations were there: Manitoba Beef Producers, Manitoba Bison, Keystone Ag Producers, Manitoba Forage and Grasslands Association, Manitoba Conservation Districts Association, the appeal 'tribunial', we had regrets from AMM, even though that's where their head office is at, Association of Manitoba Community Pastures.

Then on February the 20th of April—to through April the 6th, we had online discussions on the document, invitation to submit to the general public. And I can tell the member opposite we had a large number of presentations back to us.

February the 21st, 2018, we were in Swan River, which again we met with ACL clients.

Then the 22nd, the following day, we were in Dauphin. Again, we met with our ACL clients. And then we moved on to Ste. Rose on this 22nd as well, which we had consultations with our clients once again. And then on the 23rd, we were in Brandon.

I imagine you're probably getting tired on my ride right now, but this is really important to show how much we did consult on this. Because we then went from Brandon, we went to Neepawa on the 28th. And, again, we met with clients there. Then in on March 1st, we went to Ashern and met with our clients once again. Then on March the 1st, we went to Teulon, my hometown. We had a great turnout there as well.

Then on March the 1st, again, we moved over to Beausejour to consult with them. We have a small amount of Crown land available there, but certainly we want to make sure they were consulted.

And then on March the 26th, another consultation in Winnipeg. And this was with the Keystone Ag Producers.

As you know, they're the major 'agronization' for the province of Manitoba to look after their members and make sure they had do the right thing. You know, as I said their comments earlier on.

April 11th, we were in Portage la Prairie once again. And that was consultation mainly with the appeal 'tribunial'. Then April the 17th, we were in Hamiota, which we met with the national cattlemen's association—feeders association.

Then October 4th we had another consultation in Winnipeg and Manitoba Beef Producers were there then, Keystone Agricultural Producers, Manitoba Forage and Grasslands Association.

Then October the 15th we were in Gladstone and, again, more consultation. Manitoba Beef Producers were there. They wanted to make sure that their members had an opportunity to present to us, so we met with them, and then we also, 15 days later on October the 30th, we had another consultation in Winnipeg, again with the meat producers—Keystone Agricultural Producers—in order to ensure that they had all the documentation, and then we moved back to Portage once again on November 12th and, again, the Keystone Ag Producers had an opportunity to bring their members because we wanted to make sure they were all involved, so we did that.

And then back to Winnipeg on December the 7th. Again, Keystone Ag Producers, we re-met with them, and on January the 23rd of this year, 2019, we were

back in Brandon, who we met by invitation with ACL clients. We had them all the way from The Pas and Flin Flon. I remember being there. They drove through winter roads in order to get there.

Also Keystone Ag Producers were there, Manitoba Beef Producers were there, the national cattleman's association was there, Manitoba Bison Association was there, and we had a very fruitful conversation there in regards to our changes, making sure we got it right.

Then January the 25th, we did a mail-out, a communication with frequently asked questions, and, of course, how we're going to invoice this out, what's it going to look like, and to activate all those ag Crown lands' clients.

February the 15th, we did another mail-out to provincial municipalities, 'indigenous' communities to ensure they were there as well.

I've got more that I would like to put on the record, but the Chair says I'm out of time, so I'll get back to more consultations in—on your next question.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Brar: And thanks to the minister for all those details and hard work you did for making these changes.

And in light of these changes, I mean, the latest criteria is one should be a citizen and having the most money. That's what I perceive. This change means that absentee out-of-province corporations can gobble up our Crown land and then hire low-wage Manitoba workers.

Why has the minister done this?

Mr. Eichler: Actually, the member is wrong, Mr. Chair. This is a management decision. Every party that's in business makes the decision about what's affordable for them. I can assure the member opposite that the auction system was established exactly for that.

This is not about who has the most money; it's about the business practices available to those that's going to be able to bid on these. It'll be open; it'll be transparent. This will be a bid system. It's not a system that we took lightly.

If the member consults with the number of people I've talked about, he'll find that this was asked for by those members to go to the auction system. So this was in consultation with those organizations in order to make sure they had a fair and transparent way.

This will set the price of what they want to pay according to their management decisions. Of course we know that there's some established farmers that will be bidding accordingly too, but a lot of those that had Crown land in the past didn't always surrender it, and that line—that land, Crown land that was at—lease, sometimes they would sublet that, which was against the rules, or they would sell it for hay purposes, and that land was locked up for a long periods of time.

So we wanted to make sure that young farmers had an opportunity to access that land, and we'd have got into that if we had an opportunity yesterday in our briefing, but this is a complex issue that we took very seriously, and we are taking very seriously. We will have consultations again. We'll have some town halls starting next week. We'll be starting in Moosehorn next Tuesday—Ste. Rose next Tuesday? *[interjection]* Sorry—close, but no cigar, but it certainly—we will be in Moosehorn, I hope—Thursday we'll be in Moosehorn.

So we're meeting with the producers. As the member will get to know as he gets to know me, I don't take anything lightly. I take this very seriously, and we want to make sure we do get it right and we will get it right.

* (17:00)

Yes, there was 400 people at the meeting in Ste. Rose, mainly because of misinformation. And when I get questions in the House about misinformation, I want to set the record straight and I want to make sure we have the right goods to these members so—to understand the opportunities for them as they go forward. So we will do our due diligence.

We also have met with the Manitoba Beef Producers. We will ensure that they're well informed. Fact, I talked to the president yesterday and I talked to the CAO today about their meetings coming up and their consultations at district meetings. There'll be 14 of them, which will be discussing Crown land as well.

I invite the member to attend any of them that he might want to attend. They're open to the public; not just beef producers, media's been invited as well. So I'm sure we'll have a robust discussion about these ag Crown lands. But we are ensuring that our producers have a legacy lease. Those that do, then the Crown land will be available to our young producers on a 15-year basis and ensure that we have the right lands in the right place for the right opportunity.

But I want to stress the fact they have to be beef producers. It's not land for speculation. This is land that's going to be used for beef producers. Manitobans own this land and they'll have access to it.

Mr. Brar: Thanks, Minister, for your response.

The minister would have better served the public if those draft regulations were widely circulated and formed the basis of a discussion and document out in the community before the regulations were put in place. For many people, the first time they saw those regulations was after they had been approved by the Cabinet.

Mr. Eichler: I won't read the list back on the record again, but I think it speaks loud and clear about our consultation process and, like, you know, how much clearer I can be about our consultation process. The regulations were certainly part of that, and that's why we had the consultation. They had every opportunity to be part of that. And I can assure the member that as our town halls are starting next week—I'm sure there'll be a good turnout there, there's no doubt about it—but we will make sure they understand the impact it has on them. We will not meet with individual producers about theirs. That's the job of my staff, in order to meet with those producers.

Every lease is a bit unique. All of them have different aspects to it. Some are far from where their home residences are and then they have access to that Crown land. But, certainly, part of our process is to ensure that the current leaseholders have access to that land. And, of course, the first right of refusal's been part of that discussion. I will suggest the member to stay tuned on that as we make any necessary changes there. That's been the No. 1 thing.

The other part that's been up and front most, and I'll ask the member if he has any suggestions on it, but—and that's access to Crown lands. Currently, the model that we have is any Manitoban can access Crown land without notice. We don't think that's right. We can't stop it. But I can tell you this much, that with biosecurity and herd health, that's critically important. And we would ask anybody to help us in regards to making sure they get access from the Crown land 'leasee' in order to let them know they're going on their land.

Hunting season's right around the corner. There'll be a lot of hunters that'll have access to Crown land. And we ask that they get a hold of the producers before they have access to that land. They don't have to. But, for biosecurity and safety of health herds, in

order to ensure that they have the safety in mind for their livestock. Livestock sometimes are—can be a bit skittish from strangers coming on their land. So we don't want any herds to be displaced, calves lost. So people have access to that land and they have every right to be there. But I think it's respectful of all Manitobans to make sure they let cattle producers know before they access land. That's leased or private land. Private land, they have to make sure they have application to be there. But, certainly, we want to stand beside producers in making sure that they have their rights protected for herd health and management health so that they don't lose any livestock.

This is a tough time for our livestock producers right now. Some are—have feed shortages. Others have management problems. But, certainly, we want to be there for them. We want their property to be respected.

Mr. Brar: Thanks, the minister, for your response.

The minister very recently amended the agricultural Crown land leases and permits—regulations. In section 6(1), it lays out clearly that the forage leases and cropping leases are to be in terms of no longer than 15 years. Section 6(2) says that a forage lease or a cropping lease is not renewable.

When I brought this to the attention of the minister on Monday, he said I was dead wrong and he said that the changes gives the young farmers the opportunity to lease this land for 15 years, with two more automatic renewals if they so wish.

Can the minister point me to the section of the regulations which include these automatic renewals. And if he can't, will he retract his earlier comments? Thank you.

* (17:10)

Mr. Eichler: We have a document called frequent asked questions; I'd be happy to share it with the member. I want to read it into the record so that we have the record straight.

What it says is: What if I have an existing forage lease renewable permit for hay or grazing?

So existing forage leases and renewable permits for haying or grazing remain in place under the existing terms and conditions outlined in your lease or permit agreement. In 2020 there will be a transitional rent value applied, being the average that is calculated as per formula in the regulations, rental rate, and the current rental rate of \$2.13 for animal unit. In 2021 the full calculation of forage rental rate will apply.

Additional transitional measures will be applied to forage leases or associated renewable permits expiring on or before December 31st, 2034. This time frame aligns with the new lease term of 15 years for forage dispositions. As such, any forage lease or assisted associated renewable permits expiring prior to December 31st of 2034 will be eligible for renewal with a term not to go beyond December the 31st, 2034.

And, normally, legacy leases, they would end when they turn 65 and they would have a renewal of five years, and so, under the new system, they actually could get a renewal for 15 years, where it was taken to the age of 80 if they happen to fall within those parameters.

So it's a bit complicated but, certainly, one that will be part of the renewal program that we've been talking about here this afternoon.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): What I'm hearing from a number of farmers is that some of these changes are going to be devastating. The minister is saying that young farmers are going to be the big beneficiaries, but I have here the Manitoba Beef Producers saying that young ranchers are going to feel the brunt of the changes that he's making.

It seems that there are a number of problems. You may have a large number of leases coming up in 2034 to be auctioned off at the same time. That's going to create, you know, I would suggest, some problems not only short term but long term because you—with the repeated 15 years, you would then have a whole lot more leases coming up in 2049.

Wouldn't it have been better to work out something that would not have, you know, had so many leases coming up all at once?

The removing the cap on the number of animals, I'm hearing, could have the potential for significant environmental degradation and leases themselves. While people may be good stewards of their land in the first few years, the way the auction works it could provide an incentive for people to degrade the land and harvest as much as they possibly can in the last few years so that the land won't be worth as much so that they'll have a better chance of bidding for it.

So I think that there's a number of problems here, and I would challenge the minister that it's not going to be quite as simple as he seems to think.

Mr. Eichler: I appreciate member's opposite suggestions, but I do want to stress this. Farmers are

the best stewards of the land. I don't know of anybody the member's talking about that's going to destroy the land for the next generation; I don't know of anybody like that. And I would like him to apologize, first of all, because that's just wrong. I don't know of any farmer that would do that. Fact, I've been in the ag business, have been a farm boy my whole life, and I can tell you one thing I always do know and I'll always stand by and that's our farm families. They pay their bills. They will go without food. They'll feed their livestock before they'll even feed themselves. They want to make sure they have the best land for the next generation to come. So I take exception to that.

Did I say it was going to be easy? Absolutely not. And, as far as the leases are concerned, he said these all going to come up in 2034; that's not the case at all. Some will already have the renewals for 15 years, and they will be able to hold on to that land. So, once that becomes available, that land will become available and some of those leases will already be out. There's going to be farmers that are getting out of the business, some of them that, quite frankly, don't have cattle now; we can't take that land away from them under the current legislation, but now we will. That land will now become available for our young guys.

And do I have a crystal ball to look into and say what the values are going to be? I don't. But I know one thing for sure that farmers want to get a return on their investment, and that's making sure they got cattle on that land to utilize it and not sublet it. Under the previous agreements, the way it was set up, that was available to those producers to be able to sublet it. And those days are gone. And to have the ability to be able to sell their farm with public money, public land, is wrong. And every farmer has to have access to that land in order for us to grow our livestock producers. And the member should know that land that belongs to the general public should be utilized as that. They're simply borrowing the land. The farmers actually buy their land. They know that they're at risk with Crown land that still belongs to Manitobans and all Manitobans.

So no farmer should benefit as a result of having Crown lands and selling that with their farms, and it's been a misconception that this is acceptable, but it's not, and we want to ensure that beef producers have access to this land. And some of this process will be complicated, and that's why we're doing our town hall meetings. We're not afraid of meeting with our producers. We proved that with the consultation process. I don't know if you were here when I read on the record our consultation process, but we went

through this every day. We wanted to make sure our farmers were aware. Probably a lot of them didn't pay attention; we know that. But we know the one thing for sure, we will meet with them in order to ensure that we do get it right so we do grow our beef herd in Manitoba, and we'll do that.

* (17:20)

Member opposite should know that I'll do that. I give the member a briefing earlier on when we first introduced this. Your leader has asked me for a briefing, which we sent him an invite along with my critic. We wanted to do it last night with him, but he wasn't available, so we did make it available next week, which we will happily invite you to as well. If you're—want to come along with your leader, we're happy to do that. Our door is always open, and we'll continue to meet with our beef producers to ensure that their concerns are dealt with in a timely manner.

And, quite frankly, I believe we have it right. In fact, we offered to start to—when we first started this process, we offered a tender process on the Crown land. They said, no, no, we want to go the auction system. It's more transparent. We have to be there in person or we have to—somebody that's going to represent us and identify that they have the money in order to actually bid, and that's really critically important.

So I beg to differ with the member. I know that we will have challenges, but I'm not afraid of the challenges and neither are farm families. And we will stand with our farm families every day to ensure that they have access to this land now and into the future.

Future generations are important, and growing a beef herd's not going to be easy. We went from 800,000 head, prior to BSE and the flood of 2011, down to 450,000. We're still at about 500,000 now. We're on the trend up. Yes, we have some challenges with feed. We know that. We'll have some herds that are going to be sold off. Yes, we know that too.

But we also know there's hope, and we have to give them some hope, and that's what we're doing with our new amendments to the Crown land leases.

Mr. Gerrard: The concern that I'm hearing is that we may end up with a lot of absentee landlords, people who've purchased land from other provinces. And the result of that will be a decreased number people of living in the area, decreased taxes and so on to the local municipality, increased taxes or costs to the rural municipality for bylaw enforcement and so on. So

these are just some of the concerns which are being talked about.

I also want to talk briefly about the—we were talking earlier on about the carbon savings bank. One of the important areas to be preserving carbon is in the soil and, of course, in trees. And so—but in order to be able for an individual farmer to benefit, there's got to be good ways of measuring the amount of carbon that's stored in the soil and of measuring, you know, the number or the amount of carbon that the trees are absorbing. There's been quite a bit of work in other areas which suggests that there's advantages in having a not completely treed area, but some more trees than just an open, flat pasture, partly because the cattle can get out of the sun and they can get some shade, and that those trees actually enhance the production that you can get off the land.

And so, when people are talking about increasing, you know, the number of trees being grown, planting more trees, is there a possibility of doing that on pastures? And how will that work in terms of what the minister is proposing for the new rules in terms of the auctions and so on?

I think the other thing is that in the legislation, which we and the Manitoba Beef Producers supported, but it's the regulations which have come out very recently which are the ones of concern. And so we just want to make sure that the farmers are, you know, have good opportunities, that the land has got good stewardship and we're promoting biodiversity and carbon storage and things which are important in today's world.

Mr. Eichler: Well, I thank the member, Mr. Chair, for the question, because actually, at our protein summit that we just hosted—and I don't know if the member had the opportunity to follow up on it—but what we're looking at here is a 15 per cent reduction in the carbon intensity per kilogram of animal protein. And animal protein has been left out of the discussion on protein. It's mainly been about plant protein.

But cattle and grazing and Crown lands—actually, what we're looking at is a 15 per cent increase in productivity of agricultural Crown lands and privately owned grassland and forages, increased public trust of protein processing and production.

This gives us an opportunity to really bring it to a new level, and I hope the member opposite will be with us hand in hand in order to ensure that we do promote beef and grassland management. Actually, hooves on the ground are critically important. It's

regenerative agriculture, and that's something we don't do enough job of promoting. A lot of this misinformation is out there. Some—even the weather networks, well, said, let's don't grow beef no more. That's just wrong. Cattle and the environment work well together. And we got to make people understand that.

It's not just about trees. Trees are important, absolutely. I couldn't agree with the member more. But what's critically important is the right information getting out to the general public.

And, as the Minister of Agriculture, I do my best. But all of us in this room have a responsibility to talk about climate change. Climate change is real; there's no doubt about that. And we want to make sure we have the right tools in place for them to be able to do that. And, by making some of these changes and making sure the land is used for what it's intended to, and with beef, being what they do to contribute to the carbon footprint in reduction and harmony with them, are weight gain—we see this as a win-win for our beef producers. And we hope that members opposite will help us get that message out.

And, as I said earlier on, I'll be happy to brief you both, anybody else that wants to come in. I know I've done this for my own caucus. But, certainly, we're about transparency and accountability. We want to make sure we get this right. That is critically important as part of our protein advantage, and, as we move forward, critically important that we ensure that we get the best for our farm families as we go forward.

Mr. Gerrard: In order to check on the amount of carbon that's stored in the land, you actually have to measure it. Will you be promoting and enabling better measurement of carbon in the land so that you can have more carbon stored?

Mr. Eichler: I know we're about out of time, and the staff were so excited about talking about this subject because we are talking about our environmental footprint. And we are proud of the fact that we can have these conversations. In fact, we've got to have more of them. As I said earlier in my comments, we got to be able to talk about this. And the footprint's really important. We have our studies that we're ready to go on. We want to work with all Manitobans. But this—

* (17:30)

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

An Honourable Member: We'll do more in private.

Mr. Chairperson: I'm interrupting the proceedings of this section of Committee of Supply pursuant to the Sessional Order passed by the House on September 30th, 2019.

Item 2(d) and 15 state that all department Estimates must be concluded on Thursday, October 10th, 2019. If not, all resolutions are passed, the Chairperson must interrupt the proceedings at 5:30 and put all questions necessary to dispose of the remaining matters without any debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am therefore going to call in sequence the resolutions of the following matters.

Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,490,000 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.2: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,102,000 for Agriculture, Policy and Transformation, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.3: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$133,535,000 for Agriculture, Risk Management, Credit and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.4: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$16,518,000 for Agriculture, Stewardship and Assurance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.5: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$16,432,000 for Agriculture, Production and Economic Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.6: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$555,000 for Agriculture, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.7: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$500,000 for Agriculture, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

SPORT, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook): I will now call the resolutions for Sport, Culture and Heritage.

Resolution 14.1: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,152,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.1: Be it resolved that there—sorry.

Resolution 14.2: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$92,393,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Sport, Culture and Heritage Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.3: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,898,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Information Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.4: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$92,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.5: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$135,000 for Sport, Culture and Heritage, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr. Chairperson (Dennis Smook): We will now call resolutions for Executive Council.

Resolution 2.1: Be it RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,090,000 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: This concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254.

I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedication during this process.

The hour being 5:38, committee rise.

GROWTH, ENTERPRISE AND TRADE

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): Yes, I do.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge that Manitobans have reaffirmed their support for the direction we have chosen to bring greater stability, security and opportunity to people across the entire province. As the Minister for Department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue to fulfill the commitments we have made in Budget 2019.

The world is showing their confidence in Manitoba as a place to invest, build and grow business in an industry. We have had record-setting pace of growth in private sector commercial and industrial capital initiatives. Last year Manitoba led the country in private sector investment growth—excuse me. Economic growth remains at the centre of our plan for a stronger, more prosperous Manitoba. We have tremendous—we've made tremendous progress in reducing red tape, lowering taxes and creating the

conditions for business growth, expansion and competitiveness.

Through our new mandate and our Manitoba Works! plan, we will continue to work on this, build on this work with targeted actions intended to support the creation of 40,000 new jobs across the province.

On October 3rd, the Economic Development Office and GATT staged an event to launch the Manitoba Works! plan and to align its implementation with the Economic Growth Action Plan. The event brought together team Manitoba, regional and strategic partners, and other key stakeholders to identify specific actions that can be taken in the next 12 months to spur economic growth in Manitoba.

Input received from this event will also be supplemented by an online survey and subsequent online town hall events on specific topics to allow for broad consultation with Manitobans.

Manitoba Works! aims to build on Manitoba's strengths in key sectors to grow trade, investment and job creation. It takes a whole of government approach to economic growth to ensure the policies in areas like permitting, infrastructure investment and regulatory reform align with the Economic Growth Action Plan.

We have now launched the Innovation Growth Program to encourage small and medium-size enterprise private sector investment to develop and commercialize innovative new products. Strategies for tourism, cultural industries and agrifood have been launched, and the skills, talent and knowledge strategy is in progress.

The new tourism strategy's vision reflects the aspirations of all stakeholders to maximize Manitoba's opportunities as key travel destination, both now and in the future.

In addition to the province-wide tourism strategy, Travel Manitoba has also launched a Northern Manitoba Tourism Strategy and an Indigenous Tourism Strategy. They are working closely with businesses, stakeholders and communities to realize the growth and revenue targets set out in these strategies.

One of the first commitments of our government in 2016 was to create a bold new economic strategy for Northern Economic Development. Developed by northerners for northerners, the Look North Report and Action Plan is focused on sustainable and long-term solutions that will diversify and grow the northern economy in Manitoba.

As part of the government's growth action plan, Communities Economic Development Fund or CEDF, as it's known, has been identified as the Province's regional partner organization to co-ordinate the delivery of economic development programs and services in northern Manitoba, including actions under the Look North strategy. A new board of directors has been put in place and we are confident that their strong leadership will continue to propel CEDF and the Look North strategy forward.

One of the priorities identified in the Look North Report and Action Plan is continuing to build on our incredible mineral potential in northern Manitoba. In doing so, we have committed to working diligently and collaboratively in our relationships with First Nations. We want to ensure we are supporting First Nations to be a part of the conversation about major resource use projects. We believe that First Nations should be actively involved in all phases of mineral development projects and share in the benefits.

As part of this commitment, we have worked with First Nations to develop a Manitoba First Nation mineral development protocol, focusing on a mutually agreed to Crown indigenous consultation process for mineral development. It serves to enhance certainty for all parties.

The department is now actively negotiating protocol agreements with several First Nation communities, focusing first on areas of high mineral potential, where companies are actively looking to explore.

In May 2019, the Manitoba Liaison Committee on Mining and Exploration was appointed and serves as the Province's advisory group on priority issues concerning mining and mineral exploration in Manitoba.

In its first few months, the committee has already dedicated many hours of their time to working with Manitoba on solutions to the challenges faced by investors, companies and other stakeholders that interact with government to get the work done in Manitoba.

We look forward to the central Canadian mining conference to be held in Winnipeg, November 18th and 19th of this year. In Manitoba, we are optimistic about our future potential to grow this industry.

Manitoba benefits greatly from free trade both within Canada and internationally. We have taken a leadership role in bringing down barriers to internal trade across Canada and have removed a number of

Manitoba's exceptions under the Free Trade Agreement. The New West Partnership Trade Agreement creates an open common market of more than 11 million people with a combined GDP of more than \$750 billion. Manitoba businesses, workers and consumers are benefitting from these agreements.

Improved efficiency of permitting and inspection processes will also enhance opportunities for economic growth and will ensure that Manitoba remains competitive and attractive for business and job growth.

Ensuring that our province remains a safe and healthy place to work is also important. Workplace Safety and Health has been implementing targeted enforcement strategies, along with a concerted effort to ensure consistency across and within industry in all areas of the province.

Strategic enforcement, combined with significant efforts of our prevention partners, including SAFE Work Manitoba industry-based safety associations, employers and workers has reduced Manitoba time loss injury rate.

On October 1st, Manitoba's minimum wage was increased by 30 cents to \$11.65 per hour. These regular increases to the minimum wages improve wages for employees while also providing predictability for employers.

Working with all Manitobans and through a whole of government approach to economic growth, we can continue to build on Manitoba's strengths to collaboratively advance initiatives to—that grow local companies and industries, create jobs, attract talent and investment, and increase the economic competitiveness of our province.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I'd want to just make a brief opening comments to thank the minister for his dedication to the departments and, you know, we're in a bit of a challenging and, you know, challenging time in economics around North America with a lot of, you know, a lot of changes going south of the border that affects us here in Manitoba—a lot of uncertainties around the globe. And these are all challenges that we face here, as an economy and, you know, it takes a right vision to make sure that we stay as, you know,

positive growth here in the next short term—a few years—but also have a vision for how we can, you know, provide the right opportunities to continue to grow over a longer term approach, right?

* (15:10)

So what—I want to have a good dialogue today for asking some questions, learning about the department, finding ways that we can make sure that our economy is working for all Manitobans and making sure that, you know, we have a good dialogue about the best ways our economy can work for everyone.

I also just wanted to take a point to mention that on the first snowfall of the season to thank everyone for coming, especially the staff who are here. You know, it's not always nice to be out and about on the very first snowy day, so thanks for coming, and I appreciate all the time and effort you're putting in to this process today.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 10.1.(a) contained in resolution 10.1.

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

Mr. Pedersen: I would like to introduce my very capable staff: Dave Dyson, deputy minister; Melissa Ballantyne, assistant deputy minister of Finance and Corporate Services; Michelle Wallace, executive director, policy and strategy; and Steve Spry, assistant deputy minister Labour and Regulatory Services.

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

Some Honourable Members: Global.

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

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Moses: I just wanted to begin just with some—before I had some specific questions, kind of going through the legislative review documents and annual reports. But I just wanted to get some of your, just, you know, high-level sense about some of the

comments that we're seeing from the Conference Board. You know, they've been—kind of downgraded us—you know, our economic outlook. You know, they saw that over the past summer they have forecasts coming out for the next year which looks not as rosy as we've had in the past.

Just a quote from them here. I'll just read out to you, and I'd like to just get your response and just—you know, just an overall sense of where you think our economic outlook is coming up. But just their quote is: Real GDP growth will slow from a gain of 1.9 per cent last year to 1.6 per cent in 2019 and 0.7 per cent in 2020. Job losses in several sectors, including utilities and mining, will drag down overall job growth over the near term.

So I just wanted to put that quote out there and just get a sense of what your outlook will be and what your response is to the downgrading in outlook for our province moving forward.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, first of all, we don't really agree with the Conference Board. They've been the most conservative economic forecasters and, as was noted in question period, have also been wrong the last number of years about Manitoba. For instance, Royal Bank has a much more optimistic forecast. But what we're really looking at—we look at the private sector investments that we've had in Manitoba over the last couple of years. We've been leading—or leading Canada in terms of private sector investment, and that's where we believe there are 40,000 jobs that will come from the private sector over the next four years.

Also, take a bit of exception to the member talking about mining, too, that—mining was hit with a somewhat double whammy in 2008. It was affected by the worldwide slowdown in the economy which dried up investment and also from the government at the time was really not friendly to mining at all. I—also—so a lot of that investment dried up in Manitoba.

But we've had some really great work. Our mining liaison committee has been working hard to identify those potential places where we can help streamline mining investment, and the world is turning to metals right now; there is a huge push on the mineral resources. Investment flow is moving into the mining sector and this is the place to be.

So we expect to see a lot of investment and some really interesting things happening in Manitoba in terms of the mining sector in the next—over the next couple years.

Mr. Moses: So you mentioned that we're, you know, leading in private sector growth, job growth, and I just wanted to compare that to public sector—public sector investment in jobs. When you're looking at that public sector and private sector, what is the net growth when you combine those, and what is the drag on the decrease in public sector, compared to the private sector?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, there—the question about comparing public sector investment versus private sector would probably be better handled by Finance, and you got your chance in concurrence this afternoon if you want to go there.

But I would say we—this government strongly believes in private sector investment in order to grow the economy. If you're talking about public sector investment, you're talking about public debt. We know that Manitoba Hydro's debt will reach \$25 billion and beyond, once Keeyask wraps up and comes online, and it's not going to be making any money for the next foreseeable future.

So you're—if you're talking about wanting more private—public—if you want—talking about wanting more public sector what he calls investments, what I would tend to describe that as being in higher deficits and higher annual deficits. And, you know, just a reminder the public sector debt grew by \$5 billion in the last number of years, or the last couple of years of the NDP administration and we feel it's much better to go with private sector investment that creates real jobs and long-term jobs.

Public sector jobs, you know, the member's probably concerned about the wrap-up of Keeyask, but those are jobs that only last while the project is gone—the project is on. We would rather see long-term jobs throughout our diversified economy.

Mr. Moses: So, with the public-private sector job growth, often we see lower-wage jobs in the private sector than we often do in the public sector when we're investing in public sector jobs. What's your economic outlook for private sector jobs that have lower wages in terms of, you know, and Manitobans earning enough to have, you know, living wages and being able to spend and keep our economy moving in the private sector jobs versus the public sector investments that could be made?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, the member's wrong in his premise. For one thing, there are a lot of high-tech jobs that are coming to Manitoba. They are long-term, high-paying jobs. And I'll use companies like Ubisoft,

which is one of the companies that private investment—or private sector companies that's invested in Manitoba. They are actually hiring people across—from across the world. They're actually attracting expatriate Manitobans back to Manitoba with high-paying jobs.

* (15:20)

So, when you characterize the private sector as paying low salaries, that's just not correct. And what we're looking at is long-term, stable jobs that will, in the private sector, that will—in the private sector that will grow Manitoba's economy. People can invest in houses and whatever else they choose to invest in because they will have the salaries to go with that.

Mr. Moses: Okay, thanks for the answer.

Just as a little evidence—or, in—one of the reasons to back up—to support that comment is another note from the Conference Board that says, you know, consumption growth was weak last year because of job loss in several major sectors. The point I raise is lacklustre wage gains. This year's retail sales data are signalling consumption growth will remain subdued in 2019—is the quote from the board.

So that does signal that, although there are, you know, areas in the economy that are moving, there is a little bit of stagnation when it comes to wage gains. And I think there might be a correlation there between some private sector growth and the wage stagnation. And I wanted to know from the minister, what—(a) what sectors have been affected by this—maybe wage stagnation in any industries across the province, and what, if any, plan we have to change that?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, the member can pin his hopes on the Conference Board of Canada that this government will rely on the private sector to invest. We see lots of investments in the past couple of years.

We see—we know of—just to—today is the—what's the date today? October the 10th. A week ago today, we had an investment opportunity announced, and Paterson GlobalFoods—\$93 million in private sector investment, 70 jobs. These are high-tech food processing jobs, which is going to have a tremendous spinoff in the agricultural field because they're going to buy Manitoba oats that are going to be processed at this plant. There's transportation opportunities in here in both getting the raw product to there and to move the finished product out.

You know, the member can—he'll pin his hopes on the Conference Board—we feel confident in the private sector investment.

Mr. Moses: Thank you for that. I was hoping for a little bit more detailed answer if there was any sort of particular industries across the province where we are seeing any wage stagnation.

Mr. Pedersen: No.

Mr. Moses: Is that something the minister could endeavour to look into?

Mr. Pedersen: Yes, if we can find any data. But we will endeavour to find what he's looking for if it actually exists, but I can't promise that it exists.

So if we find it, we'll let you know. And if we are not able to find it, we'll let you know.

Mr. Moses: Thank you for that. I appreciate you looking into that and look forward to the results.

So you did mention mining earlier, and I wanted to just touch that a bit with a few questions. So you mentioned that, you know, we're looking at—there's precious metals—zinc, copper, nickel, gold mining sectors, you know, and there's a lot of global issues with those—some of those industries over the past little bit, which may have dragged down some of the economic results we're seeing from those. And you did mention in your preamble—in your opening comments, that there was some outlook of positive growth potential from the mining industry.

And I just wanted to get some specifics on that. So do you have specific metals or—that you think in Manitoba we will see growth from? And also, regions in the province where those might—where we might see that, as well.

Mr. Pedersen: Mr. Chair, just clarification. I have an assistant sitting over there. Can she approach so I can get an answer from her and then—[interjection] Yes, okay.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, actually, the member should have just leaned over to the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey), and he could have perhaps got a wealth of information from the member from Flin Flon. But this allows me to do that instead of the member from Flin Flon, in case he doesn't know.

There is lots of activity happening in the Snow Lake area which is really exciting not only for the community of Snow Lake but for the community of

Flin Flon which is facing the Triple Seven mine closing in a couple of years, perhaps, although they are still looking at that. The—HudBay has invested, if I remember correctly, somewhere over \$250 million in the Snow Lake area. They have in excess, I believe, of 600 employees working—living in a camp in Snow Lake. And a lot of those are employees going back and—living in Flin Flon and traveling to Snow Lake.

There is their new mine that they are still doing drill holes on. The—it's called the 1901 mine. They—HudBay is very excited about that because the—they haven't even been able to map the full potential of it. That's just how big this new mine will be. And it will be attached to the Lalor mine—that's L-a-l-o-r, I believe it's spelled—Lalor mine. And so there's lots of activity happening in that area.

To the east of Snow Lake, I believe it is a company called rock land resources, but I can confirm that name for you too—are very interested. They've done drill holes. They've brought hydro into a site. There is lots of activity happening there too.

Gold prices are up and continue to go up. And that's just in the Flin Flon-Snow Lake area. You go over to Vale mine in Thompson. They did close the smelter two years ago. And they have now got a settlement with the steelworkers, so they're very—Vale is very excited about what's going to go forward from there. They've got huge resources that they have discovered. In fact, they're talking about—they have discovered more high-grade nickel now than when the mine first opened in 1958. So there's lots of optimism there too.

There's a number of other mineral resource companies that are doing exploration. And with the mineral prices on the upswing, it bodes well for northern Manitoba.

Mr. Moses: While we're on the topic of mining, I just wanted to get a confirmation about the current amount of money in the Mining Community Reserve Fund.

* (15:30)

Mr. Pedersen: Just a correction. I think I might have mispronounced the company's—it's Rockcliff Metals that's doing test drills in the Snow Lake area.

In terms of the Mining Community Reserve Fund, you were asking the amount of money in the fund, \$11.8 million.

Mr. Moses: Can the minister provide a list of disbursements from the fund in 2018-19, in the fiscal year, current to date?

Mr. Pedersen: There was no payments out from it in 2018-19.

Mr. Moses: Has the fund grown over the past year—two fiscal years, or has it been shrinking, or holding steady? And, if so, by how much?

Mr. Pedersen: The balance of the fund was \$13,919,000 in 2015-16. And at the end of 2018-19 it is currently—at the end of 2018-19, it is \$11,735,900. So, approximately \$2.2 million less over the last four years.

Mr. Moses: So does that—that indicates that there would have been some payouts over that time. Maybe, can you provide any details of those payouts from the fund during that time period that you're outlining. As well as there must have been some payouts or also maybe there was some replenishment of the fund from mining taxes collected. Can you describe that as well?

Mr. Pedersen: We'll get you those numbers. So any payouts from 2015-16 to 2018-19, any payouts and what the—funds that actually came into it. We'll get you that; we just don't have it just right now, but we'll get it to you as soon as we have it.

Mr. Moses: Okay, so just so I'm, I understand you're going to provide the information, but just so I can understand about the fund. There's a mining tax that's collected in order to replenish the fund and, you know, I'm seeing here that there was—the Province should be more than \$12 million in mining in taxes that I'd assume would have gone to the mining reserve fund. And I wanted just to clarify that: if that's the case or no.

Mr. Pedersen: That would have been gross royalty taxes that would have been collected from the mining sector. But at 6 per cent is the levy up to—we can transfer up to 6 per cent into the community mining reserve fund.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Just following up on this Mining Community Reserve Fund. So you're allowed to put up to 6 per cent of the total tax royalty revenue collected into the fund.

So what percentage has gone into the fund for 2018-19, 2017-2018? Can you give us those numbers?

Mr. Pedersen: I think that's what the member from St. Vital was just asking, because when we give you the amount that was—went into the account from the royalties and then the disbursements, that will give you the information that you just asked for.

Mr. Lindsey: Just—it seems that if the fund was at 13-plus million in 2015-16, and I think something sticks in my mind for '17-18, it was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$17 million. I could be wrong on that. There's a \$17-million figure in there somewhere that I've got. I don't have it with me at the moment, though.

It just seems that—can the minister indicate whether they've maintained the same level, even though he doesn't have the number, the same level of percentage going into the fund, or whether that percentage level has gone down?

Mr. Pedersen: The member from Flin Flon can ask it 20 different ways, but when we get the numbers for you for the amount of money that the—that was put into the fund and the amount that was withdrawn, it will answer all of his questions.

I would add that: stay tuned. There's an announcement coming about this particular fund, and it's going to be really exciting for the North. That's all I can say.

Mr. Moses: You may have just answered my next question, which was: any legislation coming up that might change the fund in the future?

Mr. Pedersen: Don't even need to do legislation, just stay tuned. We'll let you know. You'll hear about it.

An Honourable Member: Any time frame?

Mr. Pedersen: Very, very soon. This month.

Mr. Lindsey: This very exciting news that you're going to release, is this the changing of the Mining Community Reserve Fund into this new animal that you announced during the election campaign?

Mr. Pedersen: See, I offer a hint and now you just keep poking. No, I'm not going to tell you anything more. You've just got to hold your breath and wait. And, yes, the North will be very interested in this.

Mr. Moses: I wanted to ask about the Communities Economic Development Fund. So that was, I believe, under review as of last March. Is that review ongoing? Is it complete? Is there a report that has been done for that review of that fund?

* (15:40)

Mr. Pedersen: Communities Economic Development Fund, or as—in the world of acronyms of government, we call it CEDF—C-E-D-F. They have been identified as our northern regional partner under our Economic Growth Action Plan. So we have four

regional partners—or we will have four regional partners and three strategic partners.

And so, if I can, I'll—under the regional partners we've got Economic Development Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region. We are still in the process of developing a southern rural partner, but CEDF will be our partner for economic development in the North, and we've appointed a new board, led by Jamie Wilson and the board has done a review of their operations and we've given them a mandate letter to be out there for—basically, what the mandate letter says is they will do all things economic development in the North.

So when—what we're looking from our regional partners is if there is a potential business that wants to set up, in this case let's talk about the North with—for CEDF. They then would come to CEDF and describe what they want to do. CEDF would help them gather the information, any information they would need. They're working with CEDF as one of our regional partners and works with our Economic Development Office within the department of GET and whenever there's a new business, potential new business—even an expanding business—there are a lot of issues that need to be looked at, including and not exclusive but infrastructure needs. Is there roads needed? Is there hydro, water, waste water? Labour component—what's needed in there?

So that's that CEDF will do then, is they will work with that, either potential new business or an expanding business to make sure they've got that information and so it's that one-stop shop within government. So, when they come—when a business wants to start, they're not dealing with many different departments. They're only dealing with GET, in the Economic Development Office within GET, and it really helps businesses get started and get the answers they need in terms of development.

And so CEDF is well on the way here to doing that, and actively they've opened some offices across the North. I can get you the actual locations of their offices, and they've staffed up to make sure they've got the staff to do this. Geographically, we know the North is large, so they need that ability to be around and, you know, this can be any type of business; it's not just necessarily to mining. It's more for the small-business operators who want to get started. Do they have the help they need in order to get them started?

Mr. Moses: Thank you for that detailed description of CEDF.

So I know it was under review and you've described how it's kind of the operations are starting. It is opening up offices around the North.

Would you consider the review ongoing still, or is that now complete and it's into operations? If it is under review, when will that conclude and we'll see a report?

Mr. Pedersen: I would say the operations of the CEDF are past the review stage. They're into operation now. They're collaborating with—both with the Economic Development Office in—within Growth, Enterprise and Trade. They're engaging with northern municipalities indigenous communities, business training providers. They're actively out there looking for those businesses based on the mandate letter that was given to them. They've got their board of directors, as I said, in place. They've hired staff in order to be able to staff up to be able to do this, to—is everything running perfectly? Of course not. It's an operation that will continue to grow as it has experience or gets experience, because this is a change in mandate for CEDF. They primarily before were not out there actively soliciting potential businesses. So this is a shift for them. And they've done very well. They're really dug into this. And there is huge potential all across the North, and different communities have different potentials.

And so whether it's—you know, the tourism or a small business that wants to open in downtown The Pas, wherever, there's lots of different—it's not for us as government or MLAs to dictate what businesses should be there. That's what CEDF is out there doing, is finding those people who have that entrepreneur spirit.

Mr. Moses: So, since you mention it's kind of just past the review stage, is there a report that you can show us that would have concluded the review to show just this status and the go-forward of CDF—CD—CEDF?

Mr. Pedersen: So, previously, CEDF was mainly a lending agency, mainly in—large portion of that was fishing—loans to fishing people, which coincidentally are—were mainly located in the south, not in the North.

So that—we are still working with CEDF as to where that will fit in—whether it does fit into their mandate, or where it should be.

Again, the mandate of CEDF is to help build that culture of entrepreneurship in the North. And we have online—the Economic Action Plan is online. There's lots of talk, you know, in your community about

businesses. Do I have a business that wants to start now? People in the North—with their offices, with their people out there, people in the North know—now go to CEDF to help them develop that business plan.

* (15:50)

And so that's a change in mandate for CEDF from where they were previously. And they have really adapted—picked this up and are doing a great job on that. And it's something that was missing. It was something that was identified in the Look North report when we—the Look North report was done by northerners, for northerners, and it was one of the shortfalls that was recognized: If I want to start a business in the North, how do I get help? And I'm not necessarily saying financial help; I'm saying technical help. How do we get that business up, running? And prior to our Look North report, to our economic action plan, that was missing in the North. And that's what CEDF is picking up now.

Mr. Moses: I understand that change in mandate in the—of the review of CEDF. I was asking about if there was—if it's under—if it's still under review or if there was a report. That's not clear.

So I was hoping for a clarification on that. But also, I understand that there are businesses that you're now providing assistance to. And under the old mandate, there are many fishers and—in that line of work who are receiving loans from CEDF. So, under the new mandate, those people will still—that industry of fishing will still be under CEDF's mandate to provide loans in that capacity?

Mr. Pedersen: So just to clarify, the—CEDF's fishing loans, if I can describe them as that—loans for people in the fishing industry—has continued. It was not put on pause. It was the business side that was put on pause for now. And we're still reviewing that.

If you're looking for a report back from CEDF, we gave them the mandate to become an economic driver. They—there's no—I can't give you a binder of a report back from them. We've had conversations back and forth with the new board of CEDF to help them strengthen the mandate—or to work towards a mandate and how to get them up. It's a work in progress because, as I said, this is a shift where they were primarily only in the lending business. Now they're in the economic development business. And so we continue the—Growth, Enterprise and Trade and, particularly, the Economic Development Office continues to work—we continue to have that dialogue with the board of directors. And they continue. It's just

growing, and it's really in its beginning stages now. So—but we feel quite confident with the board of directors that they've stepped out.

And the word is starting to get out in the North, too, because remember, this is something new. This did not exist before. So it's new; it takes time for it to start to grow. But CEDF is doing a great job as our regional partner.

Mr. Moses: I just wanted to just make sure that—you know, obviously, you're—you know, talk—speaking with them to make sure they're working towards their mandate. You know, it would be helpful for, I think, the public to make sure that they knew CEDF was, you know, working, and so that's why I'm asking about the report. Even if there was a draft form or something that would provide us some insight about what they're working toward would help give us some clarity on that.

You did mention the loans to fishers and that—how that continued. Do you have any numbers about how many loans were provided out in 2018-19 for the fishing and current work?

Mr. Pedersen: In terms of what is happening at CEDF, there will be a board of directors update, or an update from the board of directors at the linkages conference next Wednesday in The Pas, and so they will be giving an update on their activities.

So that's, you know, again, they're a regional partner of ours; it's, their mandate is to report back to government but at the same time to make sure that the communities know what they're doing because it doesn't do any good to bring a report back to government here in Winnipeg, what the community needs to know is what CEDF's capable of doing for them.

And so there will be an update next week, next Wednesday, at the linkages conference.

As far as fishery loans, and we have only have 2017-18 year, this is the annual report from CEDF annual report 2018. So, for 2017-18, they saw a slight drop in total commercial fish loans to \$3.02 million; that would be the loans for '17-18. That would be down from \$3.61 million in the previous year. And that, and again we don't have the '18-19 report available for you.

Mr. Moses: So, just looking at CEDF and its new current mandate for the 2018-19 year, can you describe—give us information on the assets and liabilities, just in terms of the new work that is done

outside of—you've kind of described the loans for fishers—the new work that is done, has it provided services, and any statement on the current work that is done under the new mandate?

* (16:00)

Mr. Pedersen: So their mandate—the mandate letter to CEDF went out on March 19th of 2019. And that mandate letter, then—again, it's a working document. It's for 2019-20. So, again, I refer back to the Linkages Conference next week. I am sure that the board will be bringing forth a progress report on what they've done. But I can tell you that last—we—October 3rd, when we had our Manitoba Works! kickoff here in the Golden Boy Room downstairs, we had all our strategic partners here—our regional and strategic partners here. CEDF was a part of that, and they all gave a report to the other partners. And it's really inspiring how all the groups are working together. You know, CEDF is for the North, but yet they're working in partnership with our other regional partners and with our strategic partners, with the Chambers of Commerce, Business Council. And so they—it's—they are working closely with other organizations too, and, again, I'll just refer back to they're going to be at Linkages next week.

Mr. Moses: So CEDF, along with—is one of the four original partners. When—including CEDF, when would you consider it to be fully up and running, like, fully operational under its new mandate? As well as the progress of the other three regional partners—are they all fully up and working as well?

Mr. Pedersen: So there's four regional partners—or there will be four regional partners: Economic Development Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Metro Region, CEDF are all up and running. They're—they've all got their mandate letters; they're all out there actively working with businesses and other organizations and within—between themselves and also with our strategic partners also. The rural partnership is—we've had Joe Masi from Association of Manitoba Municipalities, AMM, and Chuck Davidson from the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce developing a mandate for the rural regional partner.

During the campaign, we announced that the office for the rural partner will be in Brandon. There's been no location yet. We're not—it's not about where the office is; it's about the people that we will have working in. So we're actively looking—or we're getting recommendations in now for an interim board for the rural partner. And—which will—because there's things we've got to do is incorporate; it has to be

incorporated. We have to get it up and running. And then we're looking for representation from across I call it southern Manitoba, you know, basically from Swan River south and I don't know what, Lac du Bonnet south to the border. Just—we're looking.

And I should add that to make sure that we have on these—on this board and on all our boards, we have also mandated that there will be indigenous component—you know, participation. Women on—men and women on these boards to make sure that we cover all aspects of participation here.

So they're up and running, with the exception of the rural, which we are still hoping to have up and running as soon as possible. But it takes time just to get it organized.

Mr. Moses: So do you have a specific time frame for that?

I just wanted to know—you know, as soon as possible is great, but it'd be also great to have—I think it would be even better to have specific targets. That way, you know, they're working towards a date and the public will know what to expect from that.

Additionally, you also mentioned, you know, representation. I wanted to know if your list of representation also included people of colour.

Mr. Pedersen: I am somewhat reluctant to put a date onto when the rural partner will be up and running, because I know the first one to be back to me will be the member from St. Vital, telling me that I either missed a date, and I don't think he'll give me credit for getting it up earlier than the date. So I am—I'll just say that I'm trying—we—the department is trying to get it up as soon as possible. But yet we need to get it right, too.

Rather than rush it and then, when we should have taken a little bit more time to make sure that we've got that diversity on the board, to make sure that we've got the bylaws working on. Just—you have to realize—I'm not sure how much the member's travelled rural Manitoba, but there is a lot of different interests across rural Manitoba.

So we got to make sure that we capture that. And when—we now have our other regional partners, our strategic partners who were up and working, and working well together. That's an example that, when we get the rural partner up, that they can look to those and partner—and work with those to make sure that—once we do have it up and running.

But it is a priority. I know that we're working on it as quickly as you can, but we want to make sure that we get it as close to right as we can, realizing that, you know, we'll—it's an ongoing thing that we'll have to make sure that we get it working properly.

Mr. Moses: Thank you for that. I recognize it's challenging to get things set up as you go forward.

You know, I do hear in the House—have been there for nearly two weeks now, you know, oftentimes, you know, I hear the Premier (Mr. Pallister) speak about results and how it's important to get results. I think having a target date would add to getting results and setting up the regional partners. So I would just—if you have a date in mind when you think that this would be complete, I think that would be great to put that out there. And that way you know that they're working towards that. And I'd love to be able to know that date as well.

* (16:10)

And just comment about diversity if you are—if that is something that you're considering, as well as people of colour, you can also feel free to consider as well people in the LGBT community as well when you're considering those sorts of boards.

So I just wanted to hear your response to any dates, again, that might be provided for that.

Mr. Pedersen: As soon as possible, making sure that we get it as close to right as possible and recognizing the diversity that the member has brought forward too, because that's all part of it, and that's how we will make it work even better.

Mr. Moses: Going to ask him some questions just from—that I noted from here now.

So just going through, I mean, just a very—I mean, maybe there's a quick answer for this.

Looking at the—just even the org chart, under the relation—International Relations deputy minister, I noticed it was vacant for both this year and last year, I believe, and—for 2018-19 and in this current document here. I just wanted to clarify about that position.

Is it still vacant? Is it going to be filled? Any clarification on that?

Mr. Pedersen: There—this position is currently vacant, but I will tell you that there was a person in here—in this position until approximately January of 2019, when he transferred to another department. And

so it's been vacant for eight months or whatever, and so we will—it takes time to fill these positions, so.

Mr. Moses: Okay, so, just to clarify, so is it the same vacancy that would be on the 2018-19 report, or is this because on the—it was vacant on the 2018-19 annual report, and in this 2019-20-'19-20 departmental expenditure estimate—I want to just clarify. Is it the same vacancy, like, for the same year, or is it like a vacancy; someone was there; now there's another vacancy?

Mr. Pedersen: It's the same vacancy.

Mr. Moses: I just wanted to go through this a little bit. So I was just looking at—I know that in the—is it admin and finance area, it says that—it's described that there's a departmental reorganization. Can you just describe that? *[interjection]* Twenty-seven.

Mr. Pedersen: So there was a reorganization, as it says in the note there, on note 1 on page 27. What we had was we had a finance division in three different parts of the same department. And what we did is we consolidated those so that it—rather than have a—the same service in three different divisions, we've consolidated them into one division or one spot so that it's—we—it works better to have better financial control and a lack of—there's not the duplication of services.

Mr. Chairperson: If I may briefly interject, it has been the habit of this committee to break for a 10-minute recess at about 4:30. Is—would that be—

An Honourable Member: I don't care. It's up to you.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it—maybe a five-to-seven-minute break. Would people like to do that now or should we wait a couple minutes? Now is fine?

Is it the will of the committee to have a five-ish-minute recess right now? *[Agreed]*

Okay. Committee is recessed for five minutes. We'll return around 4:25.

The committee recessed at 4:18 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:27 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: —minister.

Mr. Pedersen: Just, we have had staff checking for the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses), and we have no information on—in terms of wage stagnation in specific industries.

Mr. Moses: Is that something the minister thinks would be a worthwhile initiative to track in order to suss out the health of our economy?

Right? If there's a wage stagnation problem in our economy, it would be helpful for the minister to know so that they can take proper steps to remedy that.

Mr. Pedersen: Well the member asked me if I thought it was a worthwhile endeavour, and I'll say no, it's not a worthwhile endeavour. First of all, this government is more concerned in terms of attracting new business, how to attract expanding business which in terms creates more employment.

And the last number of years, and for this foreseeable future given the baby boomers aging, we're in a period of low unemployment. There's—go to just about any business you want and they're looking for help. And when businesses are looking for help, there is no way there can be a wage stagnation because if you're trying to drive down wages and at the same time hire people, you're not going to be very successful.

Mr. Moses: I think the comments of the minister are generally true. But I mean, there might be pockets of wage stagnation in certain industries, and that was the source of my questioning. Right?

So if there are, you know, certain industries that are hiring more, some that are hiring less, you might see fluctuations within that. And I think it would be something that would be worthwhile to look into. I know that, you know, from my own background, I—you know, I can attest to it that there might be some challenges within that.

But it did—that did bring me to another point that I wanted to ask the minister as well, is about overall, I know—you know, generally speaking, our economies are measured by things like GDP, you know, unemployment rate. But I also wanted to know whether the minister has any stats on income inequality in our province in general, in any form, whether the minister has any stats on income inequality in our province in general, in any form—whether that's a stat that's kept track of by the minister.

* (16:30)

Mr. Pedersen: We are not tracking that, per se, as the member has asked.

I would suggest that he check with the Minister of Status of Women. Perhaps that is something that her office is following. And you could also, perhaps, go to Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. Perhaps they have

that, but it's something that our Economic Development Office is not tracking currently.

Mr. Moses: While you may not be tracking it, is that anything that your office is, at least, aware of that you, maybe, pull information from other areas to, at least, inform some of your decision making?

The reason I say that is that my riding of St. Vital, there are thousands of people who work for, at or near minimum wage. There are also people who live in multi-million dollar homes and make, you know, six—I'm sure, seven figures, right? That's within my one riding, and I would—there's obviously in—difference in income between the people.

And I want to know whether there—in terms of our job creation plan that, you know, you're touting, Manitoba Works!—whether there is any thought process of to whether job creation is going to be created in some sort of an equal way. And I'm—turn to that in terms of income equality.

Mr. Pedersen: There are many different facets to the question that the member has brought up, and, you know, he mentions he's got many people that are working for minimum wage. We've raised the minimum wage.

We've also raised the basic personal exemption, which, if memory serves me correct, we've taken something like 8,000 Manitobans off the tax roll by raising basic personal exemption. They have more money on the kitchen table at the end of the day when they are—when you raise that tax bracket or that exemption up so that they have—you keep more money that they're actually earning, they're—you know, another one too is further training. Are they—if it's faster credential recognition if we—and we've had people moving to Manitoba that are either from other provinces or from other countries. We continue to work with Manitoba Education and Training too on getting faster credential recognition. That's been a major issue in the past. We'll—and so we're working with that.

I should also mention that, you know, if a person's in minimum wage, if they're looking to advance, our first—in our economic action plan from our Manitoba Works! kickoff last week—I mentioned too that our first town hall is actually on the subject of skills, knowledge and talent training. And so if people—you know, we will encourage—we'll advertise as much as we can this town hall, but if—you know, and we certainly—if you have people in your constituency that are interested in being on a town hall like this to learn,

that's—that would be fantastic because we need to—there are opportunities out there as far as the government.

This government is—we will put our efforts into making sure that there are good-paying jobs out there in the private sector and in the public sector because we have lots of retirements coming up within the public sector that we need skilled people within government also, and not just private industry. And, you know, it is a tight labour market out there, and government has to compete with private industry in order to attract those people.

And also I should mention, while we're talking about this, it's about—it's not just about hiring people; it's about retaining people to make sure that we have that environment where people want to work and we can—they can obtain skills, whether it's in the public service or in the private sector, that they can increase their skills, and with that, wages will go up with their skill level. So there's many different facets of this that government is doing right now and that we'll continue to do.

Mr. Moses: I know that, you know, usually, when we see a large percentage of the population earning high wages and high income and a large percentage earning a low income, there's a smaller amount of people in the middle. It's usually not the sign of a healthy economy. And I wanted to know if the minister would consider keeping track of that and being able to show that our economy in Manitoba is healthy. You know, obviously, GDP is important; obviously, you know, employment rate, but also the disparity between the high-income-end earners and the low-income earners. Is that something the minister would be able to provide information on in regards to the health of our Manitoban economy?

Mr. Pedersen: The information that the member's looking for—it's not necessarily—it's not something that Growth, Enterprise and Trade is tracking. I would suggest that he try the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. Perhaps they have that information. He expressed a great love of the Conference Board before; maybe check with the Conference Board, that great bastion of critical information. And perhaps he can find it there. But, you know, we'll continue to work on making sure that we've got the right environment for businesses to grow and to be able to hire and with that, incomes will rise. And also, again, I'll mention the public service is that—we need qualified people in the public service, too.

So Manitoba—there's lots of job opportunities in Manitoba, and we will continue to work towards that.

* (16:40)

Mr. Moses: I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I just want to say is that—for that—in response, does that mean that the minister is not aware of any income inequality in Manitoba and is not really planning on taking on any action to look into it or resolve it if there are any issues?

Is that true? Is that accurate?

Mr. Pedersen: Best never to try to put words in my mouth.

We're aware of low-income people. There is—in fact, I was in the Poverty Reduction Committee this morning where there is some really positive work happening in there. Of course there are low-income people and there are people who are struggling.

There was a study done recently where 54 per cent of Manitobans have less than \$200 in their bank account at the end of the month, so of course there's—and that, I would—I—you know, the—I—whether it was Deloitte or whoever it was did the study—I don't know that they did an income breakdown.

This could be—we know very well it could be some high-income earners who are spending a lot of money and don't have any money left in their bank account.

It's—our job is to make sure we create the environment and keep taxes low that—so people have the incentive to find good jobs and retain good jobs and keep some money in their pocket at the—when they get their paycheck.

Mr. Moses: I'm just going to move on, for the sake of time, to a different subject.

Looking at the 2018-19 annual report, on page 42 it talks about oil wells that are being drilled—new wells. So I'm looking at the 2018 compared to 2019. Looks like there were—a 15 per cent increase in new wells drilled.

I know the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) talked a lot about, you know, and touting sustainability and environmental plan during the recent election. Does this correlate, the 15 per cent increase this year with—of new oil wells being drilled?

Mr. Pedersen: The member's talking about 2018—nine—where is it in 2019-2020? [*interjection*]

So these Estimates are actually Departmental Expenditure Estimates for '19–2019-2020. If the member wants to go back into 2018-19, I—we can go back into history, I guess.

I'm not really sure—he'll have to repeat his question, because I—we don't have stats in front of us as to—in terms of the number of wells drilled in 2019. What we—so we can perhaps find that for you. I know it's been an active season in the oil patch in the past year, but I don't have the numbers for him.

Mr. Moses: Sorry, to clarify. I'm referring just to the difference between 2017 and '18.

I know the Premier's talked about the environment being important, and I see that there is a 15 per cent increase of new wells being drilled being drilled from 2017 to 2018, from 240 to 276. And I wanted to clarify, you know, how this jives with the current government's environmental plan, having new oils—new wells being drilled—as well, how much, if any tax dollars would have gone into these new oil wells being drilled. And you can even refer to the number from 2018, if that's the most recent you have.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, there—okay, so there's an increase between 2017-2018. I have again said that I don't have any information on 2019. That's not out yet.

I guess I am taking it that the member is opposed to drilling any new wells then? As, you know, the same old put words in his mouth—I don't want to do that, but there is no subsidy on—from Manitoba government to drill oil wells.

Mr. Moses: So, no subsidies or no tax dollars.

Does that include any royalties for those drilling sites? Would they—royalty-free or they royalties received for those drilling locations?

Mr. Pedersen: This is one of those very complicated things, in terms of royalties on wells. You have private land where there's mineral rights; the private owner has mineral rights. You have mineral rights on Crown land.

There can be a holiday on royalties when the well is first dug that depend—and the royalties that are charged depends on the amount of production coming out of the well. There's different levels of royalties, depending on the production of the wells.

And it—I will say that it's a system called Petrinex—it's Petrinex—p-e-t-r-i-n-e-x, something like that—that is the data system. It's been in Alberta and Saskatchewan for a number of years. We are—it's

an IT system. We have finally got it up on phase 1, on Petrinx in Manitoba, which helps both—cuts the red tape in terms of—for the companies and for government, in terms of tracking the amount of production coming out of wells and, therefore, the royalty that comes out of any particular well.

* (16:50)

So it's an ongoing cost-cutting measure—or not cost-cutting but red-tape-reduction system that we have engaged in, similar, again, to what Alberta and Saskatchewan are using. And our royalty rates are higher than Saskatchewan and Alberta, that we are charging. So there is many facets to that business.

Mr. Moses: So are you saying that you're—don't have any idea of how many—how much royalties are collected for the oil drilling, or can you endeavour to produce a list of which companies have received them and how much they've received for the drilling—put a list together for us to find that information out?

Mr. Pedersen: First of all, royalties are not what companies receive. It's what—royalties are what companies pay to the Crown.

We can find that. We will get—and we'll talk about 2018 and '19, which would be the most current year we have, for the amount of royalties collected by the Manitoba government.

There are two main oil company—oil production companies in Manitoba: Tundra Oil being one and Corex Resources being the other. Roughly, Tundra has about 80 per cent of the business, and Corex has about 15 per cent. I'm using very rough numbers.

And then there's a few small companies in there that are also drilling. And these are the drilling companies that are actually producing crude oil.

Mr. Moses: So I'll look forward to your endeavouring to provide that information. We'll get it when you send it—provide it for us.

So on the royalties, does—do new drilling wells get a holiday on the royalty they pay when they start?

And then, additionally, just on that same page, 42, it references that there are 26 pipelines expected crossing drinking waters. There's one infraction recorded, so I was hoping you could describe that infraction as well as the 43 new spill sites inspected.

Mr. Pedersen: I can provide you estimates of revenue for 2019-20. This is an estimate. So petroleum royalties and fees would be \$10,457,000, and the estimates of revenue for 2018-19 was \$8,626,000.

That's—these are both estimates. Obviously, we don't have final numbers for '19 and '20, and we can find if there is final numbers for 2018-19.

And, in terms of 26 pipelines inspected, we have a very good working relationship. We have our office in Virden, and the staff there work very closely with the oil companies and including pipelines. You're asking about one infraction recorded. We can—we'll find out. We'll get the report on that particular infraction and we can share it with you. I—we don't have it here. It's obviously, it's got to come out of the office from Virden.

Mr. Moses: Thank you. I look forward to finding out about that one infraction recorded for that—the 26 pipelines as well as the 43 new spill sites that were inspected, it just says right below there.

Wondering if, you know, they were—since there were spills—or obviously, it says there's spill sites, that they were inspected, wondering if those were—if public notices went out, if there were any safety concerns, environmental concerns with those 43 spills that happened.

How much concerns—maybe is there a report to document that that you could also endeavour to provide as well.

Mr. Pedersen: Again, there will be records of that and we can provide those of that.

But I would suggest to the member that I can set it up too if he like, he should go out and visit Tundra and Corex. It's the technology that they use now for drilling wells for construction of pipeline to move the product to central locations. It is really amazing when you see the technology that they're using.

And so if the member would like we can certainly set you up with the Canadian—whatever they're—the group that works with the oil companies, and they would be more than willing to give you a tour of the area.

That there is—Mr. Chair, if I may, there's a lot of activity happening out there, it did go through a downturn when the price of oil went down and we've lost quite a number of our drilling rigs to both Saskatchewan and North Dakota. But I recently met with some of the business owners on there that, again, are facing some red tape in terms of moving their units around.

And so we've, our office is going to continue to work with them to make sure that the red tape its taken care of, like the business impediments, but at the same

time ensuring safety for both workers and the environment.

Mr. Moses: I would take you up on any offer to go on a tour, thank you very much.

And I'll pass, if you could recognize my colleague.

Mr. Lindsey: So just very quickly before we leave that the member from St. James—

An Honourable Member: St. Vital.

Mr. Lindsey: —St. Vital, I knew it was St.—something—talked about their being 26 spill sites that were inspected.

Is that number greater than the previous year or less than, is there like a history that you could share with us. Oh—sorry, 26 pipelines inspected but 43 new spill sites. So is that number bigger or smaller?

Mr. Pedersen: We have said that we would bring forward a report on this from 2018-19.

Again I remind you, we're dealing with 2019-2020 Estimates in here. And when we get this report from these, what they've asked for, if you want more information after that I am sure we can provide it. There's lots of records that the office in Virden and our resource development division will have.

So let's have a look at what we've offered to provide you, and we'll go from there.

Mr. Lindsey: Appreciate that.

We just want to be able to follow along with what's happening. Are there more spills happening because there's a lot more wells? Is there less spills? Has it become safer or less safe? And maybe it's not a direct correlation, but if there was 43 spill sites inspected for 2018-2019, it's a concern if all of a sudden now there's 60 spill sites, or conversely maybe the 43 number is down dramatically from what it was in '16-17.

So if you can provide that level of information, it would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Pedersen: I said I'd give you the report, and I'll get you the report.

* (17:00)

Mr. Lindsey: Thank you very much, just wanted to make sure that the minister understood exactly what it was I was asking for.

So let's switch gears and talk about mine site remediation, which, I believe, is also part of the minister's area of concern.

So can the minister tell us how many sites were remediated in the last year and how many are projected to be undertaken in the coming year?

Mr. Pedersen: So of the—what they're called— orphaned and abandoned mines sites, O/A, another acronym—they're classified as low, medium and high-risk sites. I can tell you that the department has completed the remediation work at 35 of 37 high-hazard sites that were abandoned prior to 1993 when the legislation was amended to hold industry accountable.

Since 1993, the companies are held responsible, although that doesn't always work if they've disappeared. So, you know, in low and medium sites, it could be something like water-monitoring, that type of monitoring.

So we—I don't have a report in front of me saying— of the work activity that the department has done in the past year, but it's—we're aware of these sites and they've been classified into low, medium and high.

Mr. Lindsey: If the minister could undertake to supply us that list and what stage each one is at that's been identified?

Mr. Pedersen: I can provide that list of the sites and they would be split into low, medium, high.

I would suggest, though, that—the department says that in terms of—especially in some of the low—or the low-risk sites and some—even some of the medium-risk sites, they're—we do water monitoring in there, but remediation sometimes would be worse than—would be more of a hazard than—to go in and move material around could actually move a site from a lower, medium risk into a higher risk.

It's very site-specific on these. There is no general—every site is specific, so you have to make sure that you look at each site and evaluate it based on the local conditions, the—you know, anything from, say, the water table to the local environmental conditions.

So—but we can provide that list to him.

Mr. Lindsey: I appreciate that. Thank you.

I just want to focus quickly on the remediation effort that's been undertaken at Sherridon. There's been some problems in the past with that particular project.

Could the minister tell us how much activity was done, as far as remediation went, this work season?

Mr. Pedersen: So, just for reference sake, I was there in February of 2017 at a community meeting, which went very well. The community, at that time, had some real concerns. That was back from when the lime was being applied. And out of that meeting, there was some agreement as to where—what remedial action needed to be—happen then.

It's still a challenge there, thanks to the previous government, who walked away from the site and didn't do anything there for many years. There's—the tailings were left, and when the rainfall oxygen hits the tailings, it creates that orange colour in the water. The remediation was done on the tailings, except that they found another area of tailings that they need to remediate.

And what—by remediation, what they do is they put the rock underwater—or, the tailings underwater, and then that stops the oxidization and the orange colour in the water.

Now, the department is aware that there still is some orange colour of the water at Camp Lake. This is a very complicated thing because you have Kississing Lake, you have Camp Lake, you have—there's a drain in there, I'm just forgetting what the name of the drain is. And then there's another—what's the other—name of the other—'sherlick'—Sherlett Creek.

And, anyway, there is some orange colour in there. The pH balance right now in the water is neutral and the department, together with Sustainable Development, they're continuing to monitor the water quality of the discharge water into Kississing Lake to ensure it is safe.

As I said, we're working closely with Sustainable Development to ensure the water quality is, in fact, at safe levels. The department will be meeting again with the community of Sherridon. And there is—as I said, there's still some remediation work to be done on some other tailings, and it's just an ongoing thing.

And to the department's credit, they have developed a good working relationship with the community. There's no doubt there is some concern in the colour when you see—or, in the water, when you see the orange colour but it's monitoring the water to make sure that it's safe.

Liming now—I'm told from the department that liming that water would not help. In fact, it would increase the alkaline content of it, which would in fact

deteriorate the water quality. So it—right now, I know it's still not good. It's a visual thing, but the water is still safe and it will be—continue to be tested.

* (17:10)

Mr. Lindsey: So the question was, how much remediation work was done this season in that location?

Mr. Pedersen: So the remediation work was done on what they thought was the entire tailings residue. It was just—I believe it was this year that they've discovered where this other tailings are that's creating the orange water. So there was not remediation work done on this—on it this year because it wasn't discovered until well into the season and, as you know, it's a very remote location in order to get equipment into there. So the department is working on a remediation plan for the other tailings, and it's—it will be determined as to when that will happen.

Mr. Lindsey: My understanding from speaking with members of the community and council is they're not very happy with the response at the moment because the red flow from Camp Lake into Kississing Lake is impacting their abilities as tourism folks to—people come up to go fishing and pull their boats out of the water, and they're stained red from what's flowing in there.

And I understand part of the issue is, well, it's iron; it's not going to necessarily kill anybody. But then there's other elements in there as well that, to my understanding, are outside the perimeters—parameters of what the initial plan was that allowed the flow to continue from Camp Lake into Kississing. Now, my understanding is some of those parameters have been changed to say it's acceptable when initially that's not what the parameters were.

Is that—does the minister know if any of those parameters have been changed?

Mr. Pedersen: As I said, this is—there is no easy solution to this because there's been some talk about holding water back, which would then back up into Sherlett Creek, which would cause challenges. And if you put the dike in on Camp Lake going into Kississing Lake, you could actually back the water up and then have a major breach. There is no easy solution to this.

The—I realize that it's—you know, people of Sherridon are living there; they see this every day. But for the member to suggest that we have changed the standards and are calling it safe is totally irresponsible

of him to make that kind of an accusation that the—we're working to—this department works closely with Department of Sustainable Development to make sure that the water quality is in fact at safe levels. And I really would caution the member to suggest that numbers are being changed to make it look better when that's not the case.

Mr. Lindsey: Before I cede the floor to the member from St. Boniface, I just want to clarify that that was my understanding from conversations with people in Sherridon, was that some of the parameters which dictated when the flow could continue and when it couldn't—some of those parameters had, perhaps, been changed. So that was just the understanding that I had from that.

But, really, the bigger question is: When will the plan be developed and implemented to stop that flow, to stop the flow of the red, which carries more than just iron with it, into Kississing Lake, which is impacting those lodges' ability to make money?

Mr. Pedersen: The department has—the Department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade has committed to meeting with the community of Sherridon to discuss the status of the product—project and continued remediation work proposed for next year. So there will be a meeting coming up. There will be—the community will be involved in this.

And I just remind the member that for a long time, as long as the NDP were in government, they did absolutely nothing about this remediation work and it's only happened—in fact, when they did finally get into remediation work, they thoroughly botched it up and made things worse—and which has been—in terms of contracts. And that's been part of our challenge here, it to get these contracts straightened out.

And we'll continue to work with the community, and the department is committed to meeting with the community.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Yes, I had some questions about the Manitoba Works! plan.

I participated in some of the—there was a Winnipeg chamber event, for example, to talk about some of the challenges facing Manitoba entrepreneurs. And when I look over the—what the key priorities are: one is for improving the investment environment for existing Manitoba companies to expand, attracting new investment to the province; and another is about talent and training, and then about expanding export markets.

The one thing I heard over and over at those hearings was the need for improved access to capital, which is something that's been addressed—or, called for by the Winnipeg and Manitoba chambers of commerce. I did ask the Premier (Mr. Pallister) this at Executive Council, and he didn't have an answer at the time.

So I was just wondering, what is there in terms of improving access to capital for local Manitoba entrepreneurs?

Mr. Pedersen: Access to capital has been a challenge across the country. It's not unique to Manitoba. It is probably around the world, but it's also a North American thing for a start-up—a company.

A start-up company depends on family and friends and their own finances to get it started, and then it's that next step to become commercialized and to be able to find the capital to be able to do that—to get to the size where a financial institution will actually look at them as a potential for a loan.

So we have started a program called the Innovation Growth Program. We're doing quarterly intakes. We have just closed the first intake on it, which will be going to our Economic Growth Committee of Cabinet and then Treasury Board and Cabinet for final approval.

It doesn't—it's a start. There—what we need to do, and I know I had an interview the other day with a radio station, and we were talking about this. And some of the challenges we face is that Manitoba has not traditionally attracted venture capital. If you want to talk about venture capital—Toronto and Calgary, Vancouver are sort of the best spots where it is, although there's—they—you still have that challenge of accessing it in a higher risk start-up company.

This is—we're using some money out of, I think it's—annually, it'll be about \$2.1 million that we're putting into this Innovation Growth Program, to help these start-up companies.

* (17:20)

We've got lots of companies that are working with, again, one of our strategic partners, North Forge, where these ideas come and start to grow. There is no quick fix in terms of access to capital.

We have—we do believe, though, that as our economy continues to grow—there's two things. As our economy continues to grow, it will begin to attract some of this capital, but in the shorter term—and I had this long discussion with a radio station the other day—

one of the things that Manitoba's—that Manitobans need to do is start talking about Manitobans, start talking about all the great things we've got going on here because—and be very positive about Manitoba because that will help to access.

If we are not—as Manitobans, if we are not willing to talk about the good things we've got here, how do you expect to attract capital? But it—I will acknowledge, it is a challenge, and it will continue to be a challenge, and it's not just for start-up companies. It's also for those companies that are—have been operating, but it's that next expansion that they want to do. And it's cash flow in there and security-wise, for borrowing money to a financial institution. And, you know, without that positive—we've all got examples of great ideas that are around, but how do you finance them and go.

So this is part—this Innovation Growth Program is a start in there. We have had companies, individuals, approach us, as government, with some suggestions on access to capital. I know—and you speak about the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. There's one particular member there who has been working on a plan, and we're suggesting put together a plan and come to us and we'll see if we can somehow make this work.

Mr. Lamont: Yes, as I see it—thank you, Mr. Chair, but there are two issues. One is the access to capital for start-up, and the other would be access to capital for scale-up.

The reason I mention it is just that, in terms of job creation, the single greatest job creators are small businesses in the first five years of operation, though there's a high failure rate.

And that's just one of the things that I wanted to mention, because I know that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and others have talked about the amount of private investment that's going into some fairly major projects. The difficulty is that there is a large amount of investment going into the construction, but the long-term jobs, sometimes are fairly small.

Even Simplot in Portage La Prairie will be 120 people. The new Paterson will be 70 people. And if you're planning on coming up with 40,000 new jobs, it seems to me there's a lot more to add to that.

The other question, if I could, was just a question around beneficial ownership. I know—and I'm not sure if this is—let me know if this is out of order, but the new beneficial ownership bill that's been proposed is

part of the New West Partnership. The New West Partnership, of course, means that we'd have harmonization with BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, in terms of a business registry, but when you—there are a number of concerns around beneficial ownership and shell companies that've been expressed by organizations, in terms of money-laundering, tax evasion, tax avoidance.

So Transparency International, the OCED and some other institutions have all, sort of, wanted to make it a priority that these—the beneficial ownership is publicly available and publicly searchable.

So I was just wondering whether that was something that would be considered as—but this is—that Canada has been one of the most opaque jurisdictions in terms of beneficial ownership. So I'm just wondering if there is any thought to making the beneficial ownership more publicly available and searchable, as part of a national database.

Mr. Pedersen: Just for clarification, because I've been in Estimates all afternoon, was Bill 22—has it passed through third reading in the House, or is it about to?

Mr. Chairperson: We're unable to discuss matters before the House for this particular discussion. We should keep it to Estimates for Growth, Enterprise and Trade.

And I would just remind all members that as per the agreement reached and announced today, we have about six minutes remaining in our time here this afternoon.

Mr. Pedersen: In terms of start-ups that the member was talking about, and that lack of access to capital in there and the 40,000 jobs, I'll just—listen, aim high. We're—we'll get there. But, again, I just want to remind you that we're—we will only hit that—and we will hit that, but it comes from selling Manitoba—from Manitobans selling Manitobans.

And in terms of the start-ups, that's where we really aim this Innovation Growth Program is at those start-ups because this is relatively small amounts of money that we're putting out to these applicants, but it will help them get started, and then we'll see how it—you know, we'll work with other stakeholders, too, to see how we can attract more access to capital in Manitoba.

Mr. Lamont: Because I understand—thank you, Mr. Chair—I understand—if I could ask the minister, what's this—do we know what the subscription for—is

like when it comes around the Small Business Venture Capital Tax Credit?

Because I know—I've heard that this is also a challenge—that it's been offered, but it isn't—it's a plan—it's a—it hasn't been—people haven't been taking up on it, essentially—that it's a—for high-income individuals, they can—it encourages them to invest in a venture in Manitoba, but I'm not sure that that many people have been doing it.

Mr. Pedersen: I would somewhat disagree with the member.

The Small Business Venture Capital Tax Credit has been fairly successful. It's been—there has been a lot of take up. And I will just go back to during the 2018 taxation year—again, we don't have it for this year—\$23.9 million in equity was raised from more than 425 Manitoba investors. So that's \$23.9 million that's injected as equity capital in there.

So that's—it's where—it's just another tool in the toolbox. You can't have one program to fit everything. This is just another tool in the toolbox for raising capital.

Mr. Lamont: Oh, I had to ask some questions about some implications around the trade strategy.

I was just wondering whether there were—I know that—I—what are the—I read some of the reports and—calculating what the benefits are, and I just wanted to really—I just raised an issue that I think, when I read Trevor Tombe's analysis—and I've looked at the Statistics Canada analysis as well—that there's some very broad variations in terms of what the anticipated benefits to Manitoba are. And one of the benefits projected by Trevor Tombe, who's an economist at the University of Calgary, was actually it was more that the benefits to Manitoba—'hwoo' was not that would—we would be increasing exports, but that Manitoba would benefit from lower cost—specific certain lower-cost goods.

So I'm just wondering whether there was—where there had been any numbers or analysis on but the specifics from a Manitoba point of view on what the impact of, say, either the Canada west or the Canada free trade agreement might be.

Mr. Pedersen: I would just say that trade is a two-way street. You can't restrict trade coming in to you if you expect to trade outside of the province. And trade works good for both Manitobans in bringing product in, but it also works very good. If we can't export—we're a small population and we're built on trade, so

we better be competitive and we better be able to trade with other provinces, other countries.

* (17:30)

And from that, also, too, that we are leading the pack in terms of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement in reducing exceptions to trade. Because that's—the biggest inhibitor to trade right now in Canada is the exceptions between provinces. And the federal government really needs to pick up its game there and loosen—and reduce the number of exceptions that they have.

So—

Mr. Chairperson: The member's time has expired.

Order, please.

I am interrupting the proceedings of this section of the Committee of Supply, pursuant to the Sessional Order passed by the House on September 30th, 2019. Items 2(d) and 15 state that all Departmental Estimates must be concluded on Thursday, October 10th, 2019. If not, all resolutions are passed.

The Chairperson must interrupt the proceedings 30 minutes prior to the adjournment hour and put all questions necessary to dispose of the remaining matters without any debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am therefore going to call in sequence resolutions on the Department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade. I would remind all members that these questions may not be debated, amended or adjourned, according to the Sessional Order.

This concludes our consideration of the Estimates—cancel that last part.

I will now call Resolution 10.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,091,000 for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$48,132,000 for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, Economic Development and Trade, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,656,000 for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, Labour and Regulatory Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,290,000 for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, Resource Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,498,000 for Growth, Enterprise and Trade, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Growth, Enterprise and Trade.

This also concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255.

I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedication during this process.

Committee rise.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

* (15:10)

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

This section of Committee of Supply will now resume the consideration for the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training.

At this time, we'll invite the ministerial and opposition staff to enter the Chamber.

And I'll get the minister to introduce his staff as they're taking their seats.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): Pleased to welcome back again this afternoon Colleen Kachulak, David Yeo, Ben Rempel and Deputy Minister Grant Doak, not in order of importance but in order that I see them, from left to right.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you, minister. And I'll—I guess—okay. We'll continue with—as previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): We're going to just continue with our line of questioning from yesterday and just some pieces from the Public Accounts.

Through Public Accounts, volume 2, we see a sizable decline to CCEDNet, the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, incorporated.

Can the minister explain the decrease from '17-18, it was \$448,000 to this year, '18-19, down to \$257,000?

Mr. Goertzen: That's information we'll endeavour to get for the member. I think, if he was referring to the community economic development corporation, that's not primarily funded from this department, so it might be a different type of agreement that's not a sustaining agreement, but we'll get the information for him.

Again, the challenge for us is that you're referring out of Public Accounts and not the SIR—SILRs, and so we may not always have that information right on hand.

Mr. Altomare: According to Public Accounts, again, in volume 2, there was a significant increase in funding for a handful of private schools, including Christian Heritage School in Brandon, the community Bible fellowship in Swan River, The King's School in Winnipeg and the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists.

Is this growth being fueled simply by formula-based increases based on growing enrolment, or is there additional funding going to these schools?

Mr. Goertzen: I understand that there's been in place a letter of understanding when it comes to private schools since 1990 that outlines the funding arrangements for those private schools. It was adhered to, obviously, by the former Filmon government throughout the 1990s, by the Gary Doer-led government up until 2009 or '10 and then by the Greg Selinger-led government and now continuing on into our government.

Mr. Altomare: This letter of understanding, I guess it—does it deal with—it has to be—is it based on

enrolment numbers, or is this something that has a little bit more to it?

Mr. Goertzen: In general terms, it doesn't provide for any capital funding. It's approximately 50 per cent—they receive 50 per cent of what public schools receive, and that's, sort of, the broad parameters of the agreement—or, of the letter of understanding that's been in place for decades.

I would note, I think I used to the term private school which the act, I believe, refers to them as private schools. I think in every other way, both in the department and amongst themselves, they refer to themselves as independent schools. And I think we will be looking to change the terminology in the act to independent schools.

And so I may have been getting ahead of myself, but I'll do my best to use what I think is both the preferred and probably the most accurate terminology, which is independent schools, and we look forward to approval of changing that terminology in the act in the year ahead.

Mr. Altomare: So the minister was referring to 50 per cent of what public schools get. So is that 50 per cent of per pupil, or 50 per cent of some other number?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes.

Mr. Altomare: According to Public Accounts, the Elmwood Community Resource Centre saw a reduction in its funding.

Can the minister explain why that is?

So I'll just, a couple of last numbers here; from '17-18 was from \$243,000, down to \$218,000 for '18-19.

Mr. Goertzen: The department funds hundreds of grants in the tune of millions of dollars. Some of the grants last for a very long time, some are for a specific project, some are based on a particular activity that's happening, that might happen for a couple of years and then expires.

So we don't have specific information on that particular project. We could endeavour to provide that for the member, however, if he'd like.

Mr. Altomare: Yes.

I just want to go back to some of the private school funding pieces.

So in the past—can the minister provide, in the past two or three years has the funding gone up for private

schools according to inflation, or has it been relatively flat?

Mr. Goertzen: It changes based on the letter of comfort—letter of understanding that's been in place since two thousand—or, 1990. There's been no variation from that.

And so it was based largely, as I mentioned, 50 per cent of what the public school system is getting per pupil. So when there is, you know, increased spending within the public school system, it naturally affects, then, the independent school system, as required through the letter that was signed in the 1990s. There's been no variation. There's been no change to that.

If the member wants to submit a FIPPA for the letter, I think it's FIPPable and he could receive it, but it's the same letter that was in place under the Gary Filmon government, the Gary Doer government, the Greg Selinger government and now this current government.

*(15:20)

Mr. Altomare: Funding to Film Training Manitoba has been \$500,000 for years, at least back to '15 and '16. It appears to drop in '18-19 to \$366,000, a reduction of \$133,000.

Can the minister explain this discrepancy?

Mr. Goertzen: Thank the member for the question.

He'll know that this government has been very supportive of the film industry, the film tax credit which began in the 1990s. I'm testing myself which minister that might have been under—maybe under Rosemary Vodrey, when she was in that department, or potentially Bonnie Mitchelson.

But regardless, the film tax credit has been considered a significant success. In fact, I remember the—one of the former MD—NDP critics suggesting that the film tax credit was going to be cut by the provincial government. And far from being cut, it was actually enhanced and there was great celebration within the industry.

I know that there continues to be good demand for using Manitoba for filming. I've had the opportunity to visit some of the sets where that work is going on. I have some—not to declare a conflict, but I have some relatives who are involved I think in sound production on some of the films, and so that's been quite exciting. I think Manitobans get excited when they see this

activity happening, and in their neighborhood, and seeing filming going on.

The amount is simply reflective of the amount that—were there applications, and negotiations and requests for training in that part of the sector. It just is—happens to be that that's what it was for that particular year. But, clearly, the government has significant interest—and has, more than any other government in the past, supported the film industry, and the availability for people to come to Manitoba, where there's Netflix. I know there's a lot of Netflix films that are being shot here in Manitoba, or whether it's one of the other major studios to come to our province.

It's a strong industry. Everything that I hear is that it'll continue to grow and to expand. And certainly, we are proud that it's happening in Manitoba, and I think that Manitobans take some pride in that.

In fact, there was a Netflix movie that escapes my mind right now, in terms of its name, but I saw part of it being produced here in Winnipeg, and my wife mentioned to me a couple of days—it is going to be on Netflix in a couple of days, and she's quite excited, not just for the movie, but I think lots of Winnipeggers and Manitobans spend time then, you know, watching the films and seeing what they recognize in the background, in terms of sets and so there's both some pride and some good economic value.

But the dollar figure that the member quotes is simply a result of what was allocated in terms of training under requirements for that year.

Mr. Altomare: So then, following that piece, would the money increase if there's more requests for funds from—for film training?

Mr. Goertzen: We work with different applicants each and every year and, you know, obviously they have to meet certain qualifications. It has to be something that matches the criteria for funding.

So it'd be difficult for me to speculate to the member what support the department might be providing in any given year for that industry or frankly, any other industry, but it is really dependent upon the applications that come in and what is considered the need for that particular time.

Mr. Altomare: FireSpirit Inc., Opaskwayak saw a reduction in Public Accounts.

Can the minister explain? In '17-18, it was \$836,000, down to \$634,000 for '18-19.

Mr. Goertzen: Sort of similar to the previous question, because the minister—or, the member's working off of Public Accounts and we're operating off of the budget books, because this is the budget Estimates process, it's—we don't have, sort of, granular detail on every part that the member might be operating off of Public Accounts.

We were able to go back and look. The question he had regarding the Elmwood—or, the funding and support in Elmwood has to do with that program or that funding being transferred to the Department of Families. So I would assume the support is still being provided, but just not by our department.

And that happens sometimes, where there is alignment issues or there's a feeling that—or maybe the nature of a program has changed and there's a feeling that it's better supported in one department than the other. So that answers that question, in terms of why was there a reduction in funding, because it moved over to Families.

On this one, we'd have to do the same thing and sort of go back and look through the documentation and try to provide the member for the answer, but answered now the Elmwood one, but recognizing this one is the new one on the list to find an answer to.

* (15:30)

Mr. Altomare: So just for clarification, so all of that Elmwood money was transferred to the Department of Families, or was a portion transferred to?

Mr. Goertzen: Responsibility for the program was transferred to Families, and whatever money we had associated with the program would have been transferred as well. But any further sort of questions about the status of it currently would have to be asked in the appropriate ministry.

Mr. Altomare: So just to clarify that it's no longer part of this minister's responsibility?

Mr. Goertzen: So the program was part of the Healthy Child initiative. As we discussed yesterday, Healthy Child is moving back—or has moved back to the Department of Families where it first came from. When—I believe it was for most of the term that the NDP were in government, it existed in the Department of Families, and it has now returned to the Department of Families, so the—along with the programs that were contained within that overall program.

Mr. Altomare: Just a few years ago, there were nearly 45 full-time-equivalent positions in Manitoba School for the Deaf. It's now down to 41. On top of

that, the school has been chronically and significantly underspent these last two years, demonstrating that there are a number of positions that are being intentionally held vacant.

The current underspend for '18-19 was \$269,000. How many positions in the Manitoba School for the Deaf are vacant?

Mr. Goertzen: There hasn't been any changes in terms of funding allocation for the school of the deaf. I understand the member mentions the four vacancies. It's the normal part of trying to keep staff. In that particular school, of course, it might be a little bit more challenging to recruit staff. They have to know ASL for obvious reasons, and so that might be a little bit more difficult to fill those positions. But the four vacancies, as mentioned, is not considered to be an exceptional or an unusual—maybe not a desirable—but not an unusual amount of vacancies.

I have met with representatives of the School for the Deaf, had a really good meeting, learning the specialized training that they provide there and how they operate the school—also had the opportunity to meet with a number of parents and to get their experience of how they felt that their children were doing within the facility. Now, that was very both meaningful and emotional for me. Of course, not every student who would have a hearing disability goes to the school, but for those that do, it was a very good opportunity for me to hear from their parents and to get a sense of the things that they thought were working well or the things that they thought could work better.

But in terms of the department itself, there has not been any changes to the funding allocation for the school of the deaf, and the relatively small number of vacancies would be attributable to normal turnover and just maybe sometimes challenges of hiring into a fairly specialized learning environment.

Mr. Altomare: So would those four vacancies—are they posted on the department website? Are they—those vacancies posted on the Manitoba School for the Deaf website?

Mr. Goertzen: For those particular positions, authority was just provided for them to be posted. So they'll be posted on the department website relatively quickly, I suppose. They've got to go through whatever posting mechanisms have to happen to get the jobs up.

Of course, that's not an unusual process. I understand last year there were more than 80 postings

that happened. I know the member talked yesterday about a day when he saw two, but over the course of the year, there had been more than 80. And so it's a regular part of the department, regular part of human resources, regular part of any government or business.

And so, yes, those positions are being processed, but authority has already been given to fill the positions.

Mr. Altomare: Under section 2(c) of the Annual Report, Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment, there is a significant underspend on salaries of \$350,000, but there is also a significant overspend on Other Expenditures of \$379,000.

Why is that?

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for the question.

So my understanding from officials is that it's something of an accounting—not irregularity, but oddity in that the—those who are coming to provide advice on curriculum development or support, they're primarily coming out of school divisions.

And so we are seconding them over into the department to provide that help, but they're not really our employees. And so they're essentially consultancies—teachers coming from the school divisions are essentially consultants. And so in the line items, that cost shows up in the other portion, which is the overexpenditure, but then we ensure that there is an almost equivalent underexpenditure in the salaries portion.

We can't put them into the salaries portion, however, because they're not really our employees. They end up going back to the school divisions at some point when their secondment is complete.

Mr. Altomare: So the other line, then, is just monies going back to school divisions for use of the consultant?

Mr. Goertzen: That's correct, primarily.

There's some costs in there that would be associated to just the cost of housing somebody into the department. So rent and different sorts of costs that get attributed to the requirement to have individuals brought over during the time that they're working on curriculum support.

* (15:40)

Mr. Altomare: Staff salaries for the indigenous education directorate were underspent by over a third

last year in 2018-19. This area had already been underspent the last few years, but now the vacancy rate is getting worse and not better.

Why is this, and what steps is the minister taking specifically to ensure that Indigenous Inclusion Directorate is fully staffed?

Mr. Goertzen: We continue to have significant commitment when it comes to indigenous education. Some of that's been lauded more publicly and across Canada, and some of the efforts in Manitoba from the—this department, but government as a whole.

We had the Treaty Education Initiative that was signed a few months ago. I had the opportunity to be part of that signing. In fact, I had the very good experience of spending half a day, I believe it was, over at the treaty commission and learning about treaties. I invited my wife to come with me. They were gracious enough to allow her to come. And we learned a great deal about the history of treaties. It was very informative and also very moving to be a part of that.

I know that that's a shorter session than they normally provide, but in that half day that they were able to provide us some information and understanding. I think it was really helpful to me and I think all of those—and there was staff who attended as well—benefitted from that treaty education opportunity.

We have signed other agreements when it comes to the preservation of language. And I've said to some of the Aboriginal leaders and some of those who were at the signing ceremony that I think the greatest thing that can be done to help to support the preservation of a culture is to preserve the language. I mean, what greater thing can you do? Because once the language is lost—and I can say this from my own cultural history—it's very difficult to get that back. And so we were pleased to support that.

When it comes to the directorate in particular, there hasn't been any reductions in terms of the staff allocation, but there are challenges in terms of hiring into that area because it is a specialized area, specialized skills. And they're in high demand, which isn't a bad thing; it's actually good that there's a high demand for those skills because it means that, in various places in the province and in Canada, they recognize the importance of it. But the downside to that is where there's high demand, there's also difficulty in terms of getting people to come into those positions.

So we hope to be able to continue to recruit from those high-demand positions or high-demand occupations into those positions, but recognizing it's a challenge, but the challenge is probably for a good reason.

Mr. Altomare: Are these positions currently posted on this website or on the department's website?

Mr. Goertzen: Certainly, when those positions are filled, they do get posted on the website. I'm advised—recognize it's a relatively small part of the department so the percentages seem high when there are vacancies, but I understand that there are—there's only one current vacancy, that there was just a hire.

There had been two vacancies, that had just been just a hire into a position. And so that leaves one vacancy, and when that's filled the presumption is, unless it's somehow filled internally, it would be posted on the website.

Mr. Altomare: So based on that answer, is the department looking at training internal people that are currently hired already into filling some of these positions that may be a challenge?

Mr. Goertzen: It's not so much that it's strategic to do that but, you know, in a department in the size of Education, which isn't the largest department in government but it's not—certainly not the smallest either, there are many people who sometimes decide they want to do something else, or they end up being involved in different parts of the department and feel that they have a skillset that would be applicable there and want to be part of an internal competition if it's open.

So it's not a particular strategy to try to fill them internally, but in the nature of human resources and the large company, there are often people who present themselves who have the right skills and the desire to fill those occupations.

Mr. Altomare: The annual report says that there was a change to TRAFs, Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund's forecasting calculation which resulted in an overestimation of the 2017-18 and subsequently to the 2018-19 requirement.

Can the minister explain this and what drove a change to the forecasting calculation?

Mr. Goertzen: So my understanding is that this was an accounting or a calculation error by the school boards, not purposeful, obviously a mistake made in—a goodwill mistake.

And part of the challenge is—and we see this challenge exist in a few other places where government operates, as the member will know, on a fiscal year going from April 1st to March 31st of the next year, where schools generally are operating, of course, on their school year which doesn't align to the fiscal year.

And so when the data comes in from the school divisions, in terms of the number of days, government is expecting that to come in based on the number of school days in the fiscal year not in the school year. And so the numbers were provided incorrectly from the school divisions, but that'll work itself out in the next calculation.

But it was a mistake that was made on their part and nothing purposeful or untoward, just simply because of the oddities of the different years that we work upon.

* (15:50)

Mr. Altomare: Is there a mechanism now in place to make sure that this—these errors don't continue?

Mr. Goertzen: It would be less so the mechanism and just really the need to communicate clearly the expectations and the differences between the fiscal year and the school year and the calculations of that.

It's not an error that happens frequently. It's a sophisticated organization. We don't expect that it'll happen again, but obviously when makes—mistakes happen you try to learn from it and I think that there has been good communication about how it happened. And I wouldn't want to say that a mistake will never happen again, but certainly I think there's been some learning from it and I wouldn't expect it to happen frequently, if ever again.

Mr. Altomare: Yesterday on the TRAF piece, we see in 2019-20 the estimate is \$201 million—a hundred and a few bucks here and there. Is that going to continue being the same estimate as we move forward?

Mr. Goertzen: So it's a year-to-year calculation that hasn't changed at this point. The TRAF board, with the number of representatives representing a number of different parts of the education system and then also experts in a lot of different areas, you know, have the investment power to invest the money from the pension funds and from the contributions from government into a variety of different investment mechanisms, and they project out over a number of years what they expect the average annual return to be, going forward. Sometimes they're a little high;

sometimes they're a little low, as one would expect in the market, and is normal for financial advisers and financial investments.

But, generally, they have, over time, hit on the historical perspective; they've hit the financial return which they've been expecting but, of course, in a year like 2008 they would have done significantly worse. A couple years ago they would have done significantly better, so it sort of goes up and down. But each and every year they provide us with what they believe the funding is needed to provide the support for teachers' pensions for that year.

Mr. Altomare: The department underspent on post-secondary education and labour market outcomes by a third in 2018-19. The department's role is to lead a skills program and improve job creation and retention and align student outcomes to Manitoba's labour market.

Now, in light of losing 10,000 people to other provinces last year and the Conference Board's report on Manitoba and our apprenticeship applications being down, can we have an explanation as to why this area is badly underspent?

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for the question. It's a thoughtful question, which requires, I hope, a thoughtful answer, and he'll judge me whether or not he gets it or not.

I, first, take some umbrage on this issue of his characterization that, you know, Manitoba is in some way dwindling in population. As the Premier (Mr. Pallister) articulated in question period today, there—we have the second highest growth in population of any province in Canada because of so many people coming to our province, and so there's been a significant net increase when it comes to population in Manitoba.

That drives a lot of jobs. That drives a tight labour market, as one would hope and expect, and you don't want jobs to be unfilled because there aren't the right kinds of people for those jobs, but it is good to have a competitive labour market, generally, for employees and for Manitobans, even though I know it's a challenge sometimes for employers.

So I take some exception to the member's characterization of the population in Manitoba. It's growing significantly, and I'm—I think I offered him yesterday—I'd be happy to take him to Steinbach and to see the growth that is happening in every corner of that community and the people who are coming and the demonstration of the growth.

And I think that's happening in Transcona as well, actually. The member mentioned that I spent some time during the campaign in Transcona, and I did. I had an enjoyable time. I'm actually a former resident of Transcona. I lived on McMeans Avenue, went to school for one year at Margaret Underhill School, which is sort of right behind the McMeans Avenue, so I could I walk to school every day. So I just figured I—he would've wanted me to mention that to him.

But the expenditure in the training program is based on the applications that come forward, and we don't fund every application that comes forward. It has to be something that meets the criteria, that has to be properly aligned in terms of priorities for training, that has to provide good value for money and that the application has—the applicant has to demonstrate that they're actually able to fulfill what it is that they are saying that they can do.

And so I'm sure that if you went back in time and looked at previous administrations and 'previa' times in this program, you will have seen an underexpenditure because I'm assuming that—like this government, I would hope that other governments would've looked at applications and said, well, we're not just going to fund something because there's an application and because there's money. We actually have to get outcomes for that money.

So I—that's the explanation. I hope it was as thoughtful as the question that the member posed.

Mr. Altomare: So just following up—so when the quality of the applications increase, that means the government or the department will support those applications?

Mr. Goertzen: Where the money is available and there's money available within that program and it matches up with quality applications, which match up with alignment in terms of the needs within the labour sector—force, yes, those are then funded.

And so I think we've had many good organizations who are out there doing training and ensuring that the—where there are needs within our market, that they're being, hopefully, filled as best that can be done with the training that is happening.

So whether that's a skill set like welding or automechanics or other sorts of needed areas where there are good and qualified applications for the funding, then we want to be able to fund that where it makes sense from a financial and outcomes perspective.

Mr. Altomare: Support for universities and colleges was cut in absolute terms last year, and it was also underspent by nearly \$3 million, which was attributed in the annual report to the timing of capital projects.

What projects in particular were delayed?

Mr. Goertzen: Thank the member for the question.

My understanding from officials is that as a result of the delay of the marine observatory, which is being supported and sponsored by the university—and the delay, as the member will know, is partly attributable to the rail line being out of service for a long time and the inability of the federal government—the federal Liberal government to step up and take their responsibility in repairing the rail line.

Of course, they finally did, reluctantly, but that is the result of the delay.

Mr. Altomare: Is there a new timeline for the completion of the marine observatory?

Mr. Goertzen: The timeline would be—rest in the hands of the university, as they're the ones who are building it and working with the contractor to build it. We're obviously—people of Manitoba are a funder of it, through the department, but the responsibility for the building of the project rests with the university.

Mr. Altomare: Training and support under Apprenticeship Manitoba declined by \$3 million. The explanation suggests that there was a higher tuition collections from clients, amongst other reasons.

Can the minister offer more clarity as to what was going on here?

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for the question.

It's sort of similar to the discussion that we had yesterday. The budgeted amount for the department doesn't change. It's—you know, we budget based on what we think or expect or maybe hope would happen, in terms of applications, but there have been fewer applications into the apprenticeship program.

And then we want to ensure that people are placed within the right apprenticeship programs, that it matches the need within the province. But there have been fewer—I'm told from officials—applications within the program. And so that would then result in an underexpenditure.

Again, we had this debate about a tight labour market. The member might not agree, but I think that is the reality of a tight labour market, meaning people have other options. They don't necessarily think of

apprenticeship as their first opportunity; might want to delay it into another time, if they can go and do well in the labour market for some period of time, then maybe return to the thought of apprenticeship later.

So it is, I understand, primarily as a result of a lower number of applicants to the program.

* (16:10)

Mr. Altomare: You do appreciate that there is certainly a tightening of the labour market and I guess some people have found it maybe so tight that they have to leave the province.

But some of the other things: Is there a strategy by the department that would get into areas where we could get more people applying to these areas, especially in areas where we have challenges filling positions?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I don't know if I would characterize, you know, people leaving the province as a result of a tight labour market. I think a tight labour market sometimes means there's lots of opportunities for people and that the employers are really looking for employees. So it can be tight from the employer perspective.

There's obviously lots of reasons that people choose sometimes to go to other provinces and I'm not going to speculate on what each one might be but there's also lots of reasons people come to a province. And the many people who are coming to our province, whether they're choosing to come from other provinces or choosing to come from other countries and other parts of the world, I think, are because of the opportunities that we have here in Manitoba.

Obviously, the department is always looking at different ways to bring applicants in, to ensure that people know of the opportunities that exist, so that they know of what the current and perhaps emerging labour market is, and try to ensure that young people and others—maybe those who are trying to re-skill into a different occupation—are aware that those opportunities exist. And so they do the work of providing that information and staying ahead of market trends as best that can be forecast, to see where those opportunities might lie.

Mr. Altomare: Training and supports and salaries and Skills and Employment Partnerships were underspent. Why was that?

Mr. Goertzen: The vacancy rate—similar answer though maybe with a bit more nuance as before—you know, trying to find the right people for the right

positions, but this office isn't one office. There are several offices across Manitoba and so there can be regional challenges as well, in terms of filling some of the roles. It's not always as easy to find the right set of skills in a smaller community or in certain areas of the province, for a variety of different reasons.

We see that in a lot of different departments and a lot of different skill sets, and so similar challenges to the main part of the department but because these offices are located throughout Manitoba, there might be specific regional challenges as well.

Mr. Altomare: Are there specific regions that are having a more difficult time than other regions? Like, is there a trend? Is it more to the North? Is it more rural, or is it specific to skill areas?

Mr. Goertzen: It is always harder in rural or more isolated areas to attract workers.

I know that the member's colleagues who represent those areas, whether it's Thompson or Flin Flon or other areas in the North—not in those particular communities always, those are pretty, you know, vibrant centres, but certainly areas around that can be a real challenge, at times, to attract and fill positions.

We saw this when I was Minister of Health. And I think I relayed when it comes to doctors, you know, the number of doctors who are going up—or, were coming to Manitoba is higher than it's ever been in the province of Manitoba, but it can be, at certain points, difficult to get them to be in certain areas.

And because you don't have the ability to, sort of, move them around like pieces on a chessboard because people have their own ability and right to live and work wherever they choose, it is sometimes harder in those rural and northern areas.

And sometimes the reasons are different. I remember asking at that time the department to, sort of, do an analysis, almost a post-interview, with doctors who were leaving rural and northern communities and to ask why they were leaving. And some of the criticism that I received in the Legislature here was that we weren't simply paying enough to those doctors to work in a rural area.

And yet, when you looked at the reasons why doctors were leaving rural areas—particularly international medical grads, as an example—money wasn't in the top five considerations. It was almost always scope of work—so their ability to work at their full practice.

Some of it was faith-based reasons, because there were—they came from a certain faith and there weren't a lot of others who practised their faith in that community, so they felt sort of isolated from a faith perspective. Others simply didn't have enough community connection within those communities, and so they left. Money was almost never the primary or the driving factor.

So when you look at rural and northern communities, it is more of a challenge to get individuals to either come or to stay to work in those environments, even though I think that, you know, they're wonderful communities.

I was born and raised in rural Manitoba and I wouldn't want it any other way, and the differences between Steinbach and, perhaps, Thompson—there are different, both in terms of geography and otherwise, but I think it's a wonderful place. I wouldn't want to raise my family in any other place but in a rural community, but haven't always been able to convince every other Manitoban of that view.

So, yes, it is more challenging in rural and in remote communities.

Mr. Altomare: When does the annual report for the Public Schools Finance Board come out? Or, when will it be released?

Mr. Goertzen: Just—in the interest of time, we will get you the answer, I'm sure, before we conclude at 5:30, but if you want to ask another question, you can proceed to that.

Mr. Altomare: So are you saying that we'll get an answer later on?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes.

* (16:20)

Mr. Altomare: I'm hoping the minister can bring us up to date on the activities of Manitoba Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education review.

Mr. Goertzen: I don't have an update other than I expect the report in the time frame that they said that they would report. I don't have any sort of regular check-ins with the commission.

However, I was very encouraged to see that there was about 15,000, I think, points of contact or submissions with the commission, both in the public and online, I think it was reported, which would probably make it, at least on the education field, probably the greatest consultation that has happened

in Manitoba that we can recall, and I think that speaks to the fact that Manitobans are interested in education.

They believe that there needs to be a review, they're eager to give their opinions on it, and I also think it speaks well of those who are on the commission, not the least of which is the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), who is a fine Manitoban in his own right, but I know is taking on this task with a full heart because he knows how important it is and because of the love that he has for the education system.

So I look forward to seeing the report early next year. You know, I know that there are people who will be nervous about reports and change, and I understand that. That happens in a big system.

When people sort of get used to operating or doing things in one certain way, there's always concern about another way, but it would be—I think I would not be doing my duty as a minister, and this government wouldn't be doing its role as an elected entity if it just simply ignored large systems and didn't do a proactive review to see if there are ways that we could do it—do better, ultimately, for our students.

We talk about systems, and I sometimes make the mistake sometimes of talking too much about systems because that's what it is, but within those systems, of course, are individuals and students who are impacted. So I'm really looking forward to the report early next year, and we—very excited to share it with the member when it becomes public.

Mr. Altomare: What are the various stages or steps of the review that still need to be completed?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, from the minister's perspective, the step that needs to be completed is receiving the report. So I'm not involved in the work that they're doing. So I don't know where they are at in terms of the process. I have heard that they're on track in terms of the time. It was relayed to me that they expect to complete the report in the time that they said they would complete it, but I don't know internally where they're at in terms of the formation of the report.

Mr. Scott Johnston, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Altomare: Just give me another couple of seconds.

I understand there was an intention for the review to conclude early in 2020.

Is that still the correct time frame, and will—with the final report to the minister due in February?

Mr. Goertzen: I believe the expectation was for the commission to report back to government in March of 2020, so that is early in 2020. The last understanding that I have from the commission is that they were on time to produce that.

So that's still my expectation. If I hear otherwise, I'd obviously advise the public of that.

Mr. Altomare: When does the minister anticipate—or is there going to be an early draft or interim report that may come through?

Mr. Goertzen: I have no knowledge of either an early draft or an interim report coming to me. I mean, that would be the decision of the commission, if they had such a thing prepared. I'm only aware that their expectation is to report back to government by March of 2020.

Mr. Altomare: Does the minister intend on making an announcement stemming from the report when he immediately receives it for implementation of September of 2020, or will there be a process that will be followed?

Mr. Goertzen: There would normally be a process by which government has time to review the recommendations and then respond to the recommendations.

You know, I know in—and having sort of landed in my own mind on this, I know in other reports that I've been responsible for that have been released, whether that's the Peachey report or other reports that are primarily related to Health, I've tended to decide on simply letting the—whether it's a consultant or in this case, a commission, provide the report, answer questions publicly, usually through the course of a news conference.

Government receives the report, spends some time reviewing it and then responds at some point in the future. So whether that ends up being the process here, haven't really made a firm decision on that, but there's no question that there would be time in between the government receiving the report and, sort of, decisions on implementation.

I just—I would expect that it would be a pretty hefty report with a lot of recommendations, and so it wouldn't be responsible for government to respond, sort of, on the spot in terms of what they were going to do with—all of the recommendations.

Mr. Altomare: Has the minister thought out how the—how that—when the report is released, how it's going to be rolled out to school divisions, how it's going to

be rolled out to independent schools, et cetera, and are they are going to receive any kind of—not a review, but any kind of reflection back from those stakeholders?

Mr. Goertzen: No—it's a fair question. I mean, obviously, I think there'll be a great deal of anticipation from not just schools—but certainly schools—but many in the education sector. There'll be a lot of anticipation for the report.

*(16:30)

So I'm sure that when the report is released, whether it's put on a website, it goes live in whatever fashion it goes live on, they'll all have sort of immediate or almost immediate access to it. And, you know, I would expect that I'll be hearing feedback from, in almost real time, from schools and others within the education system.

So, haven't thought about whether there's a particular formal way to get back feedback, but my experience so far in this department, as it was in Health, is receiving feedback won't be difficult. There will be plenty of feedback provided and, you know, we'll certainly consider that as we consider the recommendations around the report.

But remember, now, also I think it's important to say that, you know, there's feedback from the report. But there's been historic opportunity for all of those stakeholders in education to provide feedback into the report, and so they would have all been invited or had the opportunity to attend the public sections where the commission was hearing from the public.

And that was very well attended in the thousands, I understand, and then they would have had opportunity to provide feedback through the Internet and then the online survey that was provided there, and they would have then had opportunity to provide input and feedback. Some, not all, were selected to have, sort of, special submissions based on their areas of expertise, and I know many, many did through more in-depth submissions in time with the commission.

And so, yes, I'm sure that I'll get lots of feedback. Our government will get lots of feedback when the report is released, but there's been an incredible opportunity for feedback about the education system on the front end of this, which I think is really the strength of the report.

Mr. Altomare: Thank you for that piece, Mr. Minister, but once reports come out, generally there will be a lot of not just reaction, but also some

thoughtful pieces that will come out of that and people have a time to reflect on what's actually been released.

Will there be a mechanism in place for stakeholder response so that they can have another opportunity to ensure that their voices were heard or are being heard?

Mr. Goertzen: I mean, I'll take that as good advice. I don't have a clear feeling one way or the other in terms of how we'll get feedback. I know there will be feedback that will be given almost immediately. Whether that—there's a more formal process for that feedback, I'm not closed-minded to that idea. I mean, I think that there are—there might be some opportunity for that.

You know, you have to be careful, though, not to get into the endless cycle of feedback, right. So we've had all this opportunity for individuals up front to come and to provide their expertise and input into the commission, and the commission has done good work in terms of taking that feedback and, I'm assuming, providing or working on a report and then, you know, at the back end, when it's—when we get the report provided, there'll then be—people will be providing instantaneous feedback.

Then could we go back for more feedback? We could, and then go and say, well, we heard, and then people might want to have feedback on the feedback that we've heard, and you don't want to go into an endless cycle. But I don't dismiss the idea that there might be a mechanism for some feedback from the recommendations, and maybe there'll be some recommendations that lend themselves more to that kind of feedback.

So, you know, if there are 100 recommendations it may be that, you know, 90 of them don't emit any sort of difficult concerns or implementation concerns, and so you wouldn't necessarily go back for feedback on everything, but there might be one or two that are particularly tricky or difficult or require, you know, further consultation or thought, and I wouldn't dispel the idea of doing that if that's what was—seemed to be the right mechanism for policy implementation.

Mr. Altomare: I want to thank the minister for that response.

So it does—so then there will be some thought put in place to ensure that there is an opportunity to have not just a reaction to the report but also to come up with some—I wouldn't call them recommendations but more along the lines of some—of difficulty, maybe, implementing some of the pieces of that report.

Mr. Goertzen: Right. So, I mean, we want to do what's best in terms of implementation. So if there are things that are particularly challenging or difficult to have input, I'm sure—or have implementation, I'm sure that we would reach out and want to have a discussion with those who are affected by that implementation and get their opinion about how it could best be actioned, if government chose to action that particular recommendation.

So we'd always want to be engaging with those who are impacted by a recommendation about the best way to go forward on that recommendation. That would've been true, with my experience, whether it was on the mental health report and review.

We had lots of discussions after the VIRGO report about what is the best way, with those stakeholders, to go forward with the implementation of those recommendations that we were acting upon at any given time.

So you absolutely want to have that feedback from those who are impacted.

Mr. Altomare: Can we take a brief recess? I just need to go do a couple of things.

The Acting Chairperson (Scott Johnston): That be the will of the committee?

Mr. Goertzen: Not to hold the member up or to cause anything untoward to happen, but I want to just put on the record that the PSFB annual report has to be reported back by the end of the year. It's six months after their fiscal year, which ends in June, so they've got to report back by the end of this year.

And I'm absolutely okay with the recess.

The Acting Chairperson (Scott Johnston): Committee is in recess.

The committee recessed at 4:37 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:43 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Chairperson: I guess if everybody's ready, we'll resume the Estimates. The honourable member for Transcona.

Is everybody ready? Okay.

Mr. Altomare: So I just want to get some clarity on what parts of the financial model is under review by the commission on K-to-12 education.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank the member for the question.

So the terms of reference that were provided to the commission specifically excluded it from making recommendations on how money is garnered or brought into the education system. The notion there was we wanted to ensure that there was broader discussions with Finance, because of course the issue of taxation on property isn't just an education issue. It's also a Finance issue, if there's things that are going to be done a different way.

And I know the that commissioner, Mr. Manness, had publicly stated at the launch of the commission that he wouldn't even have taken the job if it included trying to determine how the system was paid for because of the complexity of it and the need to work with Finance on that because of the significant revenue gap that it would cause.

I mean, it would've been simple, I suppose, for the commission to say, well, we're just going to remove education taxes from property, but in the absence of having any sort of discussion or ability to discuss with Finance, in terms of how that hole then would be filled, it would have been difficult.

Now the member will remember during the election campaign our government committed to remove education taxes from property beginning when the balance—when the budget comes into balance, and to do it over no longer than 10 years.

And so now that mystery, in terms of how that is going to be done or what's going to happen with the property taxes, that mystery is no more. Government's made that commitment, and so following the balancing of the budget, over no more than 10 years, that will be removed from property taxes.

And it's something I'll mention to the member I campaigned on in 2003, so quite a long time ago. I think it's important. I think how that tax is applied is not indicative of people's ability to pay the tax.

And so I'll often use an example of a senior who's purchased a home for \$80,000 and over the course of their working life that home might have—if—and if you're in a community that's growing—might have increased to a value of \$280,000. And then they retire, and they're still paying now education property taxes based on the value of that home even though their ability to pay hasn't increased. In fact, it's declined as they've gone through their working days.

So I know there's been all sort of tax credits and all sorts of different add-ons and schemes to try to reduce the burden for certain segments of the population since 2003 and that's fine, but it's a much

simpler and a more equitable thing to just simply take it off of the property taxes all together.

So once the budget has reached balance, we—then the clock starts ticking and we will have to fulfill our promise; have no more than 10 years to do the removal.

Mr. Altomare: So just to follow up on some of the removing of that property tax component from education funding: a lot of people see that as a community's opportunity to invest in the education system.

And I'm wondering where would that money come from, because it's a significant amount of dollars and where would the department find those extra revenues?

Mr. Goertzen: So it—the brunt of the responsibility—and I think this is why it's the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) who tends to answer questions that are specific to what the member's asking—falls to the Department of Finance because they're going to, in the same way that health care is funded or Infrastructure is funded, it will come through general revenues.

* (16:50)

And so, the Department of Finance, I know, will be working with Treasury Board officials as we get closer to the balancing of the budget—which the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) indicated will be within the next two years—to then slowly start to backfill that money as it gets reduced from the property taxes and brought on to general revenues.

And so it's not a burden to the Department of Education per se. It is borne by Finance, as they are finding that money to fund education like they do health care and other things, through general revenue.

Now, in terms of local input, at the local level, I do think that's important, and I suspect that the K-to-12 Commission will, you know, have some things to say about local input, and how do we ensure that there is still local input into schools. Regarding—regardless of the funding motto, I think that they would have been looking at ensuring that there's local input into local areas, which I think is important.

But I also don't think the trustees—well, I won't speak for every trustee, but certainly the trustees that I know didn't run for election because they wanted to tax their neighbours and their friends and be responsible for taxation. Most of them get involved because they want to have some input into education, write large on the local level, and what sort of things

are happening more at the local level. I don't think any of them are motivated to get involved because they want to be involved in taxing their friends and neighbours.

And so I did see some correspondence from the president—I believe, was—of MASBO, who talked about that, you know, they understood that most trustees weren't really motivated by getting involved in taxing people. So, this will relieve trustees and school boards of that responsibility—mind you, over 10 years, and there have been many who have complained that that's too long of a period, but it's a responsible period, I think.

You can't replace that revenue from Finance that quickly, and so it's a responsible period of time. Some would like it to go more quickly; there might be some who feel it shouldn't happen at all, but I would say that, based on what we heard during the election campaign, is that Manitobans think that the change is long overdue.

Mr. Altomare: So if I'm understanding this correctly, there's still going to be a role for school boards to play, and there'll still be a role for local input into what's happening in their schools.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I think the member's sort of presupposing what the K-to-12 Commission is going to recommend. But what I did say to him is I think, based on, you know, what the public input was into the K-to-12 Commission, and based on, you know, that sort of feedback that was heard, I'm quite sure that the K-to-12 Commission is interested and engaged when it comes to local involvement, and at what level and what way can there be a local input into the school system.

But you know, there are many models across North America. There are many models in Canada. There are some models that have gone to no school boards, there are some models have gone to fewer school boards, but I think what is consistent among all of those models is that there is still some mechanism for local input. And I think that that's, you know, one could hearken to the regional health authority 'wellataward', there isn't any taxation powers, per se, but there is still local or regional input.

Now, please don't take that as any sort of suggestion that that should be the model that it goes to because I'm not trying to draw any sort of moral or other equivalency between those two models. Just to say that there are a lot of different parts of government

where there isn't taxation power, where there's still local input.

So I don't believe for a second that the K-to-12 Commission isn't engaged in some thoughtful discussion about how to ensure—with or without school boards, through more school boards, less school boards, regardless—that there is some important access and availability for a local input.

Mr. Altomare: So when the money is removed from that education tax levy, it'll—has to come from some other form of funding in the government.

Can the minister say where that money will specifically come from or will it just be an increase to the education levy—I mean, not the levy—to the education—to our education funding, K to 12 in the province?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, it would come from the same way that hospitals are funded or, you know, virtually every other service that is funded in government.

Mr. Altomare: When that levy is removed from property taxes, there will be a significant amount of money that will have to be replaced.

Where will that difference be made up from? Will there be cuts to the department or will there be, like I said—asked before—will there be an increase to make sure that education is properly funded?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I think the member is falling into the old trap of saying that just because, you know, something is being reduced in one section, that there 'necessarily' has to be that some revenue is being reduced in one area, there necessarily there has to be a corresponding reduction in another area.

Remember that there is growth that comes through an economy that happens on an annual basis. There are other areas of growth. I mean, I've heard—I heard the same argument when it came to the reduction in the PST, that there always had to be some sort of, you know, measured-off correlation, but I think that if you'd look at consumer spending or even income taxes this last year, there's been significant increase as a result of more economic activity.

So I don't think the member should assume that just because there's a reduction of revenue on one side, that there are not other things that help to offset that, whether that's the natural growth of an economy or the natural growth of a province.

I remember when I first started working in this building in 1995, I think the budget of the Province

was 5.2 or 5.3 billion. Now it's probably almost tripled in size, and I wouldn't say that that's because there's been three times as many taxes—although maybe the NDP were on their way to that—but there are things that grow, in terms of the economy.

So let's not make an assumption that there's a natural parallel between one action of government and there having to be found in a way that the member describes.

Mr. Altomare: Just for clarity, how much revenue do we get now from the education property tax levy in the province?

* (17:00)

Mr. Goertzen: School divisions raise, I understand, about \$840 million annually.

Mr. Altomare: That is a significant amount of money, \$840 million, to come out of a—you know, a complex budget like the Province of Manitoba's is. It's significant. I did hear the minister say that it can be up to 10 years, but it—can there—how—what—I'm just having a hard time wrapping my head around how we're going to get to fully funding a school system that's going to lose \$840 million of revenue.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, the school system's not going to lose that revenue; we've already made a commitment that it's going to be funded—Education is going to be funded through general revenues, just like every other major part of government is funding. But remember, again, there is all sorts of areas of growth that happen within a provincial economy, and then there are choices that are made when—if you'd look at the provincial revenues from 1995 compared to now, your assumption is that every part of that growth is somehow not being—is coming at the expense of something else. But if it's a decision that government wants to make, if they want to use the growth of an economy to the reduction of taxes, that doesn't come at the cost of a particular department because it's coming from the growth.

So, you know, we're committed to get 'er done when it comes to reducing this but to not get 'er done too fast. We're going to take the appropriate time, so over 12 years. We're going to be reasonable and responsible. I mean, I heard members opposite before, and I heard lots of—and this isn't this member; he won't recall it. But many of his colleagues, going back over the last four years, they said, there's no way you can reduce the PST; it's not possible; it's impossible to reduce the PST at the same time that you're going to be reducing the deficit. They had all sorts of

statements that it just simply wasn't possible. Well, it was possible. I mean, we saw—if it was possible for the NDP to increase the deficit at the same time they were increasing taxes, it isn't an impossibility to do the opposite.

And so we—we're committed to doing it. We've kept our promises in the past. We've kept them in a responsible way. This is a commitment that is over 12 years. Well, 10 years, once it begins, but if we assume that the budget is going to be balanced in two years, a 12-year commitment. That's very responsible. And the money doesn't come out of Education because the government is taking on that responsibility to fund Education.

Mr. Altomare: So, just again, to clarify: so the government will take on this \$840-million addition to Education, the funding piece?

Mr. Goertzen: I mean, this—you know, terminology is sometimes important. I mean, taxpayers take this on. So taxpayers are taking on the \$840 million now. Manitobans are paying taxes in terms of the \$840 million. They're the ones who are paying the costs of this. So I always like to ensure that we're not talking about—that this is government that is doing—whether something's being built or there's an investment. It's Manitobans. Manitobans now are paying \$840 million. We believe that over the next 12 years, we can find a way to fund Education at growing levels each and every year, I suspect, as required, from the general revenues which flow through the Department of Finance.

So it is not easy work, but we believe that it's responsible. We're talking about—if you just use sort of straight math and a reduction a little bit, it's close to \$80 million a year. We certainly think in a budget that's 15-plus billion dollars that finding that \$80 million is possible, and it might just be possible through growth, depending on how things go, but I'll leave that for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) to figure out because that's his world not mine. But the Education Department will continue to be funded and funded adequately. It'll just be funded in a different way, but in a way that is similar to every other service, essentially every other service that government provides.

Mr. Altomare: So if I'm hearing it correctly, Manitobans will still have to find a way to find this \$840 million to make sure that the education system is properly funded at K to 12?

Mr. Goertzen: Manitobans are paying the money now through the taxation on property, directly paying it. Finance finds a way through their mechanisms of raising funds to finance every other part of government and service. And so they've taken on that responsibility to, over 12 years, find a way to ensure that that equal and growing revenues are going into the Department of Education. So it's not coming from the Department of Education.

Now, my friend, I think, is assuming, well, that must mean they're going to have to tax in some other way for \$840 million, and I would encourage him to come out of that box of thinking that the only way that you can find any sort of reduction is to find a new tax to put in place. That is the traditional way of NDP thinking, and I know that, but he's young enough in his political career that he can break out of that box now. And to look at whether it's growth of the economy or other ways to find efficiencies, we've proven that we can find those, either savings within government or through growth within the economy, to be able to fund things that are important to Manitobans, like education, without having to imply a new tax.

So I don't want to leave the member with any thought that this is trading one tax for another. And the 12 years will give the opportunity for Finance and this Finance Minister and any subsequent Finance ministers that might come after him to find that money in a reasonable, responsible and moderate way each and every year. Again, there are many who had been out there lobbying for us to get rid of it, the education taxes, in a year or two. Certainly in the farm sector and others, they would've wanted it much quicker. Doing it over 12 years allows government to look at a variety of different options that don't include just starting up a new tax to replace a no tax. In fact, the commitment has been made that that won't happen.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Thank you for having—allowing us the opportunity to ask—

Mr. Chairperson: Before you—before we begin, if you can introduce your staff to the committee.

Ms. Lamoureux: I have Richard Davies, who's a caucus staff for the Manitoba Liberal Party, joining me here today in the Chamber.

I have a few questions for Education as well as immigration, but as long as time permits, we'll have quite a few for immigration.

Starting with Education, on page 45 of the Manitoba Education and Training 2019-2020

expenditure Estimates, it shows that 20 positions for inclusion support have been cut and spending has been reduced by \$1.782 million in the area of administrative support.

Can the minister share with us why the positions and funding are being cut and when the population of children and education—or when the population of children and education here in Manitoba are rising?

* (17:10)

Mr. Goertzen: Thank the member for the question. I want to congratulate her on her re-election and her new election into Tyndall Park; look forward to meeting at her local McDonald's sometime soon.

It is the Curriculum Support Centre, which is being remodeled, repurposed, where those 20 positions are coming from. There were no loss of jobs. Everybody was redeployed who was within that—within the Curriculum Support Centre.

But that is the appropriation the member's speaking of. It is a result of the repurposing of the Curriculum Support Centre.

Ms. Lamoureux: Just in follow-up, where are the positions going to be relocated?

Mr. Goertzen: Those individuals who are working within the Curriculum Support Centre were offered new positions within the department of government—or Department of Education, or maybe—they are all within the Department of Education.

So I don't know and nor do I know if it'd be appropriate for me to tell the member exactly where each one of them landed, in terms of employment, but they were all offered new positions.

Ms. Lamoureux: The \$1.782 million that was reduced, is it going towards something else?

Mr. Goertzen: There are lots of areas within the Department of Education where there is increased funding. Certainly, the support to newcomers to Manitoba has continued to increase. In addition, there was six-point-some million dollars for new funding for K-to-12 system announced last year as well.

So lots of new money going into different important places within Education. So savings that are—occurred in some areas can be applied into other areas.

Ms. Lamoureux: On page 97, with respect to support for universities and colleges, why are operating grants

and strategic initiatives reduced by \$6.15 million, and what specifically is being reduced?

Mr. Goertzen: The member will know that this government inherited a difficult financial position with a debt position—or, sorry, a deficit position that was growing upwards to \$2 billion a year. I think when we came into office it was close to a billion dollars a year of structural deficit.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) indicated, rightly, that that is not sustainable, and that needed to be an all-hands-on-deck approach to trying to get that deficit and ultimately, the debt after that into a reasonable position. And so universities and colleges have been part of that all-hands-on-deck approach.

They, of course, have operational authority for their facilities, and so they will have made decisions, in terms of how they feel best to meet those targets, but it is certainly part of an overall financial position that we inherited and had to take action upon.

Ms. Lamoureux: On page 101, there shows a reduction in demand for the apprenticeship program. We were just wondering, did less people enroll that were expected, and what does this mean for apprenticeship positions in the workforce?

Mr. Goertzen: Things haven't changed, in terms of the program itself. There have been less individuals who've applied into the program. It can be a variety of different things.

You know, there's lots of opportunities within the job market these days, and so people probably are presented with lots of different opportunities. They may be choosing to take those opportunities that aren't apprenticeship programs per se, may be delaying their desire to go into apprenticeship.

We are committed to apprenticeship though. We would like to see, particularly in the high-school sector, more young people taking apprenticeship programs; might require some thought, in terms of the kind of programs that are made available and the sort of things that they find interesting, but the reduction is a result of fewer applications, I understand.

Ms. Lamoureux: Is the government doing anything to encourage people to be filling those spots? And students to be pursuing apprenticeship positions because there will be a demand for it in high professional careers?

Mr. Goertzen: There is always information that is, you know, being provided, whether it's through the education system or other government portals or ways

to get information in terms of the programs that we have available in government. Certainly, we want to continue to do more of that, work with those who are working within the schools in providing options and guidance to young people to ensure that they encourage apprenticeship where it's appropriate.

Of course, ultimately, young people decide to pursue the opportunities that they feel that are best for their skills and for their life aspirations. But we want to ensure that we continue to make sure they know that these are opportunities that are available.

Ms. Lamoureux: I'm going to move on to immigration for a little while. I just have a few questions there. And the minister probably knows what's coming because I asked about it earlier in question period today.

And, you know, I actually appreciated his answer, even though it was in response to a question from the other day, but I still did appreciate it.

But today's question was specifically—people who are applying to the Provincial Nominee Program, I know that there is a list of careers that helps them in the application process. They get more points because we need those careers—people in those careers here in the province of Manitoba. The list that I currently have, I know, goes back at least a couple of years.

Is there an updated list somewhere, or when will there be an updated list?

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the member for the question. I apologize that I answered her question in question period two days or something after it was asked. You know, I was a critic for a long time. I've been waiting 15 years for some answers to questions that I asked when I was a critic. So, you know, I think the standard isn't so bad if I answer it two days later.

We can provide the member the list. I think we can probably commit to getting it to her within the week.

We'll commit to getting it to her within the week in terms of the new and updated list. It's obviously an amalgamation of labour market information and—matched together with what we think our skills that our new Canadians—or, immigrants can fill.

Ms. Lamoureux: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer, and I look forward to receiving the list.

I was just curious, how are those changes made? Is it Immigration Manitoba that does a survey throughout the province? Is it workplaces that submit

something saying—asking Manitoba to find people who are going to be eligible and applicable to those fields? Please let me know.

Mr. Goertzen: Officials indicate that every year, we hire a consultant to provide—to survey the labour market and environment, to do forward forecasting and then to—through their expertise—to help us develop the list of what we believe are those high-demand occupations.

* (17:20)

They're not ranked in order of—on the website, they wouldn't be—there are hundreds of occupations, I understand. They wouldn't be ranked in order of priority. But just their ranking—the—appearing on the list says that there's a demand. But it's not as though the top occupation on the top of that list means that's the highest need in Manitoba. It just means that there is a need in Manitoba, and that's how they appear on the list.

Ms. Lamoureux: I'm just a little bit curious about the process for the consultant. How long ago did the consultant begin looking up these career choices? If I'm going to be able to have a list of them next week, for example.

Mr. Goertzen: I think this is an annual process. Not to be, you know, too smart about it, but the list is on the website. And so, it—and it's updated annually, I would assume, once the new information comes forward. So every year, we hire a consultant. Every year, they do that analysis. Every year, the list is updated and it's put on the website.

So we're—out of an abundance of being helpful, we can provide you the list by printing it out and providing it to you. It probably could take us less than a week to do that, but, you know, it's Thanksgiving and everything, or you could just simply go on the website and look up yourself.

Ms. Lamoureux: I'm more than happy to print the list off myself. I'll let you enjoy your Thanksgiving weekend here.

My follow-up question is with the IELTS. I'm under the impression that right now, people need a minimum of—is it 5.5 or 6.5 to apply for a PNP?

Mr. Goertzen: So the federal government sets the minimum standard at 4, and then it varies by occupation and the determination about what type of English skills would be required for that occupation.

So in the medical field, there might be a higher level because it's important that, as an example, a doctor can communicate properly with their patients because the—and this was an issue, I know, when I was in Health, that the ability to provide the information, for the patient to be able to speak to the doctor is critically important. And when things are lost because of language proficiencies—or deficiencies, that can sometimes, you know, have dire consequences.

And so the minimum level, which is set by the federal government, is 4, and then each occupation is assigned a different level based on what they feel the need is. I understand that's also on the website. If the member has a difficulty time—difficult time finding it, I'm sure we can assist her in getting to the right place on the website.

Ms. Lamoureux: To what extent has this government considered making amendments to the accreditation process for internationally educated professionals intending to enter regulated occupations?

Mr. Goertzen: Can the member just quickly repeat the question again?

Ms. Lamoureux: Absolutely.

To what extent has this government considered making amendments to the accreditation process for internationally educated professionals intending to enter regulated occupations?

Mr. Goertzen: It's something we spoke about during the election campaign. We understand it's an issue and a concern.

We did commit to reducing the timeline to get to an interim accreditation to six months—interim assessment on their accreditation to six months, and so I think that's something that we're committed to.

I know the member is not going to have a lot of time left because of where we are on the Sessional Order. She could continue to try to ask one or two more questions if she wants. She can list off a series of questions and we can commit to get back to her; whatever she thinks is best for her as a critic.

Ms. Lamoureux: I thank the minister for the opportunity. I think I'm just going to ask two more questions today. We'll see what we can get through and I may do some follow-up. I have a nice relationship with the minister. I know I can work through his office if I need to.

Can the government talk a little bit about where specifically the \$500 acceptance fee for provincial nominee applicants is going?

Mr. Goertzen: We are investing those funds across the province, in the various parts of Manitoba. There are 17 different projects.

There's many different settlement organizations in Manitoba that have longstanding relationships with our immigrant community. We've been funding them based on the proposals they put forward to do more work. There's English-language-training proposals that are being looked at, as well, to provide supports.

So it's across Manitoba, for a variety of different settlement services, primarily with existing organizations like Welcome Place or Eastman immigrant settlement services, as an example.

Ms. Lamoureux: When the Provincial Nominee Program was first implemented 30-some years ago, was—there was no \$500 fee and the program actually ran quite successfully. The government's had some time now with the program.

Is there a goal to ultimately remove the \$500 fee?

Mr. Goertzen: We think the fee is something that provides ultimately better service and provides better support for those who are coming to Manitoba.

I don't want to diminish the fact that for some individuals \$500 can be a challenge. I would also say that \$500 for the opportunity to live in Canada and become a Canadian is perhaps the best deal in the world. I can't think of a better deal than \$500 to become and live in the greatest country in the world.

So I'm not trying to diminish the fact that that can be something of a challenge for individuals, but in my discussions with the community, they recognize that the services that they're being provided are valuable and have value, and they also recognize that \$500 to live in Canada and potentially become a Canadian is—you're not going to find a better deal than that.

Ms. Lamoureux: I think I've got time for one more question here.

Is the government planning to make any more changes with respect to allocated points in the PNP process? For example, I know right now applicants, if they are applying to move to Steinbach, Manitoba, they get more points than they would Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mr. Goertzen: It's a part we're always looking at: trying to find better ways to get better outcomes, to

ensure that needs of communities and newcomers are being met.

I appreciate the fact that there might be more points allocated to Steinbach, and I won't speak on the value of that, other than to say Steinbach has done very well by the fact that many new people have come from other parts of world to our community. I have the great opportunity to be friends with many of them; my family, my son, my wife, have had the opportunity to become friends with new Canadians.

Regardless of the points that they're assigned, we have benefitted greatly and immensely by their presence in our community.

Ms. Lamoureux: If I have time, Mr. Chairperson.

Is there a plan, though, to revisit how those points are allocated?

Mr. Goertzen: There's always reviews that are happening within the department to ensure that we're getting the best outcomes for new Canadians and for communities who are welcoming them.

* (17:30)

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. I interrupt the proceedings of this section of Committee of Supply, pursuant of the Sessional Order passed by the House on September 30th, 2019.

Items 2(d) and 15 state that all department Estimates must be concluded on Thursday, October 10th, 2019. If all resolutions are not passed, the Chairperson must interrupt the proceedings 30 minutes prior to the adjournment hour and put all questions necessary to dispose of the remaining matters without any debate, amendment or adjournment.

I am therefore going to call this sequence of the remaining resolutions on the following departments: Education and Training; Municipal Relations; Civil Service Commission; Legislative Assembly; Enabling and Other Appropriations; Employee Pensions; and Other Costs.

I would like to remind members that, in accordance with the sectional order, these questions may not be debated, amended or adjourned.

Could—call the following resolutions.

Resolution 16.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,454,000 for Education and Training, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,351,000 for Education and Training, K-12 Education, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$350,505,000 for Education and Training, Education and School Tax Credits, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,271,000 for Education and Training, Policy, Planning and Performance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.5: RESOLVED there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,393,654,000 for Education and Training, Support to Schools, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$884,010,000 for Education and Training, Post-Secondary Education and Workforce Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,853,000 for Education and Training, Immigration and Economic Opportunities, for fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$92,300,000 for Education and Training, Capital Funding, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,110,000 for Education and Training, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk): Resolution 13.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,528,000 for Municipal Relations, Administration and Finance for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum exceeding—not exceeding \$29,517,000 for Municipal Relations, Community Planning and Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Thirteen—resolution 13.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,735,000 for Municipal Relations, Infrastructure and Municipal Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$313,731,000 for Municipal Relations, fiscal assistance—Financial Assistance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk): Next resolution is Resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$22,161,000 for Civil Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk): Going to Resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,875,000 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,308,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.3: Resolved that her to be—RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,052,000 for the Legislative Assembly, the Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,696,000 for the Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,562,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Advocate for the—Children and Youth, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,000,000 for the Legislative Assembly, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

ENABLING AND OTHER APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk): Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,924,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Enabling Vote, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$183,000,000 for the Enabling Appropriations, Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$40,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Green Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$135,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Capital Assets—Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 27.1: RESOLVED that her—that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$49,500,000 for Other Appropriations, Emergency Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

* (17:40)

Resolution 27.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$500,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Losses or Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$24,113,000 for Employee Pensions and Other Costs, Employee Pensions and Other Costs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes our consideration for the Estimates for the section of Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber.

I would like to thank the ministers, critics and other honourable members for their hard work and dedication during this process.

Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Speaker: As the hour is past 5:30, in accordance with sections 8, 13, 15 and 16 of the Sessional Order passed by the House on September 30th, 2019, we shall now consider Bill 22, The Business Registration Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended), beginning with report stage and followed immediately by concurrence and third reading.

For the information of all members, any matters of privilege and points of order would be deferred until after these actions have been concluded.

For each report stage amendment, the sponsor will first move the motion and I will rule on its orderliness. The sponsor will then be allowed one minute to speak to each amendment before I put the question to the House.

For concurrence and third reading, the minister will move the motion, and I will then immediately put the question without debate.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS**Bill 22—The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended)**

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface, to move his first amendment.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 46 in the proposed clauses 2.1(3)(a) and (b) of The Corporations Act by striking out "25%" and substituting "15%".

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Boniface, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

The honourable member for St. Boniface has one minute to speak to his amendment.

Mr. Lamont: This is an important bill in improving beneficial—the disclosure of beneficial ownership in companies in Manitoba as part of the new west trade agreement, as well as other trade agreements.

It's absolutely critical, however, that when it comes to the control of corporations, that we not set the bar too high in terms of 25 per cent, which is why we have—we've amended the bill to—or, offered an amendment to change it to 15 per cent, because that kind of ownership is still important in terms of public disclosure.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: No? I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. I declare the motion defeated.

An Honourable Member: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The—on division. Defeated on division.

Madam Speaker: I will now call for the second amendment from the honourable member for St. Boniface.

I would ask him to move his second amendment.

Mr. Lamont: I move, seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 47 by replacing the proposed section 21.3 of The Corporations Act with the following:

Access to register

21.3(1) A corporation to which section 21.1 applies must publish its register of individuals with significant control over the corporation on a website available to the public.

L.G. in C. may designate website

21.3(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by regulation, designate a website that must be used for the purpose of subsection (1) and every corporation to which section 21.1 applies must

publish its register of individuals with significant control on the designated website.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

*THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 47 by replacing the proposed section 21.3 of **The Corporations Act** with the following:*

Access to—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

The honourable member for St. Boniface has one minute to speak to his amendment.

Mr. Lamont: This is an important change, in that every anti-corruption—or, a number of anti-corruption organizations, transparent 'ernational—the Anti-Corruption Division of the OECD and others have described Canada's beneficial ownership and corporate laws as being incredibly opaque, with the result that Canada itself has become a haven for tax havens and at risk for money-laundering.

This has been a serious issue in British Columbia, where it's estimated that possible billions of dollars have been laundered through companies. So it's extremely important that these beneficial registries be both public and searchable.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion defeated.

An Honourable Member: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The motion has been defeated on division.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 22—The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended)

Madam Speaker: I will now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended).

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox), that Bill 22, The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: That concludes our consideration of Bill 22.

* * *

Madam Speaker: In accordance with the Sessional Order and the agreement earlier today in the House, we will now commence with the report from the Committee of Supply on the Departmental Estimates resolutions, followed by the Main and Capital Supply process.

Committee Report

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and opted certain resolutions.

I move, seconded by the honourable member from Portage la Prairie, that the report of the committee be received.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk), seconded by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), that the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted certain resolutions.

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

* (17:50)

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Capital Supply

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

We have before us, for the—our consideration for the resolution respecting Capital Supply. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding 2 billion, 490–459 thousand, 509 thousand dollars—[*interjection*]—okay, sorry.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding 2 billion, 459 thousand—million, 509 thousand dollars for a Capital Supply for the year—fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

The floor is open for questions. Shall the—any questions?

If there's no questions, shall the resolution pass?

Resolution agreed to.

Committee rise.

Call the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted the Capital Supply resolution.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020, which have been adopted at this session, whether by a section of the Committee of Supply or by the full committee.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: Earlier today, the Opposition House Leader tabled a following list in—of ministers to be questioned in concurrence, and the list includes: the Premier (Mr. Pallister); the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Friesen); Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson); Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding); the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Wharton); the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Wharton); the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen); the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke); the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen); the Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Goertzen); the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires); the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler); the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler); and the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Cox).

These ministers will be questioned concurrently.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): In regards to indigenous fishers, what is the Province doing to support indigenous fishers during a poor season?

As we know, our farmers can apply for compensation due to poor harvest seasons. What is in place for indigenous fishers in that same regard?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I appreciate the member's question about what our government is doing to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries in the province of Manitoba.

As the member is probably well aware, under the NDP, they had destroyed Lake Manitoba fishery as well as critically endangered the Lake Winnipeg fishery by mismanaging the fish populations and increasing the fishing quota by 700,000 kilograms to unsustainable levels, as well as protecting a wasteful FFMC monopoly.

That is something that our government has not—we've reversed the course that the NDP was on, in terms of eroding the fisheries and the sustainability of the fisheries. What we have done since we've taken

office is introduced a voluntary quota buyback to fishers, which resulted in putting \$5.5 million back in the pockets of fishers—many of them whom were indigenous fishers—and it is also going to result in 525,000 kilograms of fish staying in the lake. That is certainly on the path to ensuring sustainability of our fisheries, when we're allowing fish—more fish to stay in the lake, year over year over year.

We've also looked at changing the mesh sizes and have settled on changing them so that spawning walleye and sauger can at least spawn one or two seasons before those fish are caught in the nets. We know that under the NDP, they did nothing to ensure that walleye and sauger could spawn one or two or three seasons before they were caught. They did nothing to move on the mesh sizes, which of course resulted in many of the fish being caught at unsustainable levels, and so our government has enacted new policies to ensure that sauger, walleye will spawn one or two seasons before they end up in the nets of the fishers.

That's going to ultimately result in greater value for the fishers, with higher yield coming out of the lake with fewer fish. And we've also introduced the open market to fishers in the province of Manitoba. They're getting more money. We know that the value of sauger has increased, the value of walleye has increased significantly. But what's also really of interest to many is the value of the whitefish. Where this was a species that was very much devalued under the NDP, we're seeing, with the introduction to the open market, whitefish getting record prices for their catch. And so that's putting more money in the fishers' pockets.

So our measures that we've done—changing the mesh sizes to ensure that the fish stock is sustainable, doing a voluntary quota buyback to fishers, which is resulting in putting \$5.5 million back in their pockets, as well as keeping 525,000 kilograms of fish in the lake year over year over year—is certainly enhancing our commercial fishery, and producing better results for our indigenous fishers throughout the province of Manitoba.

I'd like to just point out the good work that the members of Skownan First Nation have done with their fishery. First eco-certified fishery in the province; in fact it was one of the first eco-certified fisheries in the country. And they're getting good value for the fish that they've done. We were happy to partner with them and to provide them with a grant

to help them with their sustainability and eco-certification initiatives.

And that is a success story, not only here in Manitoba but throughout North America. And certainly, wanting to partner with other fisheries in the province on eco-certification as we move towards building sustainable fisheries for all fishers, but particularly enhancing opportunities for our indigenous fishers throughout the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson: Any further questions?

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): This is the list of environmental organizations that received provincial funding in 2018-2019: Ducks Unlimited Canada, Stonewall; Green Action Centre, Inc.; International Institute for Sustainable Development; Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium, Gimli; Manitoba Eco-Network Inc.; Manitoba Forestry Association Inc.; Manitoba Wildlife Federation; Red River Basin Commission; Fort Whyte Foundation Inc.; and the Manitoba Environmental Industries Association.

Can the minister tell us which of these organizations from this list have also received funding in 2019-2020 and, too, explain why the others have not?

And I can provide the list, if that helps. I'll table the list. I apologize.

Ms. Squires: Well, I'd like to thank the member for pointing out the numerous organizations that are funded through the Department of Sustainable Development and the numerous organizations that our government has partnered with to ensure that we have sustainable development in the province of Manitoba.

One of the organizations that she's neglected—or one of the initiatives that the member opposite has neglected to highlight in her list of organizations that the Department of Sustainable Development partners with is the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation which, of course, we're partners with them on our historic \$102-million Conservation Trust.

Last year, our government was pleased to announce that trust and we had—earlier this year had announced five signature projects, which included funding the Wildlife Haven, as well as numerous other organisations to receive funding through the Conservation Trust, including Save Our Seine.

That was one of our signature projects where we had provided them money to do riverbank stabilization projects as well as some cleanup and

work on providing—ensuring that that watershed remains sustainable.

I'm also pleased to share with the member—she may not have caught the news release that went out today, but the Conservation Trust opened up its second call for proposals today. And so perhaps, for her benefit, I would like to share with her that because of this \$102-million Conservation Trust, we are now offering a second intake, which we will be, of course, interest to many environmental groups throughout the province of Manitoba.

* (18:10)

The second call for proposals is open. This is a unique funding opportunity that was established under our province's Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan to use nature-based approaches to build resilience to climate change.

The \$102-million Conservation Trust is an innovative, forward-thinking approach to invest in projects that enhance the natural infrastructure and the environmental goods and services that they provide to the province of Manitoba.

With this long-lasting partnership with the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation and The Winnipeg Foundation, we are building a legacy of work that will benefit all Manitobans and ensure that Manitoba remains Canada's cleanest, greenest and most climate resilient province.

The fall applicants that—may be eligible to receive up to \$250,000. Applications may be submitted under four different categories: habitat and wildlife; soil health; advancing innovation and conservation planning; and connecting people to nature categories. A separate call for proposals in the watershed category will be held at a later date.

We're very pleased to be partnering with locally based conservation groups who now have a major new funding opportunity that will result in conservation activities.

I'd like to point out that under members opposite's time in government, not once did the conservation districts have a new funding opportunity available to them. They were not receiving an increase in their base funding nor were they receiving any additional funds for projects of this significance, and so this really is historic.

And I'd also like to point out to members opposite that this \$102 million invested by Manitoba in the Conservation Trust is held in perpetuity by The

Winnipeg Foundation, and that revenues from the trust support an annual granting program that is managed by the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation.

This year alone, the Conservation Trust has \$4.3 million available for grassroots conservation groups. Again, \$4.3 million that was never available to conservation groups under the NDP.

The first call for proposals to the Conservation Trust in 2018 had attracted 54 proposals, from which 31 Manitoba groups ultimately received \$2.2 million for 42 projects in the province of Manitoba.

With the addition of matching funds for this project, the total impact is \$7.8 million for conservation activities in Manitoba.

Once again, our government is very proud of this investment. We're very proud to be partnering with all these environmental groups, to get real, lasting and significant impacts on the Manitoba habitat and preserving the natural landscapes in our beautiful province.

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): Will the minister unfreeze the child-care funding by freezing the funding levels to—keeping the funding levels at 2016 levels? The centres have been cut by almost 6 per cent, as it has not kept up with the rate of inflation.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): Well I want to thank the member for the question and, of course, you know, we did inherit a fairly significant mess by the previous NDP government.

Now I know the member opposite wasn't here during those years but Madam—or, Mr. Chair, I think it's important to indicate for the member that we can't erase history.

So I think we need to go back and maybe have a bit of a history lesson as to what took place with respect to early learning and child care back in the dark days of the previous NDP government.

I remember those times well here, Mr. Chair. Unfortunately, they were dark days in the province of Manitoba that we had to really sit here and watch as the previous NDP government really created a significant mess for Manitobans; not just in child care but indeed, across all areas of government. And I think it's—you know, the incredible hole that they dug us into over those 17 dark years under the previous government really took a toll on Manitobans.

You know, they really dug deep into Manitoban's pockets and continued to rise—or, raise the debt in the province by continuously running deficits at a time when our province was doing relatively well.

In those early days I can recall when I was first elected in the Manitoba Legislature—and this was a time when, you know, our economy was doing relatively well as a result of the previous government—being the Conservative government back in the '90s who had brought us forward in a significant way that—*[interjection]*

Mr. Chairperson: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —created a great economic environment here for us in the province of Manitoba and then unfortunately, the NDP took over after that. And we saw the dark days starting to begin. And we saw it in so many different areas, driving our economy into a spiral here in Manitoba.

And unfortunately, I do recall those days. I was here during that time. And, you know, those were significant times for Manitobans. They were tough times for Manitobans. And all those years that they were here—17 years, Mr. Chair, that they had to bring us really forward in Manitoba, but unfortunately, they took us the opposite way. They took us back.

And that's really unfortunate because, you know—and certainly, in this past election we had the opportunity to—you know, we ran a campaign based on moving Manitoba forward. The NDP ran a campaign based on moving Manitoba backwards.

I don't think that Manitobans—and clearly they spoke loud and clear, I think, in the last election, that they want—they did not want to take us back to those dark days of the previous NDP government, Mr. Chair.

And so I think it's very important that he member opposite really understands this, in particular when it comes to early learning and child care. I'm going to remind the member opposite of what happened during those dark days of 17 years of the previous NDP government.

They had an opportunity to really make a difference for Manitobans when it comes to offering good, affordable child care for Manitoba families, but they chose not to, unfortunately. They went the opposite direction.

In fact, they more than doubled the child-care wait list, Mr. Chair, and that's unfortunate because those families really deserved to have an opportunity

to put their children into good quality daycare facilities in our province but they took, unfortunately, a rather ideological approach to early learning and child care in our province, Madam—or, Mr. Chair.

And I think it's important that as we move Manitoba forward, we'll look to people in our province to partner with—whether it's the private sector, which we made a great announcement not so long ago, the previous minister of—responsible for child care, the minister of Families, and I had an opportunity to go out and make this announcement with Qualico and 74 new spaces of child care that—in partnership with the private sector.

You know, these are good things for Manitobans, and this offers more flexibility in child care in our province, and I think that that's a really important thing, Mr. Chair. And I think as we continue to move Manitoba forwards, we have created almost 3,100 more spaces in Manitoba. And with the 20 new schools that we're going to be opening as well, we look forward to move child-care facilities in those schools as well.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister's time is up.

Before we can continue—before we continue, there's a lot of background noise, so we want to make sure we listen—hear the—both the critic and the minister.

And before we start—continue to—can you also—if any critics are asking questions, can they identify which minister, too, please?

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Yesterday during the Estimates process, I asked the government about the nearly \$700,000 cut to the bureau d'éducation française.

Hoping the minister can please explain the rationale behind this enormous cut to French language education support.

* (18:20)

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): The member will know, and I appreciate the question, that we have tremendous commitment to French education in the province—

Mr. Chairperson: Sorry, I would identify you as the—I thought you were actually here as a Government House Leader, so the honourable member for—the

honourable member for—the honourable Minister for Education and Training.

Mr. Goertzen: You can call me whatever you want, Mr. Chairperson. I've been called far 'worths' than either of those things that you just identified me as.

We have tremendous dedication and commitment to French language education in the province of Manitoba, and that's demonstrated in many different ways. Pleased to see that we have instituted a director within the BEF part of the department that has direct access to me as minister and to any future minister to be able to bring directly to the minister and not through a deputy minister or an ADM, but directly to the minister, concerns that they may have when it comes to French language education. And that's really important because they're working closely with the francophone community. They're hearing directly from the francophone community, and then, in turn, they can bring that directly to the minister.

It's unique in our department. It's one of the only sort of direct-line reporting individuals to the minister other than, of course, the deputy minister. And so that is not only, I think symbolic for the francophone community, but it's more than the symbolism. It's real and it's actual, and it's already had an impact, and I've really enjoyed being able to have that direct access.

And then, beyond that, of course, and I mentioned in question period earlier today, significant commitment to the DFSM schools. There are three of them that were committed to during the campaign as we—to look forward over the next decade in terms of the schools that we're going to need in Manitoba, and top among that list is one in Transcona for the DSFM community, and I've heard many, many reports about how important that is, both for DSFM and for Transcona.

I know they were very, very impressed and happy, both for the announcement of that school, but DSFM, in particular, has been talking about the need to project out in terms of planning. And I think this was sometimes lost, and we had some questions during the campaign about, well, why are you announcing schools 10 years in advance? And the reality is that there is so much planning that goes into those in terms of land acquisition or ensuring that things are going to happen at the right time, both in terms of that land acquisition, the planning, that you really do need that kind of a window. You need to be able to look out further in advance. And of course it gives communities and different individuals within the community the assurance that they have that

support and that they know where they're going in terms of capital. So I think that that was very, very important to have that announced 10 years out.

So in many different ways, and I know that there are other areas of government, it's not just the Department of Education and Training that demonstrate their support for francophone services. I would commend our minister who is responsible for French language services in the province of Manitoba who's been an incredible advocate, and I've been very, very impressed how she's really taken on that file since she was appointed into it when we formed government into 2016. And not only have I been impressed, but I've talked to many in the francophone community who have come to me specifically and said what a great job that she's been doing, not only just learning the language itself, but immersing herself into the culture, into the issues, wanting to ensure that the views and the concerns that are being brought forward are done so to our government. And I can tell you that she does so in a responsible but a very vigorous way within our caucus and within our Cabinet, and they have a fine representative for that member.

So the question, if it had any sort of concern, and I listened very intently to the question when it was posed, if there was any concern regarding the commitment that this government has to those in their francophone community when it comes to French language, I want that member to be assured that this is a government that I think is more committed than any recent government when it comes to francophone services. We understand the history, the cultural significance, the importance of it in this Assembly and in the province of Manitoba more generally.

So it's a good question in that we need to continue to raise awareness about the different issues that come forward. I hope the member will continue to raise, in his time, whether that's in question periods or forums like this, continue to raise those important questions about the francophone community. That's what he's doing as the job of a member of this Assembly.

We, as a government, will continue to be proactive, responding to his questions but proactive in the different things that we're hearing within the community as well, and I think that he will see, over time, that it is going to bear the kinds of fruits and the results that he would hope he'll find many in the community who are supportive of the work that we're doing and I hope he'll bring that to the Legislature as well and not just criticisms, Madam Speaker.

I'll leave it at that, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, the next question.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): This is a question for the Minister of Education.

It came through Estimates that we have a number of vacancies in the Department of Education, and when we go through line by line we notice that we have some of the budget amounts that are budgeted at, say, a certain amount, and then there's the FTEs, and then after there is a considerable decline in the actuals of those things because there is actually not the actual number that's been identified that are currently working in the department.

I would like to ask the minister: What is the plan to fill some of those vacancies, and when can we look forward to having a fully funded and fully staffed Department of Education?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and I thank the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare) for the question. We did have a very fulsome discussion in Estimates on this issue, and I want to thank him for that discussion.

As I said to him, I think, during Estimates, Estimates is an opportunity not just for critics to learn about the department, but it's often very educational for staff and for ministers because we learn about the different concerns that might be happening from critics. Staff learn about the different things that might be of concern for members of the Legislature, and so I found it a very rewarding experience. I only wish we'd have had more time, and I know that we'll have that opportunity at another time to continue on with the discussion.

As we spoke about the issue of vacancies, however, he'll recognize that in any large organization, whether that's in the private sector or in government, there is a natural churn when it comes to human resources, that people decide to move on into other occupations, or maybe they decide to retire, or maybe they decide to work less, but of course those are very individual and personal decisions that happen in anybody's life. And so they make that decision, and, of course, that isn't something that we control, but we have to respond to and that we have to react to. So there is the natural reality that people move on into different occupations and then government has to, or any organization, that has to respond to that.

Beyond that, it's important to ensure that you're hiring the right people into the right positions, and so while the member, I think, was advocating for speed

when it comes to filling up positions, it's more than just about doing it quickly, because you can hire somebody quickly into a position and you can get the wrong person. You want to ensure you're getting the right person, so I've always said to the officials that I've worked with, in the two departments that I've had the opportunity to be minister of, that you want to ensure that you're getting the right person, so do it the right way, because those decisions are often very, very long-term decisions, and so there's a thoughtful process.

Now, the member said, in Estimates, that he went online and he only saw two job vacancies being posted online, and when I went and checked with the department they said, in fact, there'd been 86 hirings over the last year, so maybe at that particular moment that the member was going online that's what he saw, but that was just a snapshot in time and he needs to continue to look and he'll continue to see that we are filling vacancies as they come up, or we're filling them in the right way. You don't want to just rush into hiring someone.

Now, I know that things have been done differently in this Assembly at different times. I recall a former premier, when they had vacancies in their offices, one of the things they did was they phoned up the union shop and they brought over a union official to come into the premier's office itself—and I know I see the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), he's expressing surprise that that happened, and he should express surprise, and I'd be happy to give him more details in terms how that happened—but they brought into the premier's office, at a very senior level, someone who was just simply high in—up in the unions, and it seemed that their job was to protect the premier, to try to get them re-elected, not in the general public, but from within the party, because there was a certain amount of angst that was happening in the party in the time—he can google that if he doesn't remember how that happened.

And so they brought in this person on the public dime, on the public payroll, to organize for the premier on a political fight that was happening within the NDP. And members of the opposition at that time, we raised questions about that and said, is this really the appropriate way to hire people? Is this really how you want to have taxpayers' dollars used and expended in a public forum, let alone the premier's office?

* (18:30)

Now, of course, it's the highest office in Manitoba, and so that draws a lot of attention, as it should have drawn attention, but it wouldn't be just to that office. And so I think that we as a government, we've taken a very different approach in ensuring that we're hiring good quality people, because that's what Manitobans would expect, who are then providing us good quality advice for non-partisan and non-political reason. And ultimately, I think that's what you'd want in any organization, that you get the best people at the best time.

So the member talks about vacancies. There's a natural element to that. But then there's also the desire to get the right people in at the right place who are giving the right advice. And we do that because that's important to us as government officials, but it's important to the taxpayers as well.

So I look forward to the member continuing to go on to the website and seeing that there are available jobs within my department, with other departments of government, and he can spread the word that we're looking for good people to do good work in the civil service and to provide good advice, and he can then also tell those people we've turned our backs on the ways of the NDP where they just hired political people to do political things in government jobs and are happy—

Mr. Chairperson: The minister's time is up.

Any further questions? Is there any other questions?

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): This question is for the Minister of Education again.

On November 1st, 2017, the government began to charge Provincial Nominee Program applicants \$500 to process applications, and at the time, we were told that the fees would go towards funding programs for new immigrants. Could the minister please describe what kind of programs are now being offered to new immigrants as a result of these generated—as a result of the generated revenue from these processing fees?

Mr. Goertzen: It's a thoughtful question, and it's a good question. The funds that were raised from that initiative have largely been dispersed throughout Manitoba, in every section of Manitoba. There are 17 different agencies that have received the \$3 million in funding. One could look at Welcome Place in Winnipeg or Eastman immigration services in southern Manitoba or other providers in Westman and in northern Manitoba. And a large part of that funding was to look at those organizations that already existed.

I know there's a temptation sometimes for governments to just start up something new because then they say they've started up something new. But we looked at the organizations that were already doing good work in terms of settlement services, trying to ensure that people are getting connected into communities, connected into employment, and we asked them if they could do more of that good work. And so they've put in proposals. Those proposals were evaluated. And the money, then, was attributed to them to continue in the settlement services, largely in the organizations that were already doing some of that work but needed more support to do more of that work because of the demand.

There's also an English language component. So there's funding that is being attributed to training or to helping those meet better English language skills. And so that money is being apportioned to the various areas right across the province of Manitoba.

And I want to say, because I was asked the question before about the \$500 cost, and I'm not minimizing the fact that for some new Canadians, for some new immigrants, \$500 is not necessarily an easy amount of money. But I do want to say that for the services that are provided and for the opportunity to come to a country like Canada with all the opportunities and freedoms we have, I don't think that there is a better deal anywhere in the world than \$500 for the opportunity to join the greatest country in the world, which is Canada.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): The Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (Mr. Pedersen) and I discussed today in Estimates about the declining—perceived declining economy in Manitoba. I referenced the comments from the Conference Board of Canada, and although he disagreed, he did later refer to the Conference Board—refer me to the Conference Board of Canada, saying that they had good information that I could go back to.

So I just wanted to confirm with the minister: Does he agree with the Conference Board of Canada's information that our economy—our economic outlook is declining in Manitoba?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade): It certainly was an interesting afternoon, a discussion with the member from St. Vital.

We now know that he is against the mining industry in Manitoba, against the oil industry, which, I'm sure, Mr. Chair, that would strike a chord with

you—the apparently, he doesn't like private investment at all, holds the Conference Board of Canada in high esteem, and so when he kept asking me about that, I said, well, just go back and you're the one who believes them, so read what you want.

But it—and it was interesting that the member certainly is a huge proponent of public sector investment and, therefore, higher debt, higher deficits. It's kind of like the NDP projections on the deficit. They missed them every year, and they were always higher than what they were projecting. It's been said that the NDP never saw a tax they didn't like and they never saw a tax they wouldn't hike. So I guess he is prescribing to that same philosophy.

There is—they raised taxes in—15 times in 14 years, which certainly we saw when it was part of the mess that we inherited when we came in to government with a deficit pushing towards \$1 billion and projected to go to \$1.7 billion within two years. So we've certainly had our hands full in cleaning up the mess that the NDP left Manitobans. And now their only suggestion is to go back into more public debt. That seems to be their only answer for anything that they want to do.

So the member made it quite—the member from St. Vital made it quite clear that he doesn't like private investment. He feels that we shouldn't have any of that; we should always do it with just public sector investment only.

An Honourable Member: Moving backwards.

Mr. Pedersen: Moving backwards, but never forwards.

You know, the member liked to quote the Conference Board of Canada and their gloom and doom projections for Manitoba, but we've already proven the Conference Board of Canada wrong the last three years, and we expect to see that to happen again because we're leading the country in private sector investment. I know that that's not a happy term for the NDP is private sector, but it really is what is making Manitoba move forward, not backward, and we will continue to encourage that.

And as I used the example just the other day, when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler) and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) were at Patterson Global Foods' \$93-million private sector investment, bringing in 70 high-tech jobs which, in turn, will create huge spinoffs in the agricultural sector supplying the oats; the transportation sector moving

that product to and from the manufacturing plant. And that is another one that he didn't like.

* (18:40)

He kept talking about low wages, and yet we have Manitobans coming back to work in Manitoba to work for companies like Ubisoft, because there wasn't the opportunity before when the NDP were in power, and now at companies like Ubisoft, people are moving back home because they know that Manitoba's the place to be.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): This question is for Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler).

Manitoba Agriculture offers a program called environmental farm plans that involves the producers to undergo a training program where they complete environmental farm plans themselves during that training, which is a half-day training.

So the number of environmental farm plans has dropped over the last two years. In 2017, it was 7,033. Now it's 6,947.

Can the minister kindly speak to it?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to talk about the environmental farm plan.

Of course, we've been working with the Keystone Agricultural Producers. The farm organization's been chosen to represent farmers in Manitoba. Certainly, we have had ongoing conversations, and the importance of our environmental farm plan is a large part of our economy.

We know that our farmers are the best stewards to the land. They'll continue to be the best stewards to the land, and we know that in partnership together, between government and the farmers, we'll certainly make sure that they continue to follow environmental farm plans.

One that's critically important—crop rotation is critically important disease prevention. We know that those issues are paramount to not only that organization, but the farmers and the successes. We've had the first case of clubroot in a number of years. We've been able to keep it out of the province of Manitoba.

We know that there's checks and balances in place. Once you take that land out of production where that clubroot is out, you need to ensure that at

least two years between crop rotations. It's very critically important.

So as we continue down the path of environmental plans, we'll also roll into that the BMPs, which is critically important to ensure that we get the best management practices as we go forward.

So we know that even though members opposite may not be involved in the farming area as much as we are on this side of the House, but certainly, we're happy to stand with our farm families as we talk about agriculture and—now and into the future.

But one thing I do need to remind the member of is that with the crop rotations environmental farm plans, we need to make sure that we have the right application, the right place at the right time, underneath the four Rs, and I can assure the member that our farmers in the areas have been focusing on that.

And just last year, we invested \$1.2 million in best management practices to ensure that they have those plans in place. And, of course, part of that they can't apply for unless they do have environmental farm plans.

So we feel we're doing good job. Can we make improvements? Absolutely. Farmers are innovative. They're the best stewards of the land. They'll continue to do that. So I encourage the member to stay tuned as we focus on best management practices and to ensure the farm plans are followed in a way to make them more sustainable, more whole.

So certainly, we're proud to talk about agriculture now and in the future.

Mr. Bushie: I would like to thank the Chair for clarifying that. I shall direct my questions to the specific minister to answer.

And being that I am the Indigenous and Northern Relations critic and I have an indigenous relations question, I shall direct my question to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations (Ms. Clarke), to which she is responsible.

Why won't the minister commit to having more indigenous-driven restorative justice programs funded in indigenous communities?

* (18:50)

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): I thank the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) for this question on restorative justice.

And this is just another area; during Estimates I explained to you that our relationship with First Nations has changed dramatically since May 2016, at a time when our communities and the leadership of indigenous communities had little opportunity to meet with the ministers or with our government to discuss issues that were really concerning to them. Moving forward, we have listened, and the Department of Justice, of course, is no different in doing that. They have made significant change. This started in 2017, when they established a restorative 'justive' centre, and that's working with 49 communities.

They have also increased funding and they have added additional staff to make sure that all the bases are covered. And more effective—and restorative justice is recognized as a key pillar within the Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy that exists. A goal of diverting 5,000 cases to restorative justice has actually been exceeded, which is terrific. Budget 2019 is making significant investments to key parts of that plan.

And just to give you an idea in dollars where this money's going to and how it is being directed to our First Nations: \$400,000 for the MKO First Nations Justice Strategy; \$270,000 for the Onashowewin Justice Circle; \$243,000 for the Southern Chiefs' Organization Restorative Justice Program; \$120,000 to the Hollow Water community holistic healing circle; \$50,000 to 'Sraint' Theresa Point First Nation justice program; \$44,000 to Fisher River Cree Nation restorative justice; and another \$30,000 to restorative justice in Cross Lake. So you can clearly see this is being distributed well across the province.

Another step that's been taken which is significant—and this again shows we stress partnerships and working together to make things better for these communities and for the people in their communities. So the Justice Department in our government has been working very closely with the RCMP so that they also have a better plan working towards restorative justice. They are 'willerking' to build capacities within the communities and with the leadership. So again, the partnerships are significant.

They've gone another step further, and this is also being discussed with all federal ministers across Canada, and it's really interesting that Manitoba has some really good suggestions to share with federal ministers all across our country to ensure that restorative justice in all the communities is made easier. It—we realize that there's such significant costs involved within the—for the communities and the

people when they have to go to other areas. And I know that there's more courts available in the communities as well, going forward.

So I think—it's certainly significant that our government recognizes that the voice of the indigenous people in making these changes has been heard. And I know that we'll continue working in that direction.

Ms. Naylor: This is a question for the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires)—[interjection]—sorry.

I previously asked a question about environmental organizations that received provincial funding in 2018-2019. I recognize that the minister enjoyed reading her own press release, but what I would like is an answer to the question about which organizations received funding for 2019-2020 and why the others have not.

Ms. Squires: I would like to point out for the member and correct the record that it wasn't the Province of Manitoba press release that I was reading earlier. I was just simply illuminating some information that was—

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

In accordance with the—section e-2(e) (13) and (16) of the Sessional Order passed by the House on September 30th, 2019, I am interrupting the proceedings to allow the committee and the House to conclude the remaining steps in the main and Capital Supply procedure.

Therefore, I now put forward the question of concurrence motion currently under the debate, and then we will carry on with the remaining steps of the process.

The question before the committee is the motion moved by the Government House Leader that the Committee of Supply concur that all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020, which have been adopted at this session, whether as session of—whether by the section of the committee of this—of Supply or by the full committee.

Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly passed.

That concludes the business currently before us.

Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a motion regarding the concurrence in Supply.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin), I—that the report be—of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The honourable government House—oh.

As per the provisions of the Sessional Order, the remaining steps in the Main and Capital Supply process are to be decided without any further debate. All necessary questions will be moved and put to the House for a decision without any debate.

In addition, all points of order and matters of privilege are set aside until after royal assent has been given to the main and Capital Supply bills and to Bill 22.

Concurrence Motion

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the House concur in the report of the Committee of Supply respecting concurrence in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Motion agreed to.

Supply Motions

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that there be granted out of the Consolidated Fund for Capital Purposes, the sum of \$2,459,509,000 for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Fielding: I move, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), that there be granted to Her Majesty for the public service of the Province for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2020, out of the Consolidated Fund, the sum of \$13,957,866,000, as set out in part A, Operating, and \$639,879,000, as set out in part B, Capital Investment, of the Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 3—The Appropriation Act, 2019

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 3, The Appropriation Act, 2019 now be read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 3—The Appropriation Act, 2019

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 3, The Appropriation Act, 2019 now be read a second time and be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 4—The Loan Act, 2019

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 4, The Loan Act, 2019 be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

* (19:10)

SECOND READINGS

Bill 4—The Loan Act, 2019

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 4, The Loan Act, 2019, be now read a second time and be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House will now resolve into committee—*[interjection]*—Bill 4, The Loan Act, has been adopted for second reading.

The House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 3, The Appropriation Act, 2019, and Bill 4, The Loan Act, 2019, for concurrence and third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk): The Committee of the Whole will come to order to consider Bill 3, The Appropriation Act, 2019, and Bill 4, The Loan Act, 2019.

During the consideration of these bills, the table of the contents, the enacting clauses and the titles are postponed until the other clauses have been considered in their appropriate order.

If there is any agreement that—from this committee that I will call clause in blocks that conform to pages. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Bill 3—The Appropriation Act, 2019

Mr. Chairperson: The next bill that we—the next bill for our consideration is Bill 3, The Appropriation Act 2019.

Clauses 1 and 2—pass; clauses 3 through 6—pass; schedule—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 4—The Loan Act, 2019

Mr. Chairperson: The last bill of our consideration is Bill 4, The Loan Act, 2019.

Clauses 1 through 3—pass; clauses 4 through 6—pass; clause 7—pass; enacting clause—pass; schedule—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes business before us.

Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson): The Committee of the Whole has considered the following: Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2019; and Bill 4, The Loan Act, 2019. The reports are the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), that the report of the Committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 4—The Loan Act, 2019

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson) that Bill 4, The Loan Act, 2019, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 3—The Appropriation Act, 2019

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Sustainable Development (Ms. Squires), that Bill 3, The Appropriation Act, 2019, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL ASSENT

Madam Speaker: As previously agreed, we shall now proceed to royal assent. I am advised that His Honour, the Administrator, is about to arrive to grant royal assent to the bills. I am therefore interrupting the proceedings of the House for the royal assent.

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Ray Gislason): His Honour the Administrator.

His Honour Chief Justice Richard Chartier, Administrator of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed His Honour, the Administrator in the following words:

Madam Speaker: Your Honour:

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

Clerk Assistant (Mr. Claude Michaud):

Bill 3—The Appropriation Act 2019; Loi de 2019 portant affectation de crédits

Bill 4—The Loan Act, 2019; Loi d'emprunt de 2019

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): In Her Majesty's name, the Administrator thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to these bills.

Madam Speaker: Your Honour:

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

Clerk Assistant (Mr. Claude Michaud):

Bill 22—The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur l'enregistrement, la surveillance et la transparence de la propriété effective des entreprises (modification de diverses dispositions législatives)

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

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

God Save the Queen was sung.

O Canada was sung.

Madam Speaker: Prior to adjournment, I would just like to wish a happy Thanksgiving to everybody, a very important time of year, and as you're all heading home, drive careful, and we'll see you when the House resumes again.

The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 10, 2019

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Tabling of Reports		Lifeflight Air Ambulance	
Cullen	633	Bushie	643
Stefanson	633	Friesen	643
Fielding	633	Provincial Out-Migration	
Squires	634	Lamont	644
Cox	634	Pallister	644
Ministerial Statements		Insurance Broker Compensation	
International Day of the Girl		Lamont	644
Squires	634	Pallister	644
Marcelino	634	Provincial Nominee Program	
Lamoureux	635	Lamoureux	644
Members' Statements		Goertzen	645
Gorilla Jack Safe Parcel Service		Provincial Finances	
Martin	635	Helwer	645
Keewatin Tribal Council Anniversary		Fielding	645
Adams	636	French Language Services	
St. Amant Centre		Sala	645
Squires	636	Squires	645
Homeless Population		Bureau de l'éducation française	
Lamont	637	Sala	646
Brooklands Active Living Centre		Goertzen	646
Marcelino	638	French Language Services	
Oral Questions		Sala	646
Fall Flooding Update		Squires	646
Kinew	638	Agricultural Crown Lands	
Pallister	638	Brar	646
Manitoba Hydro Staff Reduction		Eichler	646
Kinew	639	Pallister	647
Pallister	639	Health Sciences Centre	
IV Drug Use and HIV Contraction		Guillemard	647
B. Smith	640	Friesen	647
Friesen	640	Overdose Incident Case Concern	
Child-Care Centre Safety		Lamont	648
Adams	641	Cullen	648
Stefanson	641	Violent Crime Statistics	
Manitoba's Economic Forecast		Gerrard	648
Moses	642	Cullen	648
Fielding	642	Matter of Privilege	
Pallister	643	Gerrard	649
		Goertzen	649
		Speaker's Statement	
		Driedger	649

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Committee of Supply (Concurrent Sections)

Agriculture	
Eichler	650
Brar	651
Gerrard	665
Sport, Culture and Heritage	668
Executive Council	668
Growth, Enterprise and Trade	
Pedersen	668
Moses	670
Lindsey	673
Lamont	684
Education and Training	
Goertzen	687
Altomare	687
Lamoureux	701
Municipal Relations	705
Civil Service Commission	705
Legislative Assembly	706
Enabling and Other Appropriations	706
Report Stage Amendments	
Bill 22–The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended)	
Lamont	707
Concurrence and Third Readings	
Bill 22–The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended)	
Pedersen	708
Committee Report	
Piwniuk	708
Committee of Supply	
Capital Supply	709
Committee Report	
Piwniuk	709

Committee of Supply

Concurrence Motion	
Goertzen	709
Bushie	709
Squires	709
Naylor	710
Adams	711
Stefanson	711
Sala	712
Goertzen	712
Altomare	714
Marcelino	715
Moses	715
Pedersen	715
Brar	716
Eichler	716
Clarke	717
Committee Report	
Piwniuk	718
Concurrence Motion	718
Supply Motions	
Fielding	718
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 3–The Appropriation Act, 2019	
Fielding	719
Second Readings	
Bill 3–The Appropriation Act, 2019	
Fielding	719
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 4–The Loan Act, 2019	
Fielding	719
Second Readings	
Bill 4–The Loan Act, 2019	
Fielding	719
Committee of the Whole	
Bill 3–The Appropriation Act, 2019	719
Bill 4–The Loan Act, 2019	719
Committee Report	
Piwniuk	719
Concurrence and Third Readings	
Bill 4–The Loan Act, 2019	
Fielding	720
Bill 3–The Appropriation Act, 2019	
Fielding	720

Royal Assent

Bill 3–The Appropriation Act 2019	720
Bill 4–The Loan Act, 2019	720
Bill 22–The Business Registration, Supervision and Ownership Transparency Act (Various Acts Amended)	720

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings

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