

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

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

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Please be seated, everybody. Good afternoon.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

**Bill 233—The Health Services Insurance
Amendment Act**

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that Bill 233, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Swan: Health-care premiums charged to Manitobans were abolished by Ed Schreyer's NDP government in the early 1970s. It was the right thing to do then and it remains the right policy today.

I am pleased to introduce this bill which will ensure that no premium or fee is required for a Manitoba resident to be eligible for insured health care. I am certain that every member of this House who believes in Canada's universal health-care system will support this bill.

Thank you.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Thank you—

Madam Speaker: Oh, pardon me.

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

**Bill 232—The Efficiency Manitoba
Amendment Act**

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the member from The Maples, The

Efficiency Manitoba Amendment Act be now read a first time.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Fletcher: Okay. I move, seconded by the member from The Maples, that Bill 232, The Efficiency Manitoba Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Fletcher: I have some documents to be tabled along with this.

Madam Speaker, this amendment is designed to stop the creation of a creepy Crown corporation that will invade the bathrooms of Manitobans and deal with demand-side management, which is even worse than supply-side management, and this bill will take away the intrusive nature of this government's legislation.

I encourage everyone to vote for it. Thank you.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to table the following reports: The Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation Annual Report, '16-17; the Clean Environment Commission Annual Report, '17-18; Green Manitoba Annual Report, '16-17; and the Coordinated Aquatic Monitoring Program Annual Activity Report, '16-17.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Further tabling of reports?

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): It's my pleasure to rise today in the Assembly and table Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries' 2017-2018 Annual Report.

Madam Speaker, I'm—it's also my pleasure to rise today to present—or, table, sorry, the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation's 2017-2018 Annual Report.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, 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.

Royal MTC's New Artistic Director Kelly Thornton

Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure as the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage to rise in the House today to recognize the appointment of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's new artistic director, Ms. Kelly Thornton.

Today, standing in the gallery is Steven Schipper, the current artistic director that will be replaced by Kelly Thornton. We are really very excited to also have in the House actress Terri Cherniack, who is starring in the royal Manitoba centre's—Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre's production of *Sense and Sensibility*, which opens next week right here in Winnipeg.

Ms. Thornton brings with her more than 25 years of professional theatre experience. She is an award-winning director who has focused on diversity and mentorship throughout her career, and I am particularly pleased to announce during Women's History Month that Kelly is the first female artistic director of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre. Kelly will bring a unique perspective to the organization while honouring the vision of quality and excellence that the theatre is renowned for.

And Madam Speaker, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is one of our province's most treasured theatre companies. It is Canada's oldest English-speaking theatre, producing more than 600 plays since its founding in 1958, and continues to present over 250 performances annually.

Manitoba is fortunate to have Kelly's artistic leadership, and we anticipate great success over the years to come as she joins our very robust and active theatre community. I have no doubt she will carve her own legacy at the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, and we are thrilled to welcome her to the new position and to our province.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to thank and acknowledge Steven Schipper, who is also in the

gallery, as I mentioned earlier. Steven is retiring next year after 30 wonderful years as the artistic leader of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre.

Madam Speaker, in 2010, during Steven's tenure, Queen Elizabeth II honoured the Manitoba Theatre Centre with a royal designation, and the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is the only theatre company in North America to have been honoured in this manner. In 2012, Steven was appointed to the Order of Canada for his contributions to Canadian theatre and received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal.

Steven's accomplishments are superseded only by his genuine, warm and always welcoming personality. I am proud to call Steven my friend and wish him and his wife, Terri, all the best as they embark on their exciting journey together.

Please join me in acknowledging Ms. Kelly Thornton and Mr. Steven Schipper and, of course, his wonderful wife, Terri, today in the gallery.

* (13:40)

I ask that their names be recorded.

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

Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre guests in gallery: Kelly Thornton, incoming artistic director; Steven Schipper, artistic director; Terri Cherniack, actor.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): For over 60 years, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre has helped build Manitoba's cultural identity. It's known for its creative vision and ambitious programming. After three decades, the Royal MTC has appointed a new artistic director, and for the first time in its history they have appointed a woman.

Kelly Thornton will helm the theatre following Steven Schipper's retirement. While it's certainly been a difficult task for the Royal MTC's board of trustees to replace Mr. Schipper, they have chosen an excellent candidate. Ms. Thornton is an award-winning director who worked as the artistic director for the Nightwood Theatre in Toronto for 17 years. She has not only been recognized for her artistry, but also for her advocacy and her mentorship of young theatre talent.

Although 60 years is far too long to wait before appointing a woman to the position of artistic director, the Royal MTC is making strides in Manitoba's art scene, making it more diverse. During her time at the Nightwood Theatre, Ms. Thornton

focused on advancing the stories of women, indigenous voices and cultural minorities. Her commitment to diversifying the theatre will surely continue when she takes her appointment at the Royal MTC.

Theatre is a reflection of the population that inspires it. Therefore, we need more women and minorities to be involved in its production. We are proud of the art that is being made here in Manitoba, and we are proud that Kelly Thornton will have a hand in making it. Congratulations, Kelly, and welcome to Manitoba's vibrant arts community.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Kelly Thornton, the first female artistic director for the Manitoba Theatre Centre.

The Manitoba Theatre Centre, MTC, was formed in 1958 when the Winnipeg Little Theatre and Theatre 77 first merged. MTC became the first of the regional theatres across North America.

Since the founding of MTC, over 600 plays have been produced with hundreds of actors, including Keanu Reeves who played in the production of Hamlet.

Today, MTC operates two theatre venues here in Winnipeg. We have the John Hirsch Mainstage and the Tom Hendry Warehouse, and every season there are six mainstage productions.

MTC also had a big focus on students—has a big focus on students. It is unique, as it provides matinees specifically for students, young audience programs, scholarships and apprentice opportunities for theatre students in post-secondary education.

Madam Speaker, we are confident that with Ms. Thornton's experience and expertise and with her strong advocacy in diversifying our stages, that she will ensure that the Manitoba Theatre Centre will remain a centre of excellence and will carry on the legacy of Winnipeg as a cultural capital.

Welcome to Manitoba, Ms. Thornton, and thank you, Steven and Terri Schipper, for your 30 years of advancement in theatre here in Manitoba and beyond.

Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Taylor Friesen and Curtis Loewen

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I would like to take this opportunity to recognize two inspiring and dedicated Special Olympians from the Altona Panthers, Taylor Friesen and Curtis Loewen.

Along with the other members of the Altona Panthers team, Taylor and Curtis attend practice Monday nights at West Park School gym. The coaching staff of the Altona Panthers runs a two-sport program which consists of track and field in the spring and snowshoeing in the winter. Each year the Panthers compete in a Winnipeg Winter Games for snowshoeing and in the track events for the Manitoba games.

In addition to attending practice and competitions, Taylor and Curtis also work in the community of Altona. Taylor is a support worker at Eastview care home, and Curtis works at A&I Products.

This year Taylor and Curtis were selected as members of Team Manitoba. They travelled to Nova Scotia to compete in the 2018 Special Olympics Canada games, which took place from July 31st to August 4th.

Before each competition, the Special Olympics slogan is recited. The slogan states: Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.

I'm pleased to report that these two brave Manitoba athletes did win this summer. Taylor Friesen won bronze in the 100-metre race, and Curtis Loewen won silver in the long jump and gold in the shot put in the 2018 Special Olympics Canada games.

Curtis Loewen and his parents are with us here today. I would ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Curtis on this tremendous achievement.

Northern Health Programs and Services

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): All Manitobans, regardless of where they live within the province, deserve quality health care. They deserve to receive care in a timely fashion and have that care delivered to them with well—in a well-staffed facility with their loved ones easily accessible to them.

Programs and services in the North need to be upgraded, not cut. This government made cuts to the Northern Patient Transportation Program, which helps people get the medical care they are entitled to in the city. The most egregious cut is to the escort for family members that may require when travelling to medical care in Winnipeg. People rely on this program for various reasons, but mobility issues are one of them, old age or lack of familiarity with the city.

Investment needs to be made in active recruitment of medical-care practitioners. Right now, there are over 50 vacant nursing positions listed by the northern regional health authority, and don't get me started on doctor shortages. With the current staffing, the northern health facility is being ordered not to replace first sick calls; patient care, particularly in our seniors homes, is suffering. Care workers are consistently short-staffed, which forces them to pull double duty and puts them at increased risk of injury, never mind lacking the care for the seniors.

Will—while the government is pocketing the cuts to funding, northern Manitobans will have to suffer the expense of travelling to reach health-care services not available to them in their own communities or, worse yet, just stay home and get sicker. The state of health care as it is now is not fair to northern Manitobans, and they deserve better.

The government needs to stop neglecting the needs of Manitobans in favour of budget cuts and start investing in stronger, more accessible health care in northern communities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Alzheimer's Awareness

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): On September 21st the world celebrated Alzheimer's day, but as the number of Manitobans suffering with Alzheimer's is set to reach 40,000 over the next 20 years, we must continue the conversation year-round.

On October 1st the constituency of Tyndall Park began that conversation by hosting an event to raise awareness for Alzheimer's and hear from experts and community members on their ideas to support families affected by the disease. Different coping mechanisms that were practical for friends and family members of Alzheimer's patients to do at home were just one of the many suggestions that came out of the event.

Special thanks should be given to Dr. Jennifer Licardo of the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba and Dr. Arzu Aptekman, who both offered their knowledge and skills and helped to make the event a success.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, who launched their program Art to Inspire this summer. It is a program for seniors with Alzheimer's and their caregivers, who are often family members providing full-time care, a chance to look at art and then create their own.

The program has been a resounding success, with a wait-list already established for future sessions. With 56 per cent of Manitobans impacted by dementia because they have a friend or family member with the disease, programs like these are vitally important.

Thank you to the WAG—that's the Winnipeg Art Gallery—and all other organizations helping to improve the lives of Alzheimer's patients.

Thank you.

* (13:50)

Barry Trotz

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): As Manitobans gear up for another exciting Winnipeg Jets season, I'm reminded of when Barry Trotz and the Washington Capitals defeated the Vegas Golden Knights in the 2018 Stanley Cup Finals and the day Dauphin's Barry Trotz brought the Stanley Cup to his home town of Dauphin.

On August 22nd, Barry Trotz Day was proclaimed, and Barry and his family rode in an honour parade through downtown while following a honour guard of lively Ukrainian musicians in costume and the horsemen and women from Canada's National Riding and Dancing Cossacks.

Besides taking the Stanley Cup to seniors homes and the Dauphin hospital, Barry also helped to raise money for local charities and fundraising events by pledging to match all money raised, up to \$75,000.

Barry Trotz is currently the head coach of the New York Islanders of the National Hockey League. In 2013, he became the longest tenured head coach in the NHL and the second longest tenured coach in the four major North American professional sports leagues.

Barry has received many prestigious coaching awards and is an active community supporter wherever he goes.

Before beginning his coaching career, Trotz played for the Regina Pats, helping them win the WHL championship in 1980, and with the Dauphin Kings, helping them win the Manitoba Junior Hockey League title, as well as the ANAVET Cup.

Madam Speaker, it's not every day the Stanley Cup comes to the Parkland. I want to acknowledge Barry, Kim and the Trotz family for their achievements and to thank them for the very special and inspirational day they shared with everybody in the Parkland.

Brandon University Athletics Wall of Fame Inductees

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): As someone with a long and proud history in youth sports in our province, I'm pleased to rise in this Chamber to acknowledge a fellow member who is going to be honoured this weekend for his contributions to sport in Manitoba.

This weekend, Brandon University Athletics will induct their 2018 Wall of Fame inductees. One of those is none other than the member for Fort Whyte, our Premier (Mr. Pallister).

As Brandon University notes, the member was, and I quote, known for his imposing sky hook as a member of the Brandon University men's basketball team and has continued to shoot for the sky beyond the Bobcats. They also note the Premier joined the Bobcats in the mid-1970s after graduating from Portage Collegiate Institute. An imposing six-foot-eight centre, he played with Brandon U from 1974 to 1976, and then returned for the '79-80 season to help the Bobcats win their first ever conference championship and reach the national final.

It is also important to note that the induction ceremony is part of the Bobcat/College Cap basketball reunion scheduled for October 11 to the 14th. The ceremony and reunion happily coincide with Homecoming 2018. This year's homecoming will pay tribute to the 50th anniversary of the inaugural class at Brandon University.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of our PC caucus team and all Manitobans, I want to congratulate the Premier on this well-deserved recognition of his athletic achievements.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

Seated in the Speaker's Gallery we have with us today ambassador of Austria to Canada, His Excellency Mr. Stefan Pehringer; and Donald Streuber, honorary consul general for Austria in Winnipeg.

On behalf of all members, we welcome you both to the Manitoba Legislature.

And also seated in the public gallery from Garden City Collegiate we have 50 grade 9 students under the direction of Lia Baffour-Awuah, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry).

On behalf of all members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Methamphetamine Crisis Violence Against Health Workers

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, it seems like every day there's a new story about the impact of the meth crisis in Winnipeg and across Manitoba. This morning, I was watching a brutal video of another violent altercation in a Winnipeg hospital, and by all accounts it appears to be meth-related.

Now, the number of assaults against front-line health-care workers—nurses, aides, other health-care professionals—has seen a dramatic increase, and it's no accident that this increase goes along with the 1,200 per cent increase in the number of patients who show up at the ER as a result of methamphetamine use. That's say—that's to say nothing about the other impacts that this is having across other sectors of our society.

Now, the facts are clear: violence is increasing in our city and meth is one of the main causes. Experts have acknowledged that fact. Front-line workers and families are living with the consequences.

What concrete steps will the government take to keep our health-care professionals safe?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Whether caused by meth or not, Madam Speaker, violence towards health-care personnel is a concern for all of us here

and certainly one that we should take very seriously and do.

Clearly, we understand, all of us in this House, that methamphetamine has serious health consequences, devastating consequences, not only for those who choose to use it or abuse its use, but for those around them. And this is a classic example of that.

I appreciate the member raising the issue. We certainly are raising the issue by working co-operatively with all agencies and with all community members who take a deep interest in this issue as well.

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

Mr. Kinew: I know I, and certainly the health-care professionals, would like to hear more details about the concrete and tangible steps that this government will take.

We know that those addicted to methamphetamines and their families, they need support to be able to get through this, and we have to try and address this challenge at the root cause. However, we also know that the front-line workers who are being put into the path of harm's way, in some instances, they need to be able to feel safe. They're taking care of our loved ones when they show up at the hospital, but they ought to be able to feel safe while they're delivering that care.

Now, we raised this issue many times in the Legislature. We know that others are raising this issue as well. And we need to hear which concrete steps the government is going to take in order to improve security and safety not just for the patients in the hospital, but, importantly, for the front-line workers there.

So I'd ask the Premier again: Can he tell us which concrete and tangible steps they are taking now to respond to this new spike in meth-related violence at ERs and hospitals across Winnipeg?

Mr. Pallister: Again, not giving verification to the member, nor should I, in respect of The Personal Health Information Act, Madam Speaker, to his assertion that this incident he highlights is somehow meth-related. I can't verify that, will not confirm that.

But I will say this, that we are taking action. We are using lessons learned somewhat, of course, from the opioid crisis that preceded this. We're focusing on developing processes that better

meet the challenges of withdrawal management and detoxification, of treatment to reduce the risks in the first place, Madam Speaker, and doing many other things. We've actioned the VIRGO report, which has made specific recommendations for services to be increased, and so on, and we're actioning that, and we're open to other ideas. I invite the member to participate in finding solutions as well.

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

Mr. Kinew: We know that when a nurse or a health-care aide goes to work that they want to take care of our family members and they ought to feel safe to do so. Their workplace should not look like the aftermath of the Conor versus Khabib fight, as we saw in that video. And so it's a very serious issue.

We've raised many ideas for how to help cope with the meth crisis. Unfortunately, the government is ignoring the evidence and not adopting the idea of having a safe injection site in Winnipeg. We know that Rick Lees, head of the Main Street Project, was very clear: safe injection sites help save the lives of meth addicts, which is to say nothing of the spillover impacts in our communities which are presented.

Now, of course, this is only part of the solution. This rash, this spate of violence clearly demands some sort of direct interventions in the hospitals themselves. We need to be able to assure that not only patients but also the nurses and aides caring for them will be safe when they go to hospital.

Can the Premier tell us specifically what new measures are they putting in place to respond to these recent incidents of violence in Winnipeg hospitals?

* (14:00)

Mr. Pallister: Well, I understand, Madam Speaker, very well that one of the first obligations of governments is to protect the security of people, and so most certainly we take these challenges seriously and will continue to. Security to other people can—security from violent acts by other people is an important issue to address, and we are addressing it in many ways.

And I want to say, first of all, Madam Speaker, in respect of the security personnel who dealt with this incident—I think very effectively—and have had to deal with other incidents over many years and will continue to, sadly, have to deal with them, I don't think any of us should take their services and their willingness to put themselves at risk for

granted. We don't and so we'll continue to work with security personnel and on the treatment side, but we'll also work on the preventative side, because that ultimately is where we need to go to make sure we stem the tide not only of meth use, but of excessive drug use and violent behaviour.

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

**St. Boniface Neonatal Unit
Mandatory Overtime Concerns**

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, the other issue that we've been hearing about consistently are the cuts to the health-care system in Manitoba that this Premier is dictating at the Cabinet table.

Now, I received another letter today, which I'll table, from a retired nurse who is concerned about the massive overtime nurses and aides are working at St. Boniface Hospital. Now, she's worried about the care that patients are receiving, and, in fact, her daughter is one of these nurses in the postpartum unit at St. Boniface Hospital. She's clear; she writes that the mandated overtime is, quote, affecting her daughter and her colleagues' health and their lives. End quote. She goes on, quote, these brutal working conditions are resulting in increased sick time which results in increased mandating of overtime. End quote. So she's saying it's a vicious cycle that just begets more and more unsafe working conditions and more and more mandated overtime.

Madam Speaker, we know that this is being caused by the Premier's plan for cuts that he's ushered in across the Winnipeg health region.

Will the Premier admit that his disruption of our health-care system is causing the real damage, and will he finally listen to the front-line nurses and their family members who are telling him to stop?

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The myth the member perpetrates is just that, and it's becoming increasingly understood that his words don't match the reality.

We are investing this year alone more than \$400 million in excess of any NDP health budget. Doesn't sound like a cut to any common sense person, Madam Speaker. The changes that are occurring in this ambitious health-care reform are designed, with expert input in mind, for better patient

care, and we will focus on making sure that the system works better for patients.

The system we inherited was broken, Madam Speaker. We're dedicated to fixing that system.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, repeatedly the Premier is confronted with crises and his answer is simply to deny that there's a problem.

We saw the video. No, didn't see it; not sure that it's meth.

Gets a letter that OT is at crisis at St. Boniface. No it's not, look over here. Look at these numbers instead.

Gets a second letter about St. Boniface overtime. Again, ignores—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —the question.

The government can come up with a lot of excuses, Madam Speaker, but there is no excuse for their inaction. It's plain and simple.

When will the Premier realize that he has a moral responsibility to respond to what this woman is saying and to the cry that nurses are putting out? Again, they're being forced to work extra shifts at the end of already long shifts, 16-hour days. That's not safe for the front-line workers. It's not safe for the patients, either.

Will the Premier finally listen to the nurses? Will he stop the massive disruption at St. Boniface Hospital?

Mr. Pallister: The member speaks about a moral responsibility. If he wishes to have a debate on our ability respectively as leaders to demonstrate that we understand the obligations of moral responsibility, I am happy to enter into such a debate with him. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: If he continues to use false information in his preambles, I will continue to correct it. He put false information in his preamble previously and has done so repeatedly. He hopes that people will buy it. No one's buying it, Madam Speaker.

We're investing over \$400 million, much more than a million dollars every day, more in health care

than the NDP ever did. But the biggest change, Madam Speaker, is we're focused on getting results for patients, and they never were.

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

Mr. Kinew: It's very clear that the Premier simply does not listen, Madam Speaker.

Mandatory overtime has been a massive issue in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and now we're hearing about other units at St. Boniface Hospital—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —which are affected, as well. And it's clear that the practitioners themselves, the nurses, are saying that this is impacting the quality of care that they want to deliver to their patients, and yet time and time again the minister and his Minister for Health will not listen to the people who care for our family members.

Now, we know that they ought to. The question asked in that letter is very simple: who will apply to be employed on these units when they will be subjected to mandatory overtime?

And, again, we hear the misdirection and the shifting of blame and the on and on from the Premier, but I'd ask him to respond simply to the question Mrs. Douglas asked in her letter: Even though you say the overtime hours are down over the past 10 years, I do not feel you can overlook what is happening at St. Boniface Hospital. Could you please look into the overtime situation on the maternal child unit at St. Boniface—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Pallister: I assure the member we're looking into all the various problems we inherited, the mess we inherited from the previous administration in health care, unlike the previous administration which stood quietly by, just spent more money and didn't worry about outcomes or results.

Madam Speaker, every nurse in this province wants to work in a system that works better for patients. That's the first concern of the nurses I respect and know, and I know many. And that's the focus we'll continue to have, along with the health-care professionals who are, we understand, facing the challenges of change admirably, and we thank them for that.

It's too bad the member opposite can't face those challenges respectfully and with facts, rather than with innuendo and falsehoods.

Addiction Treatment Services Need for Harm-Reduction Strategies

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yesterday, as crews were cleaning up hundreds of discarded needles in Vimy Ridge Park, we debated the meth crisis, and on this side we're interested to see what the government was going to say. And we heard first from the member from Radisson, who told us it was trite to say that safe consumption sites save lives, even if there are statistics to back it up, and that was not the kind of harm reduction he thought was right for Manitoba.

I'll ask the Minister of Health if he believes that saving lives is trite, and exactly what kind of harm reduction is right for Manitoba?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Well, yesterday the members of the government were disappointed to see the opposition members bring a resolution that could have been an act of engagement and collaboration. Instead what they called for was condemnation.

What this government increasingly calls for is collaboration, finding the real solutions for real Manitobans.

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

Mr. Swan: The member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) yesterday told us that he believes that hitting rock bottom is the most effective way to get Manitobans with addictions to change their lives—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —and he admitted in the same breath that for some, quote, there isn't really a rock bottom until you're dead.

Will the Minister of Health advise whether he agrees that Manitobans should first hit rock bottom, and if they survive, then be entitled to treatment for their addiction?

Mr. Friesen: Well, the member for Minto makes a number of false statements, but among them yesterday was his assertion that somehow the government had done nothing when, in fact, what we were able to clearly explain yesterday in debate is that the government has undertaken many actions, including the provision of six new in-patient beds at

HSC addictions medicine. We have added 12 new beds to the women's in-service addictions clinic in Winnipeg, as well. We are—undertaken to train more doctors with an addictions specialty.

And this is only some of the actions that we're undertaking by listening and engaging respectfully. We'll keep doing that while that member continues to flail and say that nothing's being done.

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

Mr. Swan: I'm sorry that quoting his member's statements are a problem for this Minister of Health, but there is more.

The member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) told us that it was far more important than any government program—which I presume means prevention, intervention, harm reduction, rehabilitation—it was far more important to have love.

Well, in the real world, the member for Radisson and the Minister of Health and every member of the Conservative caucus should talk to families, families who are telling us that their lives have been devastated by a family member who's become involved—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Oh. Order, please. Order.

I would urge all members to please respectfully listen to each other and allow members that are on their feet to be able to ask their questions or answer their questions.

* (14:10)

And I would just urge that members give some thought to the environment we're working in. It is a very sensitive issue, and I would just encourage all members to please behave in a very respectful way in this Chamber and allow these types of questions and answers to be given. And if we can achieve that, I think that will be better for democracy and better for the efforts that are trying to be made in Manitoba to address this issue.

Mr. Swan: Does the Minister of Health agree with the minister for Radisson, and is he going to tell families devastated about their family members' addictions that the real problem isn't government inaction, but a lack of love?

Mr. Friesen: The member for Minto demonstrates in his own question an inability to take the high road and to recognize that the very issues that he raises are ones that are faced by many, many Manitoba families.

That member also said yesterday in debate that nothing was done, although I can tell that member, and told him yesterday, that with the rapid addictions access to medicine clinic, in its first week of operation in Thompson, a woman who came and presented was immediately diverted into care for treatment. That would never have happened under the NDP and it happened immediately in the first week of treatment in Thompson.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Request for Government Plan

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I was honoured to attend today's release of the Winnipeg Street Census 2018 report. For 24 hours in April, hundreds of volunteers collected data from over 1,500 people experience homelessness to provide a—just a snapshot of homelessness here in Winnipeg.

That number is up from 1,400, just last year, to over 1,500 this year. It's clear from this report that this government's failure to produce a poverty reduction strategy and its cuts to Rent Assist are hurting Manitoba's vulnerable families.

I asked yesterday and I'll ask again and I'll continue to ask: Where is the poverty reduction strategy that's over a year late?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): Well, Madam Speaker, while there's still much more work to be done after 17 years of NDP mismanagement in this area, I am pleased to report that Manitoba is no longer the child poverty capital of Canada, and I think that's something.

Now, Madam Speaker, we recognize and value all Manitobans who have participated—more than 2,000 Manitobans who participated in extensive consultation in this area. We respect what they have to offer in this and we will be coming forward with that poverty reduction strategy shortly.

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

Poverty, Addiction and Homelessness Request for Government Plan

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): This government doesn't seem to understand how

complex poverty is or they simply don't care, but people all across Manitoba do. People can experience homelessness completely out of the blue. When low-income families lose their children to CFS, they also lose their financial support and then get kicked out of housing. These families are then having difficulty getting their kids back because this government says that they need their children—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —in order to qualify to get into a three-bedroom.

How is this minister going to stop this vicious cycle and what's she—where's her plan to ensure that these families are kept together?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families): Again, there were many, many years under the previous NDP government where Manitoba was, in fact, the child poverty capital of Canada. We believe that's entirely unacceptable and action has been taken since we came into government to reverse that so that Manitoba is no longer the child poverty capital of Canada.

But we also recognize that there's much more work that needs to be done. Things are not going to change overnight and we need to look at this as a holistic approach not just for government, but for communities, for the private sector, the non-profit sector. We need to all get together to eradicate these issues.

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

Mrs. Smith: They've had over two years to get it right. They're continuing to get it wrong. According to—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Mrs. Smith: According to the Winnipeg Street Census, 263 people cited addictions or substance abuse as the reason they became homeless, and a further 97 people cited medical or mental health issues. The children's advocate alerted the public about the government's failure to help young people suffering from addictions.

Yesterday, on the other hand, the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) spoke about the need to imprison people who are struggling with addictions.

Madam Speaker, when homelessness, addictions and mental health are intertwined, how can this government in good conscience—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Stefanson: This coming from a member opposite, Madam Speaker, who was part of a government who in fact doubled incarceration rates under their time. They were putting more people in jail than we have, and I will tell you they, in fact, doubled that number.

That was unacceptable. It's why we came up with the Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy to reverse that, to ensure that we take the necessary measures—preventative measures, restorative justice measures—that we be positive in that to work with communities, to work with all stakeholders in the communities to ensure that we deal with these issues.

Bills Before the Legislature Members' Conflict of Interest

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Speaker, we know from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner that Manitoba has the lowest standards for conflict of interest in Canada. They have not been updated since 1985.

As a new MLA, I was told that I should—if I should face a vote on a matter of conflict of interest, I should declare it and recuse myself.

Bill 12, the red tape reduction act, includes a clause that weakens the rights of tenants to appeal rent increases. For a landlord to vote in favour of undermining tenants' rights is a self-evident conflict of interest, and we know that specific ministers own apartments because they declared it on their conflict of interest forms.

Will the Premier instruct his Cabinet and caucus to follow the rules, weak though they are, and to refrain from voting on bills like Bill 12 in which they have a declared conflict?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The member is right and he's wrong in the same preamble, which is typically a Liberal trait.

He's right in the fact that we do need to upgrade our conflict of interest standards in Manitoba, that they have been neglected for a long time, and he's correct in that assertion. I hope all members of the House will engage together in that exercise over the next while and we can come up with something that

won't lead to false or misleading accusations like the second part of his question.

When issues are a broad application, when they apply to thousands of Manitobans, a farmer, for example, is not in a conflict of interest for voting on a piece of legislation that impacts agriculture generally, and he has highlighted a case which does not apply in terms of the present or likely future conflict of interest rules of any kind.

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

Conflict of Interest Commissioner Tenure Security

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Well, that speaks to the weakness of the conflict of interest rules, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Legislative Affairs Committee met with one item on the agenda this summer: reappointing the current Conflict of Interest Commissioner who has recommended 83 changes to update Manitoba's conflict legislation. The meeting was called in the middle of summer. It was chaired by the current Justice Minister. But the reappointment of the commissioner came with a hitch. The government wasn't appointing the commissioner for three years, they left in a loophole where they could fire him.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba needs an independent Conflict of Interest Commissioner, a watchdog with bark and bite, and central to being independent is security of tenure so that that watchdog is free to speak without the threat of dismissal hanging over his head.

Will the Premier commit to reappointing the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to his full three-year term without conditions and without delay?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I had previously committed to reviewing the act and the legislation will be reviewed with all members of this House entitled, as well as the general public, to participate in such a process.

But I reiterate, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), for example, has ownership in an insurance brokerage and is not in any way, shape or form in a conflict in voting on a piece of legislation affecting, broadly, the insurance industry. The member for Minto (Mr. Swan) is a lawyer and he is

not restricted in any way, shape or form from voting on legislation impacting all lawyers.

So the member's assertion is a false one and he'll need to regroup and research to prepare a better preamble next time.

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

Bills Before the Legislature Members' Conflict of Interest

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Speaker, Bill 12 is one of many bills that has impacts related to conflict of interest. The BITSA bill also makes cuts specifically for small businesses or, more technically, Canadian-controlled private corporations, to be able to save \$7,000.

I will point out again, as the First Minister has mentioned, a number of MLAs and ministers own corporations such as these. While this proposal is being presented as defending small businesses, some such corporations employ no one and some don't even have revenue.

* (14:20)

For example, Madam Speaker, it is a misconception that the Premier owns personal vacation property in Costa Rica. He owns a corporation with no revenue that owns his property.

What the purpose of a 'corporation' without revenue would be is one of the great mysteries of modern capitalism, Madam Speaker, but the Premier's conflict of interest declaration is opaque. It does include a family trust—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —and other businesses.

So my question is whether any of the Premier's business holdings stand to benefit from this tax break and, if so, he will refrain from voting on it.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): I've referenced to other members of the House, Madam Speaker, there are many who have involvement or have had involvement in various occupations and various backgrounds of various kinds. They are not disqualified in any way, shape or form from voting on issues of broad application.

I'm not sure of the member's employment background or history. This, perhaps, is his first full-time job. But the fact remains that he—neither is

he restricted in any way, shape or form from voting on such legislation.

I should also note that his attempt, veiled as it was, Madam Speaker, to go after small-business people is a parallel to Ottawa-east's strategy of going after the small-business people—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —of our country. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: And I would encourage him to depart from Ottawa-east policies just once and support our call to have fair tax structures nationally, as we do provincially, for small-business people. They are, after all, Madam Speaker, the engine of Manitoba's growth.

Northern Patient Transportation Program Coverage for Patients and Escorts

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): This government cut coverage for northern patients and escorts who need to travel to Winnipeg and other city centres for health care. Low-income people in Cranberry Portage now have no affordable means to see a doctor in Flin Flon because this government made cuts to the taxi subsidy that got them from Cranberry to Flin Flon under the NPTP.

Will this government restore all coverage for patients and escorts under the northern transportation program?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): That member knows that this government has been very clear that the changes that we are undertaking are changes that are long overdue, that have demonstrated in other jurisdictions that they are valuable and valid and go directly to improving patient experience and outcomes. This is the work that we're focused on.

If that member is asking us if we are—cease—are going to cease and desist from that plan, no; we're going to bring better care for Manitobans where the NDP government failed to do so.

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

Mr. Lindsey: The new Minister of Health is more confused about northern patient transportation than the previous minister was, Madam Speaker.

There's a duty to provide public health care to all Manitobans. We need to make sure that it's

reliable, predictably funded, so that all Manitobans, particularly those in the North, have access to it. Right now they do not. That means providing adequate coverage under the Northern Patient Transportation Program and not privatizing services like Lifeflight.

Madam Speaker, why is this government abdicating its responsibility to provide northern Manitobans with reliable, predictable, public health care?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, the member is caught in his own conundrum. He advocates for better service for the North, but for 17 years the NDP oversaw a transport system in health for the North that had no master contract, that paid full retail rates and kept no safety standards.

Where for 17 years was that member's concern for a good demonstration of service, value and safety for people in the North? It was nowhere to be found.

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

Mr. Lindsey: Madam Speaker, what the previous NDP government did for 17 years was ensure that people—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: —in northern Manitoba had equitable access to health care. This government is refusing to provide a basic human right to people in northern Manitoba and they should be ashamed of themselves.

Madam Speaker, someone living on minimum wage, working two jobs in Flin Flon does not have the same access to a escort now if her child gets sick.

Will this government tell this person in Flin Flon or other northern communities how it is they're supposed to access health care when this government refuses to properly fund northern transportation?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, I'd like the member to explain to the House how he's going to explain the NDP supporting a carbon tax that's going to raise the cost of gas for a northerner in Manitoba by hundreds of dollars a year. I'd like him to explain that to that single mom in The Pas who is working two part-time jobs and supporting her kids and has to be punished every time she starts up the car. I'd like him to explain that to the people of the North and I'd like him to explain how the NDP has—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: –how the NDP is in any way, shape or form demonstrating a concern or compassion in a real way for the people of rural and Northern Manitoba by jacking up a carbon tax and saying no to a green plan at the same time.

Changes to Agricultural Crown Lands Management of Community Pastures

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): Last week, our PC government introduced legislation that will amend The Crown Lands Act, which seeks to improve the management of community pastures and agricultural Crown lands.

Could the Minister of Agriculture inform the House about this critical piece of legislation that will support producers and farm families?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture): I'd like to thank my colleague from La Verendrye for that question.

Madam Speaker, we've been listening to Manitoba beef producers, Manitoba–Keystone Ag Producers and of course our farm families. Our government is focusing on modernizing the legislation in regards to Crown lands and utilization of such land. Additionally–are working on the community pastures to ensure that they work for the environment and support our families.

We look forward to support of all members of the House today as we debate this bill.

East-Side Road Development Request for Five-Year Plan

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): In June of 2017, I asked the Minister of Infrastructure about the development of the east-side road network. He said that in the upcoming session his department would table their five-year plan.

This is now the third upcoming session since we had that discussion.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure release the department's five-year plan for the development of the east-side roads today?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Well, Madam Speaker, I don't know where to start, where we have started and where we have completed–*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Schuler: –projects that were never, ever even contemplated under the NDP, and I'd like to start

with the Freedom Road. In 17 years not a mile, not a yard, not an inch was ever accomplished under the NDP, and today we're in the final stages of completing the Freedom Road, something that was never, ever accomplished under 17 years of the NDP.

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Kewatinook, on a supplementary question.

Wasagamack Airport Progress Update

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): And I'd like to thank Trudeau for making that possible.

Minister, I have also been requesting for–*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Klassen: –help for Wasagamack First Nation, for them to get an airport into–in their community due to the hazards they face when crossing the lake during emergency situations, and, in general, as they have no choice but to get to St. Mary Island to get to our airport to fly down south for medical reasons.

Will the minister update us on the progress he has made regarding Wasagamack's airport?

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): We announced some time ago that we were beginning a process of rationalizing the department of Manitoba Infrastructure, looking at what we do very well and what perhaps the private sector could do better and, Madam Speaker, one of the thing that we have done is looked at our airports. We are engaging with communities in the North and I would suggest to the member opposite: stay posted.

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

Sale of First Nations Airports Government Intentions

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Allow me to quote the minister, when he–what he said to me: Wasagamack either chooses the airport or the all-weather road, not both.

Since this minister has this mindset, it begs the question: since his ministry has been trying to sell some of its smaller airports in First Nations to those specific First Nations, can the minister tell us if his ministry is attempting to deliberately mislead the First Nations?

Once sold, is it the intention of the government to shut down all talks of all-weather road access into those First Nations once they own their airports?

* (14:30)

Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure): Well, Madam Speaker, one of the things we won't do as a government is go out and campaign, going door to door and telling people we'd never raise taxes like under the NDP, and then get elected and raise taxes, raise the PST—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Schuler: —and raise the PST on northerners, those who were, some of them, struggling and ended up having to pay a lot more, whether it was 'futting'—putting food on the table, paying for insurance, paying for automobiles and the like, Madam Speaker.

Insofar as the airports are, up north, our government and—led by the minister of Aboriginal and northern affairs, Madam Speaker, we are going out to communities and we are speaking to these communities, to our First Nations, and suggesting to them that there is an opportunity with their airports, and we will continue to do so—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Public Accounts Reporting Auditor General's Advice

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): This Minister of Finance has continued his predecessor's pattern of playing fast and loose with the finances. For the first time in over a decade the Auditor General has come out publicly to say that the government has made two significant errors in the presentation of the Public Accounts. The government did this in spite of the advice of the Auditor General.

So the simple question is this: Why is this government refusing to listen to the advice of the Auditor General?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): What this government is doing is cleaning up a financial mess that was left by the NDP government. *[interjection]* We know that the NDP were counting—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —income. We know that the NDP—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: We know that the NDP were counting income that truly wasn't theirs to make their horrible balance sheet just look marginally better.

What we are doing is cleaning up so people—Manitobans—have a true sense of what our finances are, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, it's clear, Madam Speaker, that the minister refuses to answer the question here, and it's not surprising because he's ignoring the Auditor General's advice. This is no small matter to ignore this advice and for the Auditor General to issue a qualified audit opinion.

This is—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: What's most concerning about this, Madam Speaker, is that the Province refused to provide any explanation to the independent officer when pressed and refused to say anything about it when asked by the media.

So the problem is clear. It's the Province and the minister who is playing fast and loose with the books and they won't tell Manitobans why.

Why did this minister ignore the advice of the Auditor General?

Mr. Fielding: We know what the NDP's track record was when it comes to deficits: deficits from year to year to year to year. What this government has done is making steady progress in terms of deficit reduction, which the Auditor General thinks is a good thing.

Why we're making these moves is to protect financial volatility in terms of the numbers, protect taxpayers, ensuring that future governments, potentially NDP governments—hopefully that will never happen—will raid those funds, and we want true accountability—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: —Madam Speaker, in terms of what our finances are doing. That's what this government's doing. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable member for Concordia, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, the issue here is straightforward. The Province has rejected the Auditor General's advice, advice that has not been given for decades in this province, and yet the auditor was very clear with this government: the Province was deliberately making two significant errors in presenting their books. So it's a very serious issue.

The auditor doesn't give this qualified opinion lightly. It's becoming something of a pattern now where the government picks the fights that it wants to pick with independent officers. First it was the children's advocate, and now we hear the same pattern emerging with the auditor.

Will the minister drop the games and be clear with Manitobans: Why did he ignore the Auditor General's advice?

Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier): The Auditor General advised the previous government they were wasting \$500 million on 50 miles of road. They didn't listen. The Auditor General told the previous government they should end the practice of—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —untendered sole-source contracts, and they didn't listen. The Auditor General told the previous government they didn't have a green plan, and they still don't.

So here's the difference between us and them: the NDP played games with Workers Compensation money that belonged to workers. We know it belonged to workers. The NDP said it belonged to them. The NDP—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Pallister: —played games with money in the Crop Insurance Fund to try to make themselves look better. They thought it belonged to them and, Madam Speaker, we say it belongs to the farmers of this province.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: And I have a ruling—*[interjection]*—and I have a ruling for the House.

During orders of the day on Wednesday, June 6th, 2018, the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) raised a matter of privilege

regarding the amount of heckling that had taken place during oral questions on that day. The honourable member contended that the heckling was preventing him from being able to hear the answers, which would prevent him from sharing the responses with his constituents.

At the conclusion of his remarks, the honourable member for Concordia moved, and I quote: That my ability to execute my duties as an MLA are being impeded by the heckling in the House and need to immediately cease.

The government House leader, the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) and the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) also offered advice to the Chair. I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities and to peruse Hansard. I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the matter of privilege.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity and, second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached, in order to warrant putting the matter to the House?

Although the member did not initially provide a motion when concluding his remarks, at the prompting of the Chair, a motion was subsequently prepared and read into the record. I would like to remind members that when raising privilege, it is necessary to move a motion at the conclusion of remarks in accordance with subrule 36(2), and to provide it in writing, otherwise the matter of privilege would be out of order, due to lack of a motion.

Regarding the first condition of whether the matter was raised at the earliest opportunity, given that rule 28(5) indicates that points of order and matters of privilege cannot be raised during question period—during oral questions, pardon me, the earliest opportunity to raise a matter of privilege about issues stemming from oral questions is immediately after oral questions. However, the honourable member did not raise his matter of privilege immediately after oral questions, so the issue of timeliness has not been met.

On the second condition of whether a prima facie case of privilege has been demonstrated, although I do share the concerns of the honourable

member about the amount of heckling that has taken place during oral questions and in the House on the day in question, this is an issue that should have been raised as a point of order and not as a matter of privilege. Complaints about how the House proceeds in the conduct of business are matters of order, not privilege.

Therefore, I respectfully rule that a prima facie case of privilege has not been demonstrated.

That having been said, I would like to remind the House that I had to make repeated calls for order during oral questions and subsequently during orders of the day on that day. I've advised the House more than once that yelling at each other and trying to shout each other down does not aid decorum or the transaction of public business, and it does not show the Legislative Assembly in a positive light to the public.

It is very ironic that on the anniversary of D-Day, June 6th, a day when many Canadians fought and died on Juno Beach in the name of freedom and democracy, our Assembly spent the day arguing and yelling at each other. Let us all try to do better in the future and be worthy of the trust that our constituents have placed in us.

I thank all members for their kind attention to this ruling.

* (14:40)

PETITIONS

Seven Oaks General Hospital Emergency Room

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

The background to the—this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government has announced the closure of three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in the city of Winnipeg, including closing down the emergency room at Seven Oaks General Hospital.

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

(3) The closures have left families and seniors in north Winnipeg without any point—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —of contact with front-line health-care services and will result in them having to travel 20 minutes or more to St. Boniface Hospital emergency room or Health Sciences Centre's emergency room for emergency care.

(4) These cuts will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in north Winnipeg and visit the emergency room frequently, especially for those who are unable to drive or are low income.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Ruben Asis, Fatima Aguillar *[phonetic]*, Chris Ablian and many, many other Manitobans.

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

Misericordia Urgent Care Centre—Reverse Closure Decision

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government has announced the closures of three emergency rooms and an urgent-care centre in the city of Winnipeg, including closing down the urgent-care centre at Misericordia Health Centre.

(2) The closures come on the heels of the closing of a QuickCare clinic in the city, as well as the cancelling of important health-care projects such as

ACCESS centres and personal-care homes that served families in the surrounding area.

(3) The closures have left the 40,000 families and seniors in Wolseley, the West End, Fort-Garry Riverview and River Heights who used Misericordia Urgent Care Centre without any point of contact with front-line health-care services in their community.

(4) These closures will be a strain on the large number of seniors who live near Misericordia and visit the urgent-care centre frequently, especially for those who are unable or are low income.

(5) Misericordia's urgent-care centre was a successful model for non-emergency timely care in the province that diverted patients out of crowded emergency rooms.

(6) Medical officers—officials at Misericordia were not consulted regarding these sweeping changes and how would it impact their ability to provide quality patient care.

(7) Closing the urgent-care centre at Misericordia was not a recommendation in the Peachey report. Rather, it was a decision that was developed by and taken by the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living and the Premier.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the decision to close Misericordia Health Centre's urgent-care centre so that families and seniors in south Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have timely access to quality patient care.

This petition is signed by Teresa Olson, Don Ferguson, Caroline French and many other Manitobans.

Medical Laboratory Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provision of laboratory services to medical clinics and physicians' offices has been historically, and continues to be, a private sector service.

It is vitally important that there be competition in laboratory services to allow medical clinics to seek solutions from more than one provider, to control costs and to improve service for health professionals and patients.

Under the present provincial government, Dynacare, an Ontario-based subsidiary of a US company, has acquired Unicity labs, resulting in a monopoly situation for the provision of laboratory services in medical clinics and physicians' offices.

With the creation of this monopoly there has been the closure of many laboratories by Dynacare in or around the city of Winnipeg. Since the acquisition of Unicity labs, Dynacare has made it more difficult for some medical offices by changing the collection schedules of patients' specimens and charging some medical offices for collection services.

These closures have created a situation where a great number of patients are less well served, having to travel significant distances in some cases, waiting considerable periods of time and sometimes being denied or having to leave without obtaining lab services. This situation is particularly critical for patients requiring fasting blood draws, as they may experience complications that could be life-threatening based on their individual health situations.

Furthermore, Dynacare has instructed that all patients requiring immediate results, STATs patients, such as patients with suspicious internal infections, be directed to its King Edward location. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the patients who are required to travel to that lab rather than simply collecting the test—completing the test in their doctor's office. This new directive by Dynacare presents a direct risk to patients' health. This has further resulted in patients opting to visit emergency rooms rather than travelling twice, which increases cost to the public health-care system.

Medical clinics and physicians' offices service thousands of patients in their communities and have structured their offices to provide a one-stop service, acting as a health-care front line that takes off some of the load from emergency rooms. The creation of this monopoly has been problematic to many medical clinics and physicians, hampering their ability to provide high-quality and complete service to their patients due to closure of so many laboratories.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to request Dynacare to reopen the closed laboratories or allow Diagnostic Services of Manitoba to freely open labs in clinics which formerly housed labs that have been shut down by Dynacare.

To urge the provincial government to ensure high-quality lab services for patients and a level playing field and competition in the provision of laboratory services to medical offices.

To urge the provincial government to address this matter immediately, in the interest of better patient-focused care and improved support for health professionals.

Signed by L. Zuzanski, D. Schellenberg, D. McGillivray and many others.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, could you please call second reading of Bill 36, followed by second reading of Bill 35, to be followed by the resumption of the main and capital process, if time permits.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of bills 36, then 35 this afternoon, followed by debate on main and Capital Supply.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 36—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences)

Madam Speaker: Moving then to second reading of Bill 36, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences).

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mrs. Mayer), that Bill 36, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: I'm pleased to rise in the House today for second reading of Bill 36, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences).

As all members of this House know, our government has communicated two primary messages as we respond to the federal government's decision to legalize recreational cannabis. First, we have committed to protect health and safety as we establish a legislative and regulatory framework for the retail and consumption of this newly legal product. And second, we have maintained, from the

very beginning, that the federal government is rushing into the process of legalization for political purposes. As a result, our government has committed to reviewing our legislative framework for cannabis to determine any gaps that have arisen due to the federal government's rushed timeline.

Madam Speaker, Bill 36 is a— is the result of that review, and I want to thank my hard-working team in Manitoba Justice for identifying this particular gap and suggesting a legislative amendment to address that.

* (14:50)

The federal Bill C-46 enables law enforcement to use federally approved oral fluid screening devices to determine whether a driver has drugs in their system. It also creates three new Criminal Code offences for different levels of THC in the blood while driving, including low drug offences for between two and five nanograms of THC in the blood, high drug offences for over five nanograms of THC in the blood and, thirdly, mixed drug and alcohol offences involving over 2.5 nanograms of THC and blood alcohol content of over 0.05 or above.

Madam Speaker, our provincial Bill 26, which was passed in June 2018, imposes provincial sanctions to correspond with these new offences. Both Bill C-46 and Bill 26 have two parts, the first part dealing with the new drug-impaired driving offences and the second part dealing with streamlining and modernizing various Criminal Code transportation offences. As such, part 2 of Bill 26 is about ensuring that our legislation includes accurate cross-references with part 2 of the federal legislation.

Madam Speaker, part 2 of Bill 26 comes into force on December 18th, 2018 and will replace the existing Highway Traffic Act provisions related to relating to driver's licence suspensions for refusals of a police demand for a roadside test. However, the replacement provisions currently exclude refusals of police demands to participate in a physical co-ordination test or drug recognition evaluation. These are essential tools for our front-line police officers. Unless these provisions are amended when part 2 of the legislation comes into force, police will no longer have the authority to impose a three-month roadside driver's licence suspension for refusing a physical co-ordination test or drug recognition evaluation.

There is also a need to correct some inaccurate cross-references to the Criminal Code, which this legislation also addresses.

Madam Speaker, correcting this gap in a timely way is consistent with our public safety approach to cannabis legalization. It will ensure that police have the tools they need to keep our roads safe from drug-impaired drivers.

I urge all members of this House to support Bill 36 to correct this gap and ensure we do everything we can to keep our roads safe for Manitobans.

Thank you very much.

Questions

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

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): You know, it was only a few months ago that our opposition agreed to pass the government's Impaired Driving Offences Act, which we were told at the time would provide everything needed for the legalization of cannabis coming forward.

When did the government determine that this amendment was necessary?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

Clearly, we're down this road with the federal government wanting to legalize cannabis. We're trying to create the legislative and the regulatory framework to ensure that Manitobans are safe. Clearly, impaired drivers are a problem for Manitobans and a problem on Manitoba highways. We brought the previous Bill 26 in to try to address those issues relative to the federal legislation that went through the books as well.

So we thought we had all the angles covered. Upon reflection, though, we—there were some errors made in the writing of Bill 26—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I would ask the minister first to describe what's involved in the physical co-ordination and drug reporting evaluation.

And also I would ask the minister whether it is the government's intention that the levels which he's described be used alone, or would there be a requirement that there be a demonstration of the impact or the effect of the drug on physical co-ordination or in other respects.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance.

An Honourable Member: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In terms of the physical co-ordination test or the drug recognition evaluation, those really are tools that police officers will use when they pull over an impaired driver. So they will ask the respective driver to go through either the physical co-ordination test or—police office are now being trained on the drug recognition evaluation to actually recognize drivers that are under the impairment of drugs.

So those are the two roadside tests that police officers will use. As you may know, the federal government has just authorized a roadside—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I wonder if the minister can inform the House about the methods that will be used to determine if there is a driver that is impaired and how that person is impaired. By what mechanism is it—cannabis, alcohol, crystal meth—and are there technologies that can do this beyond the human look; and, finally, is the technology widely available to all police forces?

Mr. Cullen: Yes, Madam Speaker, the police across Manitoba—in fact, across the country—are being trained in the drug recognition evaluation program and that's ongoing training, and some of that money is being supplied by the federal government. So, hopefully, police officers will be able to use that training and make that assessment whether that particular driver will need a blood sample to make sure that we understand exactly what levels of blood that particular driver will be impaired by.

To the point about roadside screening devices, there are screening devices available across Canada. I believe the company that has been authorized by the federal government have 500 devices—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Swan: I was just a little confused by the minister's answer to my question about when the government determined this amendment was needed. The Criminal Code did not change between the time the bill was passed in June and today, so I believe that the minister is acknowledging it was an error on the government's part.

But when did the government determine that it was actually necessary to bring forward Bill 36?

Mr. Cullen: Yes, I will try and clarify the need for Bill 36. When Bill 26 was written, it actually excluded the ability for a police officer to offer to enact a suspension of a driver. And that was just in the writing of Bill 26. So the department recognized there was an oversight in terms of the writing of Bill 26 that actually left this particular provision out. So the—what we're doing under Bill 36 is actually bringing that provision back in so that a peace officer will have the ability to actually offer or provide—or suspend a driver's licence for that 24-hour period.

So it really enhances the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I would return to the question which I'd asked but the minister didn't get a chance to respond to, and that is: In doing the evaluation, will the police, first of all, do the drug testing or will the police, first of all, do the physical co-ordination test and the drug recognition evaluation test before proceeding to the drug test only if they find the first one positive?

Mr. Cullen: This will be my understanding, my—how I think it will work.

The officer will have a look at the impaired driver, try to determine whether it may be alcohol or a drug and, hopefully, their training will provide that direction to them. Then they will have the ability—they could either offer a roadside Breathalyzer or they could offer a roadside drug screening test if they had those devices available to them.

* (15:00)

If not, they still have the ability, if they suspect the individual is impaired, they could still seek—go directly to either a Breathalyzer within the police station or they could access one of the facilities that would allow actual blood testing—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Fletcher: I wonder if the minister could tell or inform the House if the regulations around Manitoba

Public Insurance deal with cannabis or other impairments, and if there's a differentiation between the—sort of, what is generally called, in the no-fault system, tin and glass, versus the Personal Injury Protection Plan. Depending on the origin of the accident, it can be quite a severe penalty one way or the other.

Mr. Cullen: Yes, I'm not sure I got the entire premise of the member's question there. Maybe—certainly, more involved in the—just the legislation we're dealing with today, and I would certainly entertain to—following up on his question at a later date.

This particular legislation, Bill 36, will—addresses drug impairment. So drug impairment would take into effect any drug that that particular individual may be impaired by. So the rules will apply to whatever drug that particular individual may be impaired with.

Mr. Swan: Yes, I thank the minister for effectively saying it's some unintended consequences of Bill 26 that police officers, if this bill does not pass, would no longer have the authority to impose suspensions for failure to agree to a—to giving a sample. Just so we're clear in the House today, I presume that the deadline is not October 17, but it is soon.

Can the minister just tell us when the—when it is absolutely imperative that this be fixed by the House?

Mr. Cullen: Yes, thanks, and I appreciate the member's 'appreciaty' under the necessary—necessity of Bill 36, certainly an oversight in the writing, and we appreciate that.

So there's two parts to the federal code. The second section of the code comes into effect on December 18th, so we would like to have this particular legislation in place December 18th. That would provide, then, the full intent of the original legislation.

Mr. Gerrard: One of the things that happens with alcohol tests and Breathalyzers is that the—from time to time, police do screenings. So they stop drivers without there being any evidence of impairment necessarily, and they do the testing.

Is it the plan that this is what the police will do, in terms of screening for cannabis and doing the testing for cannabis levels?

Mr. Cullen: Yes. In fact, ultimately the driver—if they believe the driver is impaired by drugs,

ultimately they would have to get a blood test taken. So the police officers have the drug recognition evaluation program available to them. Hopefully, we have a lot of officers trained by this date.

Or, coming soon to police station near you and a patrol car near you will be roadside screening devices, and the police officer will be able to do roadside drug screening for cannabis at that particular time. And, if the impaired individual fails either one of those tests, then the peace officer can take them for the actual blood test—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Fletcher: My question previously was just dealing the spectrum of impairment and at what point, if at any point, would someone not be eligible for MPI benefits, be it for tin and glass or the Personal Injury Protection Plan? I think in some extreme cases where crime is involved, there are provisions in the MPI act to deal with that. That was the root of my question. Perhaps the minister can reflect on that.

Mr. Cullen: There's nothing in this particular Bill 36 that would relate to that particular question, but I will address that particular question. I'll have to do that at a later time.

Mr. Swan: I thank the minister for his answers, and he's given us December 18th as the date when it would be absolutely necessary for this bill to be in effect without there being an untoward consequence. Can the minister just put on the record, will the passage of the bill by the Legislature be sufficient or are there also going to be regulations that are going to have to be passed by Cabinet before we can be satisfied that this mistake is cleared up?

Mr. Cullen: I appreciate the member's question, and to my knowledge, once we pass this particular bill, then that's all the legislative change that is required.

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the minister for clarifying that he expects that the police will set up roadside screening and that screening would be not just for individuals who can be found to be impaired on the physical co-ordination test, but they would just do routine roadside screening as they do now for alcohol.

I would ask the minister whether meth is adequately covered in this legislation or whether he'll be introducing further amendments to address testing for meth because its use is quite prevalent, as the minister knows, in Manitoba at the moment.

An Honourable Member: We'll certainly leave the—

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice.

Mr. Cullen: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We will certainly leave the enforcement side of it up to the peace officers around the province to do the good work that they do day in and day out. I guess this particular legislation is driven by—because of the cannabis legalization. In terms of the question regarding meth, that may be additional screening and analysis that may have to be required. That's something we'll have to follow up with the member on.

Mr. Fletcher: I wonder if the minister can inform the House what his degree of certainty about road safety will be with this legislation, how much more safe it will be to drive. And this whole process has been a national learning moment. I wonder if the minister can provide any suggestions on how this can be done better as we move forward.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I will admit it's been a learning curve for the government, as well, as we work through this cannabis legalization. We have taken the approach of safety. We're trying to keep cannabis out of the hands of youth. Obviously, impairment and drug impairment and driving while impaired is a major concern for us, and we hope this legislation will address that. Certainly, we'll—we need an education campaign that we've undertaken, and we will continue to work on education campaign to try to keep Manitobans safe as we move forward.

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

Debate

Madam Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Point of order, Madam Speaker.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: Honourable member for Minto, on a point of order.

Mr. Swan: During this question-and-answer period I found that, as the member of the official opposition asking questions, I was given exactly the same number of questions as the independent member from Assiniboia. I'd understood the independent members were entitled to one question during the question-and-answer period and certainly not entitled

to the same amount of time as the official opposition and the second opposition party.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on the same point of order?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Yes, on the same the same point of order.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on the same point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, the introduction of the questions or as the mentor—member from Minto suggested—however, after the first round it goes to opposition members. It doesn't specify which opposition members. Doesn't say official opposition or second opposition; it's opposition members, and we are, on this side of the House, collectively, the opposition.

* (15:10)

So, with all due respect to the member for Minto, I—what has occurred here is exactly as it should be. The questions were in order, and I hope we will continue to ask good questions and expect good answers. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate to the member that it is not a point of order. The—this is allowed during this debate. When it comes to private members' bills, that would be the time when an independent member may only ask one question. But, when it comes to government bills and the question period, this rotation is allowed, so there is no point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: So debate is open.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I will put some comments on the record about Bill 36, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

I suppose I could stand here and say, well, you know, the government has made a mistake, and we got you, and now the minister has admitted that their Bill 26 was improperly thought through or incorrect. But I'm not going to do that, and I'm not going to do that for a couple of reasons: first of all, because we know that road safety is something of great importance to my colleagues on this side of the House; and, second of all, perhaps I'm somewhat still affected, even some years after no longer being minister, that I know exactly which members in the minister's department would have been involved in drafting both Bill 26 and Bill 36.

And, although I will not mention his name, I do have a colleague—actually, a classmate of mine—who is the provincial expert, perhaps the national expert, on impaired driving, so I'm not going to mention his name, and I'm not going to say too much more about that.

This bill has been introduced at a fairly late date as this problem has come to light.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And the minister, I think, has been, again, rather open to say this bill corrects a legislative gap which was created by some omissions when Bill 26 was passed with the agreement of all parties back in June.

And, from our point of view, we believe that all families should feel safe on the road. We do believe that impaired driving is extremely serious. Unfortunately, many of us in our communities or in our families or in our groups of friends have had, unfortunately, the opportunity to experience just how damaging impaired driving can be.

And we will use some time this afternoon to talk about the bill, to talk about impaired driving, to talk about how important it is that we continue to move forward and how important it is that the government continue—or perhaps some would say start—to take these important issues seriously, to make sure that our roads are as safe as possible.

And I just—I want to take a few minutes to go through the history of road safety with this government since it was elected two and a half long years ago. We know that at the time the new Cabinet was appointed, every Cabinet minister was given a mandate letter. And the government made a big deal out of publicizing these mandate letters and posting them on the Internet. They seem to have lost their excitement for doing that, and now, in fact, there's ministers that have been ministers for over a year that still don't have a mandate letter, or at least a mandate letter they've chosen to share with the people of Manitoba. And I can see why that would be the case, because the mandate letters that were put forward by the Premier (Mr. Pallister), of course, to his ministers, it included absolutely nothing about the need to do whatever they can within their legislative control, within their spheres of influence, to try and make our roads safer.

And that was exposed rather dramatically the first year in Estimates when I asked the then-minister of Justice if she was responsible for road safety. And she looked at me in Estimates and said, well, I'm

sorry, could the member for Minto talk about what he means by that?

And I said, well, I mean things like making sure that people follow the speed limit, that people use their seat belts, that people don't use drugs or alcohol while they're driving, that we drive safely.

And the minister for Justice said no, no, actually that's not my responsibility. That responsibility actually falls with the then-minister for Crown Services, who, at the time, was also in Estimates. And I went and I asked the minister for Crown Services if he was responsible for road safety in Manitoba, and the then-minister for Crown Services, who we found out, even today in question period, is incapable of ever giving a straight answer, said, well, you know, we're all responsible for road safety in the province of Manitoba, and certainly every one of the 57 members of this House.

And I remember very clearly that interchange, and I said, well, yes, we can all play our part in road safety, but you are the minister responsible for MPI. Are you the one who is actually responsible for bringing forward new initiatives to try to make our roads safer? And rather than answer the question, which, at that point, I think the minister—then-minister for Crown Services should have, he then carried on with the same platitudes, effectively saying that he was no more responsible for road safety than anybody else in the province of Manitoba.

And, unfortunately, that seemed to be this government's approach early on, and it took a question in question period, unfortunately, to expose the government a little bit. And I put that question to both the minister of Justice and the minister for Crown Services at the time, and, finally, I believe the minister of Justice then appreciated what was so important and tried to cover up the damage.

It was just a couple of weeks after that that I had some of the then-members of MADD Winnipeg and they came to my office to talk about a few things. Even though I was no longer on the government side they still appreciated the work that we had—that we completed together to try to raise the issue of impaired driving, to try to stop people from driving while impaired and, of course, the most important thing, stop dangerous and deadly crashes from happening on our highways. And I played the clip from question period, which included their own MLA, the then-minister for Crown Services, refusing

to answer the question, and they were less than impressed.

So, since that happened, I suppose as an opposition member I can take some comfort, I suppose, that although we had to embarrass the government, we eventually did get them focused, but not before we wound up having one of the worst years on Manitoba highways when this government first took control.

And when a highway accident happens, whether it's an injury or, even worse, a fatality, it's like dropping a pebble in a pool, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The ripples of that accident continue to spread and continue to affect not just families, and not just the families of the driver, but the driver of the victim, but also include their communities, their schools, their workplaces and, in some small way, all of us.

And so it is that we come to the government's efforts to make the roads safer in light of the upcoming decision by the federal government to legalize cannabis. And there are a lot of things that can be said about that, and I will say a lot of them in my time.

Let me say at the outset, though, that we are agreeable with measures to try to make highways safer, to make sure that police have the tools they need to be able to deal with drivers who may be impaired, whether it's from alcohol, whether it's from cannabis, whether it's from other substances, and we also support measures to make Manitobans aware of these concerns and also ways to educate Manitobans.

And, on that front, I know when I was the minister responsible for MPI and the Minister of Justice, MADD Canada does a tremendous job of getting people out into schools to talk to young people who are most at risk for dangerous behaviours as they start driving. I went a couple of times to different high schools where MADD Canada would attend. They would usually have a very powerful speaker. They would talk about what had happened to their family or to their community because of impaired driving and they would always have a new video prepared, Mr. Deputy Speaker, demonstrating to young people the dangers of impaired driving.

And those videos and those speeches are not always easy to listen to, and I know they have an impact on young people, and I was very proud to be part of an effort to reduce impaired driving, especially among young people. It's one of the

reasons why, when we were in government, we passed graduated licensing legislation, which means that, effectively, for the first five years that any Manitoban has a driver's licence, they have a zero blood alcohol content requirement. And the result has been that young people, because it's primarily young people getting their licences at age 15 or 16, that then learn correct behaviours, or, more properly, don't learn incorrect behaviours.

* (15:20)

And, as people like Andrew Murie from MADD Canada will tell you, MADD Canada is not an abolitionist or prohibitionist organization. They don't tell people that they can't drink. They make it very clear that drinking and driving are two activities which need to be absolutely and completely separated.

And so it is the federal government has now entered another intoxicant into the legal category. And we know that as of October 17, individuals will be able in Manitoba to go to a privately owned cannabis store, if they can find one anywhere near their own area and they choose to go there to buy cannabis, as long as they own private property or have friends with private property, they will be allowed to smoke that product.

They're out of luck if they happen to be a renter. They're out of luck if they don't happen to have someone who has private property, but that's another story. But people will then be driving after they've been using cannabis.

But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The former minister of Justice was all over this, saying this was the worst thing that was ever going to happen. The fact of the matter is that Canadians have been driving while impaired from cannabis not just for the last year or the past five years or the last 10 years, over the last, likely, 50 years and perhaps even longer. That doesn't mean that it isn't serious. That doesn't mean that we don't support rational efforts to improve safety, but I know that the previous minister of Justice, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his other Cabinet ministers spent a lot of time and energy railing against the federal government, saying how terrible this was rather than just rolling up their sleeves and getting the job done.

And, again, I'm not going to belabour the point that we're here this afternoon debating a bill which only became necessary because of an oversight. But it does say a lot when this government has spent

more time worrying about a substance that some would say one in 10 Manitobans is already using, and they've spent so much time dealing with that and have completely ignored, first the opioid crisis that struck the province and, as well, the meth crisis which has now been building for two years or two years plus.

And I know I first raised the issue of street drugs and their impact on crime in a question in the Legislature almost exactly two years ago. And I asked the minister of Justice about the increase in crime that was being reported by CrimeStat, which is the City of Winnipeg's computer program which gives 10 representative crimes and how many of those have been reported.

And, at that time, crime, in just six months since the government was elected was up 7 per cent. And I said to the minister of Justice, I asked her whether she believed that that increase in crime was due to the availability of street drugs and effectively gave her the opportunity at that point to put on the record that, yes, there was a problem and, yes, the government was going to do something about it. But as is so often the result in question period, instead of getting any kind of reasonable answer, we had the fingers pointed back. We had the blame game being played by the government, and they refused to acknowledge that maybe street drugs were one of the reasons why crime in Manitoba went up by about 7 per cent in the first six months of their mandate—*[interjection]*

Well, if it was only 7 per cent, I think people in Manitoba and certainly people in Winnipeg would be happy. We know that in 2016 there was a substantial increase in crime. We know that in 2017 there was a substantial increase in crime, about 10 per cent across the province, both violent and non-violent crimes.

And what do we know so far? Well, as we—I believe the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) put on the record that during debate on the meth crisis yesterday, crime in Winnipeg, based on CrimeStat, is up about 10 per cent this year over the same period last year. So that adds up to about a 27 per cent increase in crime under this Conservative government.

And let me say that the opioid crisis coming to Manitoba was not the fault of the government. The methamphetamine crisis coming to Manitoba was not the fault of the government, but the test to the government—of a government is not what you do

when everything is going smoothly. The test to the—of a government is what you do when there is a serious issue that's being placed at your doorstep. And on both of those fronts this government has failed miserably and, unfortunately, we see that with the methamphetamine crisis.

And, again, while the legalization of marijuana is a serious issue, the safety of Manitobans—whether they are driving, whether they are working, whether they are a pedestrian, whether they are elsewhere—it is important that the government has spent so much time worrying about that issue, and that issue alone, that they have missed the boat as very, very serious, life-ending drugs have taken hold here in Manitoba. And, quite frankly, that's a shame.

Now, as I say, we are concerned about workers, we're concerned about families, we're concerned about seniors of Manitoba who may be harmed or killed due to impaired driving—whether that is from alcohol, cannabis or other drugs. And vehicle-related accidents are serious; they can be life threatening. And it's especially true when accidents take place around crosswalks, they take place around playgrounds, they take place around schools. And we do believe that Manitobans have the right to feel safe and to avoid the threat of drivers who are paying attention to their phones instead of paying attention to the road.

And there are many things a government can do. There's many levers a government can pull; legislation is one of them. And, again, there's no direct criticism of what's contained in this bill for cleaning up some of the things which ought to have been taken care of in the spring. But, to illustrate how governments can make a difference, it was under our government through educational programs and advertisements—we were actually fortunate to see a tremendous decrease in fatal accidents in Manitoba. And, in 2011, which was one of the years I was the minister responsible for MPI, the number of accidents caused by impaired driving in our province was 230, which was an unacceptable number. By 2016, that number had dropped to 145. That's still 145 too many, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it shows that through education, through enforcement, through laws—all of those things can change the mindset of Manitobans. They change the way that Manitobans act, and we hope, by doing that, that will save people's lives.

We know that many are expecting the number of impaired drivers to rise with an increase in marijuana

consumption. That appears to have been the result in some of the states where marijuana has been legalized. And it's unfortunate.

If you do the research, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very difficult to find truly objective reports. And, actually, you and I may have more knowledge than every other member of the House. When we went down to a conference, The Council of State Governments—I won't put on the record where that conference was held, but it was definitely a good conference. And we had individuals from across Canada and the United States studying what was happening in states like Colorado and Washington, where cannabis had become legal. And, unfortunately, I believe on both sides of the issue there were some studies that were done with a preconceived notion of what the results should be.

So there was a federal study which seemed to indicate that the number of crashes in Colorado was increasing. There was another study, which may have been also trying to get to a very different result, that seemed to suggest the number of crashes did not increase.

The one study that I read that appeared to be both credible and non-partisan, if I can call it that, was a study which suggested that there was a slight change in two factors, in Colorado, after cannabis was legalized. No. 1, there was a slight increase—and, when I say slight, 2 or 3 per cent, which is noticeable and important—a 2 to 3 per cent increase in the number of collisions on Colorado highways. Yet, at the same time, there seemed to be a reduction of about the same amount—2 or 3 per cent—in the number of fatal crashes. And one wonders, well, why would that be the case? I did have the chance to look at a study from the Netherlands, and that study was one of the only studies that's ever been conducted which actually had drivers under the influence of cannabis driving on highways. For, I suppose, some valid reasons, no research like that was ever conducted in North America. If, as an MPI minister, I'd stood up and said we were going to fund a study like that, I know the response would have been swift and immediate, but the Dutch, who've always had a different view of things, decided to take a look at it.

*(15:30)

And what did that Dutch study find? Well, actually, very much what that study from Colorado found. They would not say that drivers under the influence of a modest amount of cannabis are safer, not at all. They found they tended to have slower

reaction times for stopping. They tended—just as people under the influence of alcohol—tended to weave more in their lanes, and as a result there would be some concerns. What they also found—which might be something which police officers will tell you anecdotally, which others will tell you anecdotally—they also found that people driving under a moderate influence of cannabis became the exact opposite of driving with road rage. They actually became a lot more relaxed, their following distance has actually increased and they tended not to speed.

Now, does that make them safer drivers? No, it doesn't. But does that mean that there are other, equally or greater challenges, including continuing to keep people who've had too much to drink before they get the wheel—behind the wheel? Absolutely.

So those are some of the challenges that we have to face. It is a serious issue. I think every member of this House wants people who are using cannabis to separate that activity from driving. There's some uncertainty right now as to what level of cannabis makes it unsafe to drive and, certainly, I think most of us would like to say that it is better if people simply do not use cannabis and then drive. The challenge with cannabis is that, unlike alcohol, which comes out of someone's system at a pretty regular rate, it's still a little unclear exactly how quickly THC, the active component within cannabis, comes out of somebody's blood after they've used cannabis. And that's what different employers are struggling with, police forces are struggling with and there is some uncertainty right now.

Now, we know that a lot is going to be asked of our police services, and the police are now expected to conduct roadside testing using an oral fluid screening device which will measure the presence of THC in saliva. And as I've said, THC is the chemical responsible for most of marijuana's psychological effects. And based on the results of this roadside test, the police will then have to decide whether to do a drug recognition evaluation or whether they're simply going to take the driver in for a blood test. And we know that a driver's licence can be suspended if a driver has between two and five nanograms of THC per millilitre of blood in their system.

And I think it's fair to say that the alcohol standard is now quite clear to Canadians. It wasn't always that way and it wasn't always that certain. Most Canadians know that it is a Criminal Code

offence to drive with 0.08 blood alcohol. Most Manitobans know, at least I hope they would know, that it is a provincial—violation of provincial law, The Highway Traffic Act, to drive with a blood alcohol of more than 0.05.

This is going to be a new test which is going to be out there and we hope that everything is going to go well when October 17 rolls around.

We support safe driving on the roads and holding them—impaired drivers—accountable, but we are concerned and we'll be watching carefully to see how this government's strategy of roadside testing and accuracy rolls out.

Now, based on the laws put forward by this government, there are defence lawyers in the province who will be the ones standing up and challenging these in the courts. A prominent defence lawyer raised the issue, that the levels that are now going to be in place in Manitoba could mean that people who built up a tolerance to marijuana, such as medical users, could be considered legally impaired as soon as they get behind the wheel. This is not the case with people who are impaired by alcohol. The blood alcohol content is a fairly scientific and fairly now well-understood measure, not quite so clear when it comes to cannabis. And as that lawyer went on to say, we want to try and limit the amount of people who are impaired on the road, and I agree with that. But part of the challenge is we don't really have a serious connection between levels of marijuana in your blood in terms of nanogram percentage like we do in terms of alcohol.

And, at present, marijuana impaired driving cases are currently relatively rare in Manitoba. There may be a number of reasons for that. Hopefully, it's because a few Manitobans are choosing to drive while impaired by cannabis. It may also be there isn't a good connection rate because the effects of impairment are far more difficult to detect and vary dramatically between users. You can have two people who use the same amount of cannabis: one may, from all objective views, appear to be fine to drive; you may have someone else who is clearly intoxicated and should not be driving.

But we just need to be aware that, in future, there will be challenges to this law. And there have already been cases of driving while impaired by a drug that have resulted in acquittal at the courts because the judge decided there was not enough evidence, despite the police officer's evaluation on the scene.

Now, we also know that the government's scheme will provide that while a test showing more than five nanograms will be considered high-level impairment, there would be a licence suspension for three months and the vehicle impounded for at least 30 days, even though, again, the impact on two drivers with the same amount of cannabis in their system could be dramatically different.

One of the biggest challenges, something that employers are having to struggle with, as I say, police forces are struggling with, that I know police and Crown attorneys will be struggling with, is the issue of THC still being found in a user's bloodstream long after the effects of using cannabis have dissipated. And, at present, the individual would have to undergo a mandatory addictions assessment at the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba.

So we're heading off into a new frontier, I suppose, come October 17, but in many ways, it's not much of a frontier at all. Manitobans have already been using cannabis. I don't think anybody can deny that's the case. This will, when October 17 come around, hopefully decriminalize an activity that many Manitobans have chosen to partake in. We do hope that the roadside testing will work. We hope the government's laws will be effective. But we do have concerns.

Again, defence lawyers who've handled marijuana-related impaired driving cases in Manitoba are raising concerns about a lack of scientific clarity about how drivers' intoxication levels will be measured before provincial sanctions are imposed. And therefore it's crucial to make sure the test is right and that we take the right people off the road. We have a lot of respect for our police officers. They will be the front lines. They'll be the ones having to decide who gets tested. They'll be the ones administering the tests. And, ultimately, I suppose, they'll be the ones being questioned by defence lawyers if the defence lawyers believe that something has been done in violation of the act or in violation of people's rights.

However, the right to being safe on highways is also extremely important, and I don't want to minimize that at all.

We are hopeful—well, I shouldn't say that. We hope, although we're not hopeful, that the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) cutting of public safety officers and crime prevention programs will not significantly impact the police force's ability to enforce this

legislation. We know that there are going to be some additional costs. Manitobans deserve to feel safe and they deserve investments here in public safety, especially when we have, as I pointed out already, issues of rising crime here in Winnipeg—in fact, crime that's up about a quarter from when this government took office.

And what has actually happened to the police since this government took power? Well, we know that the government cut 15 police officer positions in places like the Integrated Organized Crime Task Force and the warrant task force. What did the Integrated Organized Crime Task Force do? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was actually a task force comprised of Winnipeg Police Service officers, RCMP officers and also officers—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —from other municipal police services. And they worked together to actually take on organized crime.

And a number of times they were successful in carrying out large-scale operations which took down large drug importation, drug selling, sexual exploitation, stolen property. It actually had an impact in knocking down organized crime by going after those not just on the street who are the easiest ones to catch but who actually have the least to offer, but by going after those at the head of organized crime in Manitoba. And that task force was greatly successful in disrupting criminal activity in Manitoba, something which it's clear this Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) does not understand, the previous minister of Justice does not understand, but which I know our police understand and are frustrated about.

* (15:40)

The warrant task force, of course, it was also a combined effort of the Winnipeg Police Service and the RCMP, and their job was to go and deal with people who were flaunting the fact that they had outstanding warrants for their arrests, they had outstanding charges and they had been refusing to work with them. And, in fact, I had the chance to go out with the task force and actually got to see the work that they were doing, enforcing warrants, bringing people in to try to clear some of this backlog of warrants. It's unfortunate that's not a—it's not a priority for this government and, again, that is having an impact, and it's part of why the crime rate in neighbourhoods like mine, the member for Point

Douglas (Mrs. Smith), the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) and others, why there's a negative impact on public safety.

And those are many reasons that we have concerns. We are hopeful this bill will fix up—

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

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): In listening to the minister's responses, it's clear that he has his work cut out for him. He needs to get answers for those questions.

We realize that another amendment will be required, because there's nothing in the bill to address the meth crisis. We want safe driving for all our Manitobans. The new PSAs that come over the radio or—and TV are heartbreaking. We lose 100 Manitobans every year. That is completely unacceptable as it's highly preventable. Why does it always have to be where we have to question how this will be rolled out in First Nation communities? Why can't this new government specifically state: And, for our First Nations, this is how it'll be rolled out, et cetera, et cetera?

How did the—I would like to know how the consultations went with First Nations police forces. I can tell you that our FNSOs aren't being talked to, and, just for clarification, that's First Nations safety officers, to clarify for my colleagues across the way. The FNSOs are being forced to be trained in traffic violations, yet they have implored this government to be trained in seizure and arrests; and, if they were listened to, we wouldn't even have to worry about drugs and alcohol getting to our drivers in our remote northern communities. So, you know, will this minister be setting up those roadside testing close by the airports that service the North? You know, I look forward to any announcements that this minister will make that will address our concerns.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any further speakers?

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): It's always a good day when I'm allowed to speak, because there are some issues that have been raised in the amendments that were proposed today under this bill. And one of the biggest concerns, of course, I think, which is shared by all, is that all families should be safe on the road. And it is very important that we address the current circumstances where, seven days from now, pot, marijuana or cannabis

will be legalized. And although there will be regulations that will govern the use, transport, planting and growing, and the other regulations that will determine whether the program on the part of the governments, both federal and provincial, will work, is quite confusing.

Number 1, in many provinces, the transport of cannabis or any of their forms, including those that involve the plant itself or useable—or edibles.

In Manitoba, we are a bit more safety conscious. It has to be in some sort of an enclosed compartment not reachable by either driver or passengers, and the only compartment that I think of is the trunk of the vehicle. And my—I don't know if you are thinking like me, but, outside the box, if it were a half-ton truck, there's no trunk, and it cannot be transported, so this will be a little bit dicey for those who are buying it and then transporting it—I mean the substance—from the point of sale to the point of use.

And it is now high time for us to face up to this crisis that we have. It is a crisis on its own because when we try to legalize something and try to make money out of it, it betrays the failure of our society to take the problem a little bit more seriously.

I still believe that legalizing pot, from my perspective, is a cop-out. It should not have been. And I think the problems that arise out of the abuse—not the use, but the abuse of anything, including alcohol, including tobacco or medicinal preparations or medications—anytime that it is abused, it is a cause for concern. And if you are to take into account the number of Canadians who are using it anyway, it's as if our society has given up in changing the behaviour of some of those who found solace and comfort in pot or cannabis or marijuana.

When I was growing up, it was big business in the Philippines because some of those who had been growing it were making tons of money and were transporting it openly—they'd just cover it with a tarp—openly, as in, even the cops know which ones are transporting it. And it's big business, and I didn't realize that in my lifetime, I'll see Canada do the same thing.

Canadians—there are some who are investing in the distribution of cannabis, and it is a problem for me personally because I see pot or marijuana as an entry-level drug, which is my experience as a police officer before. It showed me that some of those who used it for a while become very immune to the effects.

* (15:50)

It's much like tobacco. When you first smoke it, you feel the high of tobacco, and as soon as you get used to smoking a pack a day, it does not matter anymore. It becomes chain smoking.

And the danger is that families have been known to have been broken up by use of drugs. And there are no two ways about calling marijuana a drug, because it alters the reality of some. I myself smoked it once during my training, just to know the difference between tobacco and marijuana and other plants. And it was during my time as a member of the anti-narcotics unit. And a narcotic is a narcotic is a narcotic, no matter how you call it.

And, when the provincial government tried to deal with the results that might arise out of the use of this drug by introducing this amendment, I find that it is more of a hastily composed legislation that has required an amendment even before it has really any impact in our society. The haste that was—it was a hurried type of legislation that shows that the—this Conservative government in Manitoba was never prepared to govern. It is my belief that the government has to institute education and information campaigns. It is not clear to me that it is being done properly.

It is part of my acceptance that the law will be effective on the 17th and that I'll see my neighbours, I hope not my family, using the drug recreationally. And it is my hope that nobody in my family will ever use it. And it is one of the worries that sometimes bother somebody who's my age. My family are all—my—I mean, my sons are all grown up, but I have grandkids, and I worry what the effects of this are to the acceptance and normalization of usage of a drug that induces a high, and what it will do to our society as a whole.

It is a very difficult job for me to walk that fine line of accepting what is something that I cannot change anymore and trying to stay on the so-called right side, not the left side, of the issue. The issue is: Do we really have to do this? Do we really have to accept it? Maybe it's because we need to have more information about how it will affect our people. And even the use of tobacco, that was a very highly debated issue whenever it was displayed in retail stores. Up to now, we hide tobacco inside something like a box or a compartment or a drawer while I was working for 7-Eleven, and we had to make sure that it is not visible to all people. But it is this type of behaviour that we are trying to find a way to balance

the issues of, well, our moral obligations toward society.

As legislators and as elected leaders of our community, we are supposed to propose a vision of how we see ourselves, say, 20 years from now. And I find the vision a little bit hazy, and it's the smoke that I see. It is the smoke that I see coming from this drug. And I believe that I'm not speaking for everyone; I'm only speaking my mind, because it's an issue that I have seen the results of. It used to be easier for me to say: Well, that's their thing; let them do it. And it is not my duty to discipline or correct or maybe suggest another course of action for some who choose to buy marijuana and use it.

In my apartment block alone, there's one who keeps on using the drug and invites friends over for a session. And this happens regularly on Fridays until the wee hours of the morning. And it bothered me for a while until my complaints were heard, and they were evicted. But it took a while, as in more than a year, before action was taken and before I cannot smell that—I call it odour. I can't stand it, and I don't understand why people gravitate towards the use of a substance that does not really smell good. I'd rather have bacon or waffles.

An Honourable Member: Going to smoke bacon now.

Mr. Marcelino: You can smoke bacon. But, then, I digress.

The problem that I'm having with the amendments is that it is not extensive enough to fully comply with the criminal procedure requirements. The enforcement portion of any prohibition is usually a matter that has to be well-thought-out and planned. This is quite different. Impaired driving has cost so many lives already. And, in Manitoba alone, those 100 lives that could have been saved, if only there were more people who are aware that impaired driving is a no-no. People, when they make those poor choices between being impaired and driving, is—or those people are decidedly taking their lives in their hands.

* (16:00)

And it is—we, however, believe that repercussions are important to deter people from driving while impaired from drugs that are usually—well, we also refer to them as those that alter the mind.

We want also to protect the workers and families and seniors of Manitoba who may be harmed or killed due to impaired driving. And I take pride in the educational programs and advertisements that the NDP, when we were in government from 2011 to 2016, when there were—there was a decrease from 230 to 143 in impaired driving accidents.

My focus was always on the idea that, do we really need to deal with this just because—or, this way just because we already gave up. This Highway Traffic Amendment Act also has not addressed the important problem of crystal meth that we now face, and we need to be able to address the issues of the day by including that particular portion of our social problems by addressing them and providing solutions.

And I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the chance.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Regarding Bill 36, I'm very pleased to put a few words on the record today regarding this bill and following my colleague. I have to say that the minister has provided the explanation as to what happened, the mistake that was made by his department that necessitated the introduction of this bill.

Bill 36 is called The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences) and, in the explanatory note, it points out that on December 18th, 2018, The Highway Traffic Act will be amended by The Impaired Driving Offences Act (Various Acts Amended) to reflect changes to the driving-related provisions of the Criminal Code. This bill corrects a legislative gap created by these amendments.

And I guess this is just a microcosm of the entire issue that we're dealing with here when it comes to marijuana and this initiative that came about prior to the last federal election. It appears as though the drafting people in the department in the provincial government missed this, and so this bill has been rushed through now at the last minute to be available for the authorities come December 18th, when the enforcement of the new marijuana laws will take effect.

And the minister did point out that there was—clarity was required. In Bill 26, it—Bill 26 indicated that an officer could not order a suspension for 24 hours of somebody who was caught impaired. So

that would make the enforcement of the legislation impossible or difficult anyway, because the officers would not have the authority, if they picked somebody up on the—driving, and they did not have the authority to suspend the licence. That would, in effect, render the enforcement of the new legislation, certainly, only partially effective, perhaps not effective at all.

So I guess what we're seeing here is just one of the many little screw ups that are occurring and will occur as a result of this initiative from the federal government. And, you know, at a time when we are having a civic election in Winnipeg, in two weeks today, I guess, we have decided—the city people have decided to put on the ballot a referendum on whether or not we should be opening Portage and Main.

So this is a huge overpowering issue here involving our citizens in Winnipeg, and they are so conflicted in this initiative that they have decided that they're going to put this hot potato up for a referendum, and the good citizens of Winnipeg will have two weeks to make up their mind on that important question.

Now, here we are discussing an issue of—you know, involving legalizing cannabis across the country and all the implications that that entails. And we can't say we haven't known about it for a while, because the Liberal Party announced, the Prime Minister announced well before he won the federal—the prime ministership in 2015. He did announce that if he got elected, among other things, he would legalize cannabis, and now he is proceeding to do exactly that.

Now, I don't believe that there has been a proper consultation across the country to the extent that the average citizen really understands the implications of what is coming down at them on—just another week from now or so, the 17th of October, when cannabis will become legal.

At no point, I believe, did the federal government ever try to have some open public forums and questions and answers about this issue. If they did, I'm not aware of them, but they—that is something that is definitely going to have to be accelerated, I would think, in view of what is going to be happening in short order.

Now, I just want to discuss several problems that people probably haven't thought about that they're going to have to confront dealing with the—with this pot issue. And the question is about whether or not

we are actually ready for this, and maybe, in fact, whether we're ever going to be ready for this. But, clearly, there's a lot of people out there who are not ready for this and who would've thought that this would've been properly debated, I think, in a referendum setting and could've been decided on that basis.

And, of course, the next question I have is, where were the, you know, the Conservatives in all of this? I mean, the Conservatives were not very straightforward, as I recall, saying yea or nay on this matter. And the question is: What will Andrew Scheer do if he wins the Prime Minister's spot next year, with that blue wave that might be there, might not be there, propels him to the office of Prime Minister, what is Andrew going to—Scheer going to do?

* (16:10)

Is he going to, sort of, tweak the laws that are there? Or is he going to roll this idea back and try to unscramble the omelette, as it will sit next year at this time? So these are all questions that I think we are going to have to be looking at going forward.

Now, there's a number of issues that some of you may have picked up on because they've been covered by the local radio stations. But one of them is the home insurance industry. As you probably know, you know, growing marijuana is a very—it's very intensive as far as water usage is concerned and it produces huge amounts of mould. And my prediction is that as this—as cannabis does get past the legalization stage, probably the insurance industry of Canada will simply, right across the country, you know, rider out—right in your policies—rider out the coverage that you have or the protections you have for growing marijuana. Because if you have a home and you're growing, I don't know, they saying maybe four plants—you're allowed to have four plants—and if you're pouring the water to these plants and these plants are developing a lot of mould, your house could be, you know, over time, damaged to the point where you won't be able to sell it. But, more importantly, you won't be able to collect from your insurance company on the damage this—that have happened to this house.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

And, you know, up 'til now, it's been a manageable issue because the insurance companies just don't pay because it's—up 'til now, it's been illegal to be growing—having grow ops. And we do have a

number of them around the city. I have some—we see them up close, not just in the core area, but we see them out in Transcona and all over the city here, grow ops. And literally what you have is—and we see some of them now, you know, \$300,000 houses, \$400,000 houses that are just turned to rubble over time. And, of course, the insurance companies will—they refuse to pay, and so the—you know, the mortgage company takes the loss, or the homeowner takes the loss, but they've been making lots of money on the sale of the marijuana anyway, so to them, it's just a cost of doing business.

And—but what will happen now is that if you have a house and the pot is now legal, now you're going to find people that are renting your—maybe renting your house, or your kids will be growing plants in the basement. And over time, you're going to see a deterioration. You're going to see mould in your property. And it's possible your insurance company might not be there to be helping you out with this problem. So that's going to be a horrendous problem.

Another area—and you've probably heard the real estate representatives on the radio talking about this issue, is how saleable is your house going to be if the house has been used for growing marijuana, and what sort of—what's the level of disclosure that has to be made on your part to—in the listing of the property. So real estate is going to be impacted severely, the real estate industry, because of these changes. The home insurance, property insurance, P and C businesses are going to be impacted tremendously.

I think that, certainly, travel—travellers are going to be impacted negatively because of this legislation, as well, because it is possible today, I suppose, to have your teenager take your vehicle to a party. And maybe there is some smoking of marijuana in there. And, even now, if the teenager drives that vehicle to the United States and those sniffer dogs are able to do their job and do their sniffing, you could have your truck or car impounded. And so the question now is that—how much more is this going to become a problem now? Because, you know, the public will believe that, you know, marijuana's legal, and they're going to think nothing of taking marijuana with them on their airplane flights, in their cars.

But the reality is the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) said, you know, you're allowed to take the certain amount. But that's all well and good as long as you're not crossing the border. But it's when

you start crossing the border, either by land or by air, and you have these—you have this amount of marijuana with you, that things may not turn out well for you.

And, you know, I've heard stories of people that are not able to fly in the United States, and they have been—you know, they were stopped back in the 1970s. Like, they—they're—they've got, I think, lifetime bans, and so—and we see this in the travel business because they—people come in and they buy tickets, and they leave Frank at home, or Fred stays home. And why is he staying at home? Well, he's not allowed in the States, okay?

We see this with the truckers. We see truckers having driven in the States for, you know, many, many years and so on, and all of a sudden, they—there's some hint of cannabis in their rig. And they don't know how it got there, and—but, doesn't matter. The Americans have their dogs, and they go and smell, and they find these things and then they ban the person from going to the States.

So there is just a horrendous amount of problems that we're going to see developing in short order in your house insurance, in your real estate activities, in your travel activities. And so I don't know that it's been—the federal government has been responsible in how they have, you know, not presented this as a referendum with debates on either side. *[interjection]*

And well, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) wants to know what side I'm on. I'm just trying to say that I think I'm on the side of common sense. I wouldn't have done what the Prime Minister did in suggesting that this is an alternative without suggesting that perhaps we would have a referendum on it before we brought it in.

I mean, so he wins a big election and he has an agenda, and he hasn't followed all of the agenda. This is part of the agenda that he did follow. But the premiers have indicated that there's been very little co-operation and dialogue on this issue. I mean, I've heard lots of complaints and read about lots of complaints about provinces not being ready for this.

So this is a—well, I don't know how big a boondoggle it's going to be, but certainly it's, you know, up there in the Richter scale of boondoggles. I'm sure it's going to be a—you know, reasonably high up the scale.

So we are here today to help the government out of its little boondoggle, its little boondoggle that it's created for itself in this bill. And, as the member for

Flin Flon said, yes, the things that we do to help you guys out of your problems that you create for yourselves. Your own drafters missed this one, and this is just a small part of the whole complex initiative that is going to be on.

Now, I could spend a lot longer here, at least another 13 minutes or more, but I think that there's other people that want to speak to this bill. One of them was just here a few minutes ago. I don't know where he—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable Rossmere, on a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): The member from Elmwood just referenced the absence of a member from this House. That is a shameful disregard for the rules of this Chamber, which have been upheld for over a century, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Concordia, on the same point of order.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, on the same point of order, Madam Speaker, and I do believe there might have been—you know, there was a lot of noise in the Chamber.

* (16:20)

I believe maybe the member from Rossmere misheard. I don't believe that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) was referencing any name or any particular member; was just talking about how, during the course of a day, I guess there are certain members in the House and certain members who are not here.

I do know that a lot of members do want to speak to this, though, so I'll just leave my comments there and look forward to your ruling.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On that particular point of order, I would just point out that there are to be no references to the absence of members.

I know that the member for Elmwood was indicating, perhaps, that his seatmate was not here and had wanted to speak to it; I do not believe I heard him mention any names. So, in that sense, it is not a point of order but a reminder to members to not

make reference to the absence of members from the House.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: Yes, I definitely did not make any reference to the member that the members opposite think that I was referring to. But I could've been referring to any, any member here who wishes to speak to this bill, and I think that it is incumbent upon the members of the government to stand up and explain why it is they can't get their legislation through, you know, that special considerations have to be made for them because their own department screwed up the legislation. I mean, you know, I guess they could fire their minister, but 38 of them would love that or—well, the ones that aren't in the Cabinet would love that. So that would be like—how many they got over there? Thirty of them would not be too happy about that.

So the question is—and you know, you have one of the members opposite just a while back came over and was suggesting that somehow that it was our responsibility to get the night hunting legislation through when, in fact, it was his own government, that obviously can't even read a calendar, that could not get the legislation through, you know, like, filed in time. And, of course, it has a prescribed date, that it would pass automatically except for those five bills that are put off to the fall.

And so for any bills that are not introduced by the date, that the government misses the date, they take their chances. They put the bill in, like the floor crossing legislation last year. They missed the deadline and simply they have to wait 'til the next cycle. And the next cycle is not that far. We're talking the third week of November, right? We're going to finish this session. We're going to take a week off for some 'sleepies' and, you know, and relaxation, and then after the week we're going to come back and we're going to start a brand new session, and the government can start introducing bills.

All these bills that it's having all these problems with because of its own screw-ups, they can introduce them correct. What do they want us to do? Remind them? Are we supposed to kind of keep, like a—keep a list here and say—you know, maybe like their—a pair of mittens that are—you got to remind them that they have to get it through?

So, you know, I would like to recap some of the issues that we're dealing with this Bill 36.

An Honourable Member: Start over.

Mr. Maloway: I mean—yes, well, member says start over, but there's just so many issues.

The member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino)—you know, the member for Tyndall Park talked about what his concerns were going to be. Every member over there—I don't think there's anybody there that can say they truly understand how this whole pot initiative is going to roll out and that they are going to be happy with the results. I don't think there's anybody there that can say that.

And—but they will be able to recognize one element of this, and that is that it's not that simple. You know, it's sort of like the Rubik's Cube. When you turn the cube one way, you know, it's—different permutations come up, and that's what's happening—going to happen with this. There's going to be horrendous problems.

You can see the public—members of the public fighting with one another right now, because they say, well, why, in province A, can we have, you know, little retailers selling marijuana and then, in province B, it's got to be done through government retail stores, you know?

So this is going to be a very, very divisive issue, as we move forward. And all I'm saying is that I thought the federal government—and I want to—don't want to make any reference to how many of them are here and how many of them are not be here; I would be tempted, sorely tempted. But it seems to me that there's—there had to be—there should have been—somebody, somewhere should have called for a reset on this whole marijuana initiative. Somebody should have said, let's have a referendum or let's hold it off 'til after the next election.

You know, if you—if the Prime Minister wins the next election, then absolutely bring in the legislation—you know, unless they've done their polling and they find that this is a big, big advantage to the Liberals' re-election efforts. But I, personally, think it's, like, it's six of one, half of the other. I think for every person that supports the marijuana legislation, there's probably another one that doesn't, for different reasons, you know, probably within families—*[interjection]*

Would the Premier (Mr. Pallister) want to hold it off? Well, that's fine, and that's all I'm saying. Well, then where's—well, then where's the Premier in coming out here and speaking to Bill 36? Where is

he? He could speak to Bill 36. He could—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —he could—I am—now had enough comments on the record, I think, on this bill—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. Just to reiterate to the member that, again, references are not to be made to the absence of members and, I think, in this case, the member did actually specifically make a specific reference to somebody that was not here. So I would urge the member to be very careful about indicating whether or not a member is in the House or not. We know that all the members do House duty, and then there are other things going on too. There's meetings all over, so we—everybody has House duty, and others are doing other things, but they're still working, so just to be careful with the language used here.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): I really enjoyed the member from Elmwood's speech; it was very profound. I also found it very interesting, the comments made by the member from Tyndall Park and his reflections of his experiences in the Philippines.

Madam Speaker, this is a very serious issue, and it has been thrust upon the provinces by the federal government and has put the provinces in an awkward position for sure. And the legislation introduced in each province in the area of provincial responsibility needs to keep pace with the changes in the controlled substance act and Criminal Code, et cetera, from Ottawa.

So the debate about if this needs to be done or not I will save for the last third of my speech in a few hours.

Madam Speaker, the issue of impaired driving is serious, and it's serious for these reasons: Not only does it lead to a higher probability of car accidents, but we have to think about what happens after a major car accident. Most people think of tin and glass, you know, having to get their car brought in to repair, you know, property thing and it's inconvenient. And most people—and I was one of them—that's how I looked at Manitoba Public Insurance.

*(16:30)

But there's a far more profound and serious consequence when there's increases in the likelihood

of automobile collisions, and that is personal injury. Now, the personal injury, again, most people say, well, you know, I got a scrape or a scratch. The injury doesn't follow for more than a few weeks, or maybe it's whiplash.

But then there are those accidents that occur that leave people brain-damaged, damage to their internal organs or damage to the central nervous system. Some are left—many—too many people are left paraplegics; fewer still, but still too many, quadriplegics. And the human cost is enormous.

Now this is going to happen when you're on the roads. I hit a moose with my car; no one's fault, act of God. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy, but it is baffling to me, those who would argue that cannabis legalization would not increase the probability of accidents and, therefore, serious injury. Of course, it's going to increase that probability. And even if it's increasing it by, say, 25 per cent, 1,000 per cent, 1 per cent—too high. The cost is too high.

People always think that they're the best drivers in the world. Well, the answer, of course, is, no, they're not. And, secondly, it's just not themselves they need to worry about; it's the other people on the road. Accidents will happen, but if someone's impaired, it's more likely that accident will happen, and the more likely of these very negative outcomes.

So the disincentive, the mitigation of this increased risk due to the legalization of cannabis can only be done when and through regulation at the provincial level. That's the way it works in Canada. Now, legalization occurs next week. Why we're dealing with the bill a week before is concerning. Like, I really don't know why that would be. Other provinces seem to have got the regime together, or the legislation together.

So we're doing this at the last minute, and, of course, I'm going to support the legislation. The alternative is far worse. The Manitoba Party is going to support the legislation, and at least 50 per cent of the freedom caucus is going to support the legislation—50 per cent. Might be 100 per cent.

When it comes to the issue of impairment, how do you do the enforcement? What are the penalties? And how can you prove it if challenged? Because, of course, it would be the natural reaction of an individual to deny that they're impaired or deny that they're over a limit. We see this with alcohol all the time. So how do we deal with cannabis? And this is

one of the very awkward problems that the federal government has left the provinces when legalizing cannabis, and that is road safety and enforcement.

I appreciate the minister's challenges in this sector—or this issue, and we have to work together to ensure that this legislation gets through, I suppose, before next week. So I'm going to try and expedite that process by utilizing this time to fully explore, as much as possible, all the options and the details that may be missed or need to be dealt with going forward—do that because we have to get this done.

Madam Speaker, it's not clear that there is a method that is reliable enough to identify impaired drivers who use cannabis. This is not the government's fault. It's not anyone's fault. It's just the way it is. There is the roadside test that the minister was describing, but there's likely to be challenges, in time, in the courts.

I was very interested in what the minister was saying about the blood tests, which would seem to be the most reasonable way to test insofar as ensuring correct information, but I can see that there may be other kinds of legal obstacles with that. But then, on the other hand, if someone has diabetes, they take regular blood tests with a little poke. Or if DNA's required, the courts can order that. So hopefully, as time goes on, there will be a way to evaluate the impairment. That is one way of mitigating. But, at that point, it may be too late. There needs to be strong disincentives so people don't drive impaired in the first place. There needs to be education so people don't enter their vehicles impaired. And we're talking about the wacky tobacky today, but it could be anything.

* (16:40)

As time goes on—and I hope the minister will take note—it would be very interesting to know if MPI, Manitoba Public Insurance, our universal automobile insurance in Manitoba, has been consulted on this file. We have a no-fault system in Manitoba, which means exactly that. No one is assigned fault, except in some extreme circumstances. If there's criminal activity involved, that can disqualify someone. If—and it's simply not an issue of breaking the law, because—you know, you can be going—speeding and—or, get caught speeding and you get a ticket. But, if you get caught in a speeding and then go into a car chase, well, that's quite a different matter. And then, if you get into an accident, there could be very severe consequences.

And I bring this up because I—it's not clear where on the spectrum cannabis use would be or other impairments. So, if cannabis is—cannabis use and driving—say it's an open/shut—is that a speeding ticket equivalent from MPI's perspective, or is it a denial of benefits? This is particularly important if there is a serious car accident. Say, there's—a 18-, 19-year-old gets in a car accident, is clearly impaired due to pot—wacky tobacky—and is permanently disabled. Will he have access to those benefits or not? I would hope in a case like that that they would, simply because there's—it is just such a high price.

But what if the individual had some other combination of age and offence and activity and driving record? What happens in those situations? Because I think a lot of people would say if there's a serial car thief who continuously speeds and breaks the law and is high when driving—which is clearly impaired—and is a repeat offender and has total disregard for society, and then they get in an accident or cause a lot of accidents, well, is that person going to be responsible?

Again, in our no fault system, it would usually be no, unless there's criminal activity. What kind of—how severe does it—does the impairment—the impaired driving have to be to reach the criminal test? And then how does that affect the insurance coverage?

Now, this is not something the government can—it's a complicated issue, and, hopefully, it won't be an issue for some time, but over time it will be. And it will be very profound in the people's lives that this affects. And it will have an effect on MPI resources and maybe the actuarial assessments that are made by insurance companies, and they're often wrong in 20. But that's the way it is.

I'll also note that Manitoba's no-fault system has no caps, and we should keep it that way. Section 138, the MPI legislation, is, if you have an accident, MPI is obligated to mitigate that accident so you can live as much as possible as you did before your accident or enter the workforce or continue rehabilitation. Like, in a way, it's a remarkable piece of legislation. But I am concerned about this sliver of people in situations which are more likely to happen now that cannabis will be legalized.

Madam Speaker, the testing and enforcement, going forward, is going to be very important. And when the minister has the opportunity, I will hope he will take proactive steps to reach out to MPI, medical experts and look to other jurisdictions to, as quick as

possible, come up with a aggressive regime of regulation, smart regulation, that can be enforced and ensure public safety.

Madam Speaker, my fear, and I think the public's fear, in the coming weeks, months, years, is that our roads are going to become less safe because people are uneducated about driving while impaired. *[interjection]*

Now, Madam Speaker, I see some people are laughing about this very serious issue—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Fletcher: —and I hope that there's a respect for road safety and the importance of road safety because we all use the roads, our loved ones use the roads. Our—you know, it is a—it's one of those things that touch all our lives. And if we do not deal with this cannabis legalization in the appropriate way, well, then there's going to be very bad outcomes.

We also want to be current in the science and empirical evidence as time goes on, so that the legislation, if necessary, can be amended in a timely manner. The legislation should take best practices from jurisdictions in Canada and North America, and I hope it will become part of the corporate culture, the Cabinet culture, regardless of if it's a PC Manitoba government or a NDP government or Liberal government or, the most likely of all, Manitoba Party government.

The—*[interjection]*—I know under a Manitoba Party government, there would be proactive measures taken to make sure that there's smart regulation based on empirical evidence that would ensure public safety on the roads and that we don't go after people who are not guilty of impaired driving because it seems like if—the smell test; if someone is smoking in a vehicle, it's pulled aside, does not necessarily mean the person who was driving is impaired.

* (16:50)

However, if you go in a vehicle and smells as fresh as a spring morning in Manitoba, that doesn't mean that the driver's not impaired, because they could've ingested the wacky tobacky. They could have—apparently there's all sorts of—I'm out of my league when it comes to explaining how the stuff is ingested or utilized or even acquired, but I understand that it's just not smoking that we have to worry about.

And there are instances where people could have their food spiked. I heard of a—it's almost ridiculous,

except it's not—of a prom—or a high school student in the States who tried to get votes, spiked her baking to the class. And apparently it was ingested by class members, and they, you know, were involuntarily consuming cannabis.

Now, I only raise that as an example of someone, or of situations, where the impairment may not be the choice of the impaired person. So people need to be self-aware about their ability, where they are, what they've done. They need to know that it's better to side on safety.

It's—we need to do that. We need to send that message out. I hope the government has a very, very aggressive advertising campaign, perhaps through MPI, to educate people about cannabis and driving. There's a lot of misinformation. I—there's still a lot of young people who think that smoking cannabis does no harm.

Fact—I remember two elections ago, 2011, it came up at one of the high schools in my riding. I asked that question and probably 500 students raised their hands, thought it was going to do no harm. Well, that is false. It was false when the—and it's as empirical evidence comes forward, we're finding more and more issues around cannabis and its effects. It creates more anxiety, depression. You're more likely to have at least short-term memory loss, be more likely to enter other kind of drugs.

And we—earlier today, one of the MLAs raised the issue, I think it was member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), raised the issue of crystal meth. That's an impairment, for sure. Someone on crystal meth who's not behind the wheel can be very dangerous. Now, if you give them a car, a weapon on top of that, well, that's pretty serious. And so what are the penalties? Probably goes in the criminal area.

But the police have to be equipped to be able to prove that the person is impaired. And, through no fault of the government, it doesn't appear that we have the tools to make assertions about individuals that leave no doubt about the level of impairment and how they are impaired.

Madam Speaker, the other important aspect—and again, you know, we're doing this at the last minute, and we have to get this legislation passed. And that's why I'm so pleased to be able to expedite this process, but we need data. We need to know age groups, why people are driving impaired, who's driving impaired, what is impairing the individuals, what are the carrots and sticks that encourage people

not to drive impaired. We need that data, and I hope the government, perhaps through other agencies, will be able to collect that data. Perhaps the federal government should collect the data through CIHR, or Canadian Institutes of Health Research, or Stats Canada or the RCMP. But this data is important.

In order to make good public policy, the better the scientific evidence, the empirical evidence, the more likely you are to end up with public policy that meets the goal of the population. In this case, the goal is to, at least initially, mitigate the road harm that will no doubt follow the legalization of cannabis, or, as we used to say in Ottawa, the wacky tobacky. But the legalization of cannabis and all the downstream effects need to be known, analyzed and implemented. On this specific issue of road safety, this legislation seems to be a first step, and I will be supporting it.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It gives me pleasure to stand up and speak a little bit about this bill that the government is introducing.

Contrary to what many of the members of this Chamber would have you believe, when cannabis is legalized, the world will not end. It may come as a bit of a news flash to many members that there's been people using cannabis for a number of

years now. Being a child of the '70s, you know, I remember parts of the '70s.

So, you know, a lot of what everybody in—seems to be setting their hair on fire about here has been going on for many years already. This bill doesn't come as—or I shouldn't say this bill—I guess, the legalization of cannabis shouldn't have come as a big surprise to this government. Apparently, it did. We've known for many years that the Trudeau Liberals were going to legalize it. They campaigned on that promise, and they're living up to that promise. This government didn't really see it as being a big priority, I guess, and then with their somewhat inept way of introducing legislation, they introduced something that they had to change. Certainly not the first time that we've seen this government do a flip-flop, but decide today is not what they said yesterday and might not be what they say tomorrow. Now—[interjection]

Like a pickerel on a dock, my friend from Concordia says. So it—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member will have 28 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Poverty Reduction Strategy	
Bill 233–The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act		B. Smith	3523
Swan	3515	Stefanson	3523
Bill 232–The Efficiency Manitoba Amendment Act		Poverty, Addiction and Homelessness	
Fletcher	3515	B. Smith	3523
		Stefanson	3524
Tabling of Reports		Bills Before the Legislature	
Squires	3515	Lamont	3524
Mayer	3515	Pallister	3524
Ministerial Statements		Conflict of Interest Commissioner	
Royal MTC's New Artistic Director Kelly Thornton		Lamont	3525
Cox	3516	Pallister	3525
B. Smith	3516		
Lamoureux	3517	Bills Before the Legislature	
Members' Statements		Lamont	3525
Taylor Friesen and Curtis Loewen		Pallister	3525
Graydon	3517	Northern Patient Transportation Program	
Northern Health Programs and Services		Lindsey	3526
Lindsey	3517	Friesen	3526
Alzheimer's Awareness		Pallister	3526
T. Marcelino	3518	Changes to Agricultural Crown Lands	
Barry Trotz		Smook	3527
Michaleski	3518	Eichler	3527
Brandon University Athletics Wall of Fame Inductees		East-Side Road Development	
Wowchuk	3519	Klassen	3527
		Schuler	3527
Oral Questions		Wasagamack Airport	
Methamphetamine Crisis		Klassen	3527
Kinew	3519	Schuler	3528
Pallister	3519	Public Accounts Reporting	
St. Boniface Neonatal Unit		Wiebe	3528
Kinew	3521	Fielding	3528
Pallister	3521	Pallister	3529
Addiction Treatment Services		Speaker's Ruling	
Swan	3522	Driedger	3529
Friesen	3522		

Petitions

Seven Oaks General Hospital Emergency Room B. Smith	3530
Misericordia Urgent Care Centre–Reverse Closure Decision Allum	3530
Medical Laboratory Services Gerrard	3531

ORDERS OF THE DAY**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS****Second Readings**

Bill 36–The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Impaired Driving Offences) Cullen	3532
--	------

Questions

Swan	3533
Cullen	3533
Gerrard	3533
Fletcher	3533
Debate	
Swan	3536
Klassen	3542
T. Marcelino	3542
Maloway	3544
Fletcher	3548
Lindsey	3551

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

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>