

Fourth Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne, Hon.	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Greg, Hon.	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Thomas, Hon.	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie, Hon.	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Gimli	—
<i>Vacant</i>	Southdale	—

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 29, 2015

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no bills, we'll move on to committee reports.

**Standing Committee on Social
and Economic Development
Eighth Report**

Mr. Dave Gaudreau (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT presents the following as its Eighth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in the Legislative Building:

- September 14, 2015
- October 28, 2015

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Legal Profession Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la profession d'avocat*
- **Bill (No. 27)** – *The Veterinary Medical Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la médecine vétérinaire*
- **Bill (No. 37)** – *The Radiation Protection Act/Loi sur la radioprotection*
- **Bill (No. 38)** – *The Intimate Image Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des images intimes*

- **Bill (No. 41)** – *The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2015/Loi corrective de 2015*

- **Bill (No. 45)** – *The Elections Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi électorale*

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the September 14, 2015 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Mr. EWASKO*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. HELWER*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX*
- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Ms. OSWALD (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Mr. SWAN*

Your Committee elected Mr. JHA as the Chairperson at the September 14, 2015 meeting

Committee Membership for the October 28, 2015 meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. BLADY*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. GAUDREAU*
- *Mr. HELWER*
- *Hon. Mr. KOSTYSHYN*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX*
- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Mr. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. PIWNIUK*
- *Mr. SCHULER*

Your Committee elected Mr. GAUDREAU as the Chairperson at the October 28, 2015 meeting

Your Committee elected Mr. MARCELINO as the Vice-Chairperson at the October 28, 2015 meeting

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 19)** – *The Legal**

Profession Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la profession d'avocat:

September 14, 2015 meeting

David Grant, Private Citizen

October 28, 2015 meeting

Kris Dangerfield, Law Society of Manitoba

Your Committee heard the following seven presentations on **Bill (No. 27) – The Veterinary Medical Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la médecine vétérinaire:**

Doraine Washniak, Private Citizen

Dr. Roxane Neufeld, Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association

Cindy Sontag, Manitoba Animal Health Technologist Association

Melanie Browning, Private Citizen

Trish Lobaton, Registered Veterinary Technologists and Technicians of Canada

Dr. Suzanne Davidson, Private Citizen

Dr. Michael Sheridan, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 27) – The Veterinary Medical Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la médecine vétérinaire:**

Dr. James A. Broughton, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 19) – The Legal Profession Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la profession d'avocat**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 27) – The Veterinary Medical Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la médecine vétérinaire**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill on a recorded vote of yeas, 6 nays 4, with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 42(2) of the Bill be amended

(a) in the section heading, by striking out "February 1, 2016" and substituting "section 7"; and

(b) in the section, by striking out "on February 1, 2016" and substituting "six months after the day this Act receives royal assent".

- **Bill (No. 37) – The Radiation Protection Act/Loi sur la radioprotection**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 38) – The Intimate Image Protection Act/Loi sur la protection des images intimes**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 41) – The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2015/Loi corrective de 2015**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 45) – The Elections Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi électorale**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Gaudreau: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing none, we'll move on to tabling of reports.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister responsible for the Civil Service): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to table the Public Service Group Insurance Fund for the year-end of April 30th, 2015.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to table the Actuarial Valuation Report as of December 31st, 2014, for the Civil Service Superannuation Fund.

Mr. Speaker: Any further tabling of reports? Seeing none, ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Trinity United–50th Anniversary

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, one of my favourite things about being the MLA for Fort Richmond is celebrating big milestones with my community. I

recently joined parishioners of Trinity United Church to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary, and it was very special. Today we have the church's 50th anniversary committee joining us in the gallery.

In the 1950s, Fort Richmond was a small community. A few United Church families would get together to teach their children basic Christian concepts in a small one-room school. As the community grew, the families decided to found the St. Norbert church on Pembina Highway.

Eventually, the name was changed to Trinity United to reflect the three areas served at the time: St. Norbert, Fort Richmond and Waverley Heights. Throughout location changes and building upgrades, the church retained a focus on educating young people, and their Sunday school is still going strong today. The church has done a wonderful job of staying current and has a very accepting and progressive outlook, which continues to attract new parishioners.

When speaking with people at the 50th anniversary celebration, I was struck by how connected the church staff and worshippers felt to each other. Trinity United is clearly more than a place of worship for families, but a source of support and kindness.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Trinity United Church and thank them again for 50 years of service to the community.

Affordable Housing

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, every Manitoban deserves a place to call home.

At a time when an increasing number of Manitobans are feeling the stress of the lack of affordable housing, we see an NDP government with misplaced priorities. This government is providing \$35.3 million to Investors Group Field due to this Premier's (Mr. Selinger) fast-tracking of the completion of the stadium for his own political gain just prior to the last election.

After massive cost overruns, just two years later the roof is leaking and the cement is crumbling. That \$35.3 million could have been spent reducing the wait-lists for affordable housing, which has increased from 400 to 3,000 in the last 10 years under this government's watch. How many Manitobans could have been removed from the wait-list with a \$35.3-million investment?

Mr. Speaker, rental costs in Winnipeg have increased by 65 per cent since the NDP took office. A two-bedroom apartment that once cost a family \$600 a month is now \$1,000 a month. The shortage of decent low-income rental housing is driving up rates. How many Manitobans struggling to afford to pay their rents could have been helped?

Manitobans are paying the price for this government's failure to provide low-income housing, just like they are paying the price for the incompetence and mismanagement of this NDP government that led to the cost overruns in repairs that are needed at Investors Group Field. This NDP government waste and mismanagement is hurting those who need support the most.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Excellence in Aboriginal Business Leadership Awards

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I attended the excellence in Aboriginal leadership awards on behalf of the Premier of Manitoba, and it was also joined by the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief). The amazing gala recognizes the success of Aboriginal businesses while raising money for Aboriginal students in entering into the business world.

The awards ceremony was established in 2005, and since then they have raised over \$150,000 for Aboriginal students and become one of the most prestigious events honouring Manitoba's Aboriginal business leaders.

The event was hosted by the University of Manitoba Aboriginal Business Education Partners, a community of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students pursuing honours degrees in commerce. Their graduates have gone to work for major corporations, and they have built businesses in Manitoba and around the world.

Connie's Corner Cafe received the excellence in Aboriginal small and medium enterprise award. This community-oriented restaurant at 967 Main St. has been serving delicious food and providing a stage of local musicians since 1997, always with the willingness to give back to their community.

Thank you to the Aboriginal Business Education Partners and thank you to Dr. Michael Benarroch, dean of the University of Manitoba business school. Your outstanding commitment to business education at Asper school and, in particular, to Aboriginal

education gives entrepreneurs the freedom to supply their need to be—and to succeed.

To all the Aboriginal students pursuing commerce: The windfall of your pursuit is a strong economy of Manitoba and Canada. The investments you make in your own education today will bring inestimable returns to your own community and to our country, Canada.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Health-Care Crisis

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to speak today on the crisis in health care in Manitoba. Almost every Manitoban is impacted in some way or another with this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, over 20 emergency rooms are closed, and the number is growing. Doctor and nurse shortages have resulted in shared on-call services between facilities. This creates confusion and dangerous situations for those seeking service.

Additionally, this government has closed emergency medical stations, which means longer wait times for ambulance services. There are currently over 30 family practice doctor vacancies in the Prairie Mountain Health region alone. Now local communities such as Killarney are asking ratepayers to fund headhunting companies to find doctors. In Killarney's case, this amounts to \$300,000 of local taxpayers' money.

This NDP government has failed to offer any long-term solutions or to even engage in a discussion with stakeholders. Instead, it is management by crisis.

I recently received an unsigned letter from what appears to be a staff member at a—from a health-care facility in southwestern Manitoba. The letter speaks of, and I quote, too much management pushing paperwork, residents left to die alone as staff are doing paperwork and staff exhausted by the system.

Clearly, the NDP waste is threatening front-line services, and, Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are looking for a change for the better.

Women's History Month

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Women's History Month is about celebrating the often overlooked accomplishments of our mothers, grandmothers, leaders and friends. It's easiest to overlook historical accomplishments when someone is fighting for something that other people already

have. A woman who taught at Brooklands School almost 100 years ago waged this battle and won.

*(13:40)

In 1918, Jessie Kirk, her teaching life and her political life collided when she decided that the best way to inspire her students was to fight for a better world, specifically fighting for equal pay, equal representation and equal rights for women.

History isn't just about recovering lost memories; it's about how we measure progress in our lives. That's why our government commemorated the international day of the girl this year, by creating more opportunities for girls to pursue careers in sciences and trades. We don't want outdated social values to prevent women from taking advantage of some of the best jobs Manitoba has to offer.

Thank you to all the women whose accomplishments we have not done enough to celebrate. We will continue to work with you as partners in our pursuit of justice.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: That concludes members' statements.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I have a number of guests I'd like to introduce just prior to oral questions.

Seated in the public gallery today we have with us Ms. Melanie Parent, who is the deputy reeve of the RM of Piney, who is the guest of the honourable Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief).

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us today members of the Trinity United Church 50th Anniversary Committee including: Elizabeth Brown, Marilyn Loat, Carolyn Pierson, Jackie Snarr, Connie Fillion, Clair and Bernice Gregory and Don and Marion Schultz, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross).

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us today from Kelvin High School we have 30 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Ben Carr, who are located in the constituency of the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

And also seated in the public gallery we have with us today from Steinbach Christian High School we have 35 grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Curt Plett, and this group is located in the

constituency of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome all of you here this afternoon.

* * *

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Chomiak: I wonder if I might seek leave of the House to deal with an extraordinary event that occurred yesterday on the—on behalf of an extraordinary gesture on your part, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if we might have each group in the House speak very shortly to the extraordinary thing that occurred yesterday that you helped initiate. I wonder if I might have leave of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Leave of the House? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Theresa Oswald (Seine River): I thank our House leader and the Opposition House Leader for affording us this opportunity to pay tribute to you, Sir, for the gesture that you led last evening in commemoration, of course, of this year being the 100th anniversary of women receiving the right to vote and indeed receiving the right to hold office. There were some marvellous speeches given last night by all members of the political spectrum and they were filled with important historical information about the battles that have been waged by the women that have come before us.

But, Mr. Speaker, you, in particular, and indeed members of your staff and association—I would name specifically JoAnn McKerlie-Korol, and I have no doubt that our Clerk, Patricia Chaychuk, had—has her hands in everything like this. I would say to you that it was an incredible honour to be part of that ceremony last night, to look carefully at those women that have come before us who attended last evening. What an incredible opportunity it was to be in the same room.

I will say openly and transparently that you gave us each a gift. And in that gift there was, of course, photographs of the women that have held office in this last 100 years and a very jaunty picture of each one of us as well, I would say. And I was struck by the beauty and the historical significance of this gift and I think, like all women in our Chamber today, I was struck by how few pictures there were for 100 years, and it is my hope that 100 years from now, Mr. Speaker, when a Speaker has the class

and grace as you do to hold such a commemorative event, that we won't be able to get all the pictures into one frame.

But, again, from the bottom of my heart, and I hope I can speak for the women in this Chamber today and for the women that have come before us, it was an extraordinary gesture on your part. We were all honoured by it, and we thank you very much.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): It was, indeed, a very special occasion last night, and I was honoured to have an opportunity to put some comments forward, as well, on behalf of our leader. And we also would like to thank Mr. Speaker and JoAnn McKerlie-Korol from the Teachers' Institute for spending a lot of time over the last number of months looking back at the history of women in politics.

And the framed poster that was given to each of us—and there were a number of retired women MLAs that were there and current sitting MLAs, and it was a very, I think, emotional evening to think that we are part of that first 100 years of Manitoba women being allowed to run in the political arena. That is never going to happen again.

We are on the eve of a very momentous occasion in Canada in that Manitoba women were the first in Canada to be given the right to vote. That is, indeed, a remarkable occasion, and that will happen on January 28th, 2016. When women were given the right to vote, we were also given the right to hold office.

And helping us along that journey was Nellie McClung, and it's certainly been amazing in the last number of years to have all-party support so that we could erect a monument on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature honouring Nellie McClung.

It was an honour a couple weeks ago for the Nellie McClung Foundation to put on the mock parliament and to have Nellie McClung's granddaughter, Marcia McClung, actually play the role of her grandmother in this mock parliament. Those kinds of things are incredibly significant, and I'm not sure we all realize the significance of the history that we are being allowed right now to celebrate.

And I would also mention to everybody that there's an opportunity to nominate modern-day Nellies right now through the Winnipeg Free Press, modern-day women that are walking in Nellie's footsteps to fight for social justice, and I would urge

everybody, if you know people that should be nominated, please do that.

And I hope everybody will want to be part of the January 28th gala to celebrate 100 years of Manitoba women being given the right to vote. That gala is going to be very, very exciting for all of us, and it will happen on exactly the date that Manitoba women were given the right to vote. I suspect we're going to see some Nellie McClungs at the event, including some suffragettes, some of the early women—[interjection] Pardon me. I just did make a mistake. It is suffragists, because in Canada we were suffragists. In other countries, they were suffragettes. And in Canada we did it with style and grace and we did it with satire through the mock parliament. Other countries did not do the same and it was a much more violent fight for women's right to vote.

So I urge—I hope everybody will be there. We've got a significant event to celebrate, and I hope all of us can be there to be part of those celebrations, because this is a momentous occasion.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want, on my behalf and on behalf of our Liberal Leader, Rana Bokhari, who was there last night and spoke at your invitation, I want to say thank you for setting up the event, organizing it and making it a very special evening remembering, I think it is, 51 MLAs, women who have been elected over the years so far, and hopefully there will be many, many more in the years ahead.

It is a historic moment when we're at 100 years after women received the ability to vote and to be elected, and we've made a lot of progress in that time that we need to be grateful for and we need to look back on. At the same time, we need still to recognize that there's some things yet to do, and that's, you know, what we can dedicate ourselves to in the years ahead.

* (13:50)

Thank you for the opportunity to join others and say thank you, Mr. Speaker. This was very much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker: I thank all honourable members for their kind words on this very special occasion. It was very special for us in the Speaker's office, and I can tell you openly that the work, while I am the one here that are hearing your very kind words, there were a lot of folks that were behind the scenes that were doing all of the work, and I want to pay special mention and attention to their work too.

JoAnn McKerlie-Korol, who has been mentioned here, played a very significant and leading role in this process in this evening that we had last night, and of course Michele LaPointe-Dixon and Ellen Douglas, who also work in the Speaker's office, were also part of that group in putting together this evening—or this last evening, and their work made it the success that it was.

And I want to tell you, in my time here as the Speaker of the Assembly and also as a member of this Assembly, I've been very proud to work with many women who have been in this very special place that we call our workplace, and that you have made a significant difference.

I can see and hear the difference that has happened in this place over the years that I have been here, and I want to thank you on behalf of all Manitobans and all members of the Assembly for your work, and may you continue to play a lead role in the development of policy in our province, and thank you for your efforts.

For all of those that went before us and all of those that continue to serve today and those that will continue to serve in the future, thank you for your efforts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: So I think that concludes guests, but I'm a bit flustered here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Speaker: We'll now move on to oral questions.

Tiger Dam Contract Disclosure of Information

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the other day we were asking some questions specific to the untendered contracts given for these Tiger Dams products over the last number of years, and the Premier, in a gesture of magnanimity, had proclaimed his desire for transparency and placed at my disposal some 300-plus pages of documents to, I guess, make the point that he was quite open and willing to divulge information on the topic.

Yet what we found is that of those 300 pages, over 200 of them look like that. They're blacked out in whole or in part and they do not disclose information, particularly pertaining to the Tiger Dams themselves or the analysis that was supposed to have been done on the product some years ago.

So I'd like to give the Premier the opportunity, in the spirit of transparency and openness, to share with me and with the House the non-blacked-out documents in respect of the Tiger Dams, please.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just quickly, thank you for preparing and organizing the ceremony that we had last night. It was very powerful and moving for all of us.

On the question, Mr. Speaker, I can say this: The information was provided, copious amounts of that information, following the standards that are encoded in law in Manitoba. Our professional freedom of information people redact information that is not pertinent to the question at hand, personal information with respect to third parties or negotiations, but they do provide everything else.

And the member knows full well that at the bottom of every page, if they have a specific concern about the information they received, they have the full right of appeal to the Ombudsman on that. And I'm not aware of them having made any appeal on that. They've used it for political grandstanding, but they have not followed the procedure which will allow them the purview and review by an independent officer of the Legislature called the Ombudsman to correct any perceived errors or any transgressions that the Leader of the Opposition may believe would have occurred.

Mr. Pallister: Faint applause, Mr. Speaker, and justifiably so, because, of course, the Premier knows under the act he has the right to release the information and I've just appealed to him to do so. What higher authority should I go to? Why is he delegating the responsibility to someone else that he is in possession of?

This is one page that wasn't blacked out. It reads: A preliminary analysis of Tiger Dam flood tubes as a flood protection tool. Unfortunately, the entire report is blacked out. Not a comma, not a period, nothing left; just total blacked-out pages. That's not transparency or openness; that's just hiding facts.

Now, \$3 million was given out in untendered contracts in the two years prior to this analysis being done, which is totally hidden from us.

Would the Premier verify that his government was responsible for giving out \$3 million to a party pal in business without shopping prior to doing any analysis on the product itself?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that the member doesn't follow the procedures of the House. We put in place an Ombudsman. We put in place a privacy commissioner.

At the bottom of every page of every document that has been tabled in this House and made available to the opposition, if there's a concern, they have the right to appeal to an independent officer of the Legislature. The member hasn't done that. That indicates to me that he's playing politics with this instead of actually seeking information, information that might answer any of the questions that he's had.

And as the member well knows, and we talked about this extensively in Estimates, Mr. Speaker, if there's an imminent threat to a community, an imminent threat that a family or an individual or a farm or a rural municipality or, and indeed, any community is at risk, our flood officials have the right and the responsibility to ensure that they have the proper equipment in place to protect those communities.

And sometimes time frames are very short. Sometimes it's a matter of minutes, hours or days before those communities could be inundated with unprecedented flooding that had never been seen before in Manitoba.

And what does the member opposite want to do? He wants to spend 40 days tendering out a contract, which would have put those communities under water, which would have put lives at risk.

Our officials acted with alacrity. They acted—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister's time on this question has elapsed.

Mr. Pallister: So we've established, Mr. Speaker, that the government did no research on Tiger Dams and simply gave a contract to a friend for \$3 million worth of the product, which they then subsequently analyzed and evaluated, but they want to cover up the evaluation. This makes no sense. The Premier refers to our floodfighters and hides behind our floodfighters and our sandbaggers and our volunteers, but he's sandbagging the House today.

The reality is, of course, that they went ahead, Mr. Speaker, after this analysis was done but has not ever been disclosed, they went ahead and added \$6 million more of untendered contracts to the list, totalling \$9 million. And they have not disclosed the analysis that they've done, even today. They did not disclose the data on the contracts they gave out

either, breaking the laws of this province in the process, which require them to disclose untendered contracts within 30 days of awarding them. This was hidden for years.

Now, I ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger): This report which he is hiding, if this report was favourable, why is it totally blacked out?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member cherry-picks one page out of well over 300–250 pages of information that was provided to him. This is not unusual. We've seen this kind of behaviour before. He's had that page for a while now. If he was concerned about it, he has the entire right to make an appeal to that to the Speaker—to the Ombudsman of the House.

Yesterday, he said he went and had a meeting with the RCMP. Turns out that he had the option of doing that, Mr. Speaker. And then he implicated the RCMP in an investigation. If the RCMP want information, they can get that information. There's never been any barrier to that.

The member opposite is doing everything except following the established procedures, which would allow him to get accurate information. He's politically grandstanding, something we've seen before in this House, something we've seen in the community, Mr. Speaker, that does not serve the public interest.

When communities, individuals and families are at risk, we support our floodfighting officials to put the proper equipment in place to protect those communities. We will always do that. We will continue to do that.

In the meantime, the member opposite would see them under water when he followed the abstract procedure that he thinks is necessary when people are at imminent risk. That is irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister), on a new question.

Mr. Pallister: What is irresponsible is to pretend that the Premier is transparent and then table—two thirds of 300 documents are blacked out. Two thirds of 300 documents are totally or partially blacked out. Two thirds of 300 pages is totally or partially blacked out, including the complete—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pallister: See I've struck a nerve, Mr. Speaker. I'll wait 'til it's relatively silent to respond, if I may.

* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Pallister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that.

A preliminary technical analysis of Tiger Dam flood tubes as a flood protection tool: Taxpayers paid for this report. It was completed in December of 2009. It is completely blacked out.

Now, the only logical conclusion one could draw is that that report shows some problems with the Tiger Dams. Why else black it out? Yet the NDP government went ahead—went ahead—and purchased \$6 million more Tiger Dam products from their party pal without a tender or without shopping.

Mr. Speaker, now the Premier is covering up the fact that he bought a problem product, and I need him to stop hiding today, stop pretending and please just table the analysis so that Manitobans can see that the Tiger Dams are or are not a good product to use to protect themselves in flood situations.

Mr. Selinger: I've made a—in a previous response I made it clear that when our professional officials who administer our information laws—freedom of information laws, they make exclusions based on personal information to protect privacy, third-party business information not relevant to the specifics at hand to protect commercial interests, and information that has not been requested and may not be relevant to the request at hand.

There is extensive information that has been provided the member opposite. He knows the—well, maybe he doesn't know. It's written at the bottom of every single page: If you're not happy, here's where you appeal, to the Ombudsman. He still hasn't made that appeal.

He wants to get up here and cherry-pick information and put it on the record as if there was a deliberate attempt to exclude information. The information is provided by our professional officials according to laws that we have passed in this Legislature, and all those laws were supported by members of those Legislature. He's now saying that he wants a different approach to that. He's now saying that he wants those laws to be broken so he can make a political point in the House, Mr. Speaker. That is disgraceful.

Our officials use a variety of pieces of equipment. They use Tiger Dams; they use Aqua Dams; they use HESCO Barriers; they use super sandbags.

They use a variety of technologies to protect communities. They pick the technologies based on their professional judgment on what's the safest, best way to look after Manitobans.

We've had no lives lost in Manitoba. We've kept our communities—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Honourable First Minister's time on this question has elapsed.

Mr. Pallister: It hardly keeps our province safe to hide information that pertains to a most important area of concern, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what the Premier is doing now.

The Financial Administration Act of our province is a law. It requires the government to put on that little computer up in the library within 30 days all untendered contracts. This government issued \$9 million of untendered Tiger Dam contracts over a seven-and-a-half-year period and didn't on one instance—not one instance—did they put the information on the untendered contracts on that computer, and they broke the law of our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) gives me 200 pages of blacked-out information and talks about things like accountability in the same speech. They broke the laws of the province. They're blacking out the analysis reports so we can't even see the evaluation.

Which minister under his government's authority is responsible for reporting untendered Tiger Dam contracts and putting them on that computer? Is he responsible for it, or is someone else?

And who is responsible for not placing any of the data on untendered contracts, in obedience of the law, on the computer in the Leg. library within 30 days as is required by the law?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member deliberately avoids following the FIPPA laws in his demands in front of the Legislature and then tries to shift somewhere else the discussion. Not a surprise—not a surprise.

The Auditor General, whom we gave additional powers to investigate value for the money efforts in Manitoba, including issues of—with respect to posting contracts, tendered and untendered contracts, reviewed that; they gave us recommendations. They said, you need a more robust system of reporting. That system has been input. That system has been input in place and that—all that information is now posted on the Internet for any member of the public

in Manitoba to see. That's a step forward in transparency. That's why we have the Auditor General review these matters, and when we get good recommendations we follow them.

We also have legislation in front of this House right now for the budget implementation, which add—which would additional transparency on untendered contracts. All the members have to do is stop standing on their political high horse and pass the law, and we will have additional transparency in Manitoba.

I look forward to them voting on it. We're ready to vote today on it, Mr. Speaker, are they? I think not.

Mr. Pallister: Well, these are the types of answers that caused a rebellion within the Premier's own caucus.

This willingness—this willingness—to pretend that he is accountable and responsible on an issue which he clearly has demonstrated the opposite is clearly the cause of dissension within his own ranks, and yet he fails to address it given the opportunity.

Now, the Auditor General said—the Auditor General said—that the government was breaking its own laws, in her report last year. The government now, given the opportunity to make public the information, refuses to do so yet again, learning nothing from the report whatsoever.

The fact of the matter is that the ministers in this government need to comply with the law, just as every Manitoban expects they have to.

Now, which minister was responsible for failing to put the information on \$9 million of untendered Tiger Dam contracts on the Leg. library computer, as is required by the laws of our province? Which minister was responsible for failing to comply with the laws of our province?

Mr. Selinger: What we have on display from the Leader of the Opposition is his usual double-standard approach.

For his first several questions he's demanding we break the laws on freedom of information. For him, that's okay. He—when he wants something done his way, it's okay to break the laws.

Then he shifts to another set of issues with respect to contracts, which have been reviewed by the Auditor General. And when the Auditor General gave recommendations, we fully complied with those

recommendations, and we upped the game. We took the system we inherited, the legacy system of posting contracts and providing information on a computer in the Leg. library, and we put them a hundred per cent available on the Internet.

We have a bill in front of the Legislature. We're ready to vote on that bill today. Members opposite want to delay that as long as possible.

No surprise, Mr. Speaker. Double standard: break the law when it suits his purposes, enforce the law or pretend to want to enforce the law when it suits his purposes. Nothing new here, the same thing we've been discussing for the last several months, no surprise, no new information, no new ideas, no progress.

We posted all the information on the Internet, Mr. Speaker. We're willing to have greater transparency. All they have to do is stop posturing and vote for the bill. Let's do it today.

Untendered Contracts Public Disclosure

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear the Premier (Mr. Selinger) is—understands the concept but not the practice of law.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise to Manitobans that the NDP Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar) has, yet again, broken the law. The Financial Administration Act requires that all contracts be published without delay. We have found millions of dollars in untendered contracts that have been hidden from Manitobans until we have brought them to the attention of the Finance Department.

With the NDP, Manitobans are paying more and, indeed, getting less.

Mr. Speaker, what else and how much more is the Finance Minister hiding?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Mineral Resources): Mr. Speaker, a year and a half ago the provincial auditor did a review of the process with respect to contracts. He made recommendations to a committee of the Legislature of which the members opposite are Chair people. The recommendations called for a more robust system. Right now, today, as a result of the recommendations of the provincial auditor made a year and a half ago, all contracts, tendered or untendered, are on the Internet, available to anyone to review, which I believe is a first in the country.

In addition, there is legislation before the Legislature right now in BITSA in order to open up and provide more information.

I think there's a little bit of politics being played here.

Mr. Helwer: Well, it was disclosed in committee that this NDP Finance Minister is breaking the law by not disclosing untendered contracts.

Manitobans can't trust this NDP government. They are tired of the same NDP broken promises.

Mr. Speaker, what else is this minister hiding from Manitobans?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, when the FIPPA legislation was put in, when the legislation of which we are—the legislation we're functioning under was put in by members opposite. They had rules and regulations. We've expanded it. We've expanded the breadth of FIPPA to schools, to hospitals and to other entities.

*(14:10)

In fact, Mr. Speaker, there were 2,800–2,800—requests of FIPPA information last year. And you know what? One thousand seven hundred came from opposition parties. In other words, we're doing the research. We are providing the research to members who then take the research, stand up and criticize us for either—for not providing information because of the three standards that were put in place by members opposite: privacy, commercial or third-party interests, negotiations and the government.

I think they're playing politics.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is not listening to Manitobans and continues to be in contempt of Manitoba's laws.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in undisclosed contracts are being hidden from Manitobans by this NDP Minister of Finance, so we can't even begin to see how much money they are wasting.

Mr. Speaker, what else is this minister hiding from Manitobans, and when will he finally make these untendered contracts public for all Manitobans to see?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, let me try a different approach.

Will members opposite at least admit—will members opposite at least admit—that now in Manitoba all contracts, tendered or untendered,

going forward, over \$10,000 are available to anyone who looks on the Internet?

And will they admit, Mr. Speaker, that there used to be a computer in the Legislature that was a old-style, old computer—sort of like the old Tory party—that cranked out information that wasn't very effective? We admitted that. We changed the system.

Will they not also admit that they—the opposition party has asked for 1,700 requests of FIPPA. Some of them are hundreds and hundreds of pages, and they ask every single day. And when the Premier (Mr. Selinger) tabled hundreds of pages the other day, there was hardly any information redacted, and the members opposite, I dare say, are being political.

Manitoba's Credit Rating Budget Speech 2015

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, in the spring budget the NDP government stated its commitment to achieve stable or improving credit ratings in the future. Well, just a few months after that statement in their budget, the opposite is true. Moody's has downgraded Manitoba's credit rating, the first downgrade in 30 years.

Now, understand the Finance Minister promised Manitobans stable or better credit ratings, and then the credit rating gets downgraded. Now, Manitobans are tired of the same old NDP broken promises. Moody's warned them the summer previous that it was coming and then it happened.

So I ask the Finance Minister: When he was delivering the budget, was he already suspecting a credit downgrade?

Hon. Greg Dewar (Minister of Finance): I do want to just thank the member for earlier on this week highlighting all the hard work I'm doing on behalf of my constituents in Selkirk. Mr. Speaker, I was hoping he could maybe table some more pictures of me representing my constituents in Selkirk.

But when we brought down our budget this year, we focused on growing the economy. We focused on creating opportunities for Manitobans. We're focused on investing in health care, focusing on investing in education, focused on investing in infrastructure. We made a commitment this year to spend \$1 billion; I can inform the House we, in fact, spent more than \$1 billion this year, Mr. Speaker, on infrastructure.

As I said, we want to grow our economy. That's why we had the second lowest unemployment rate in

Canada. Our goal is to be No. 1. I ask members opposite to join with us to reach that target.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, there was no answer to my question.

I would table for this House a Department of Finance briefing note that we received through an information request. And like so many of the information requests we receive back, most of this is completely blacked out. But you can see the title, and the title says the Effects of a Possible Credit Downgrade by Moody's.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is an important issue of trust here. The minister was promising stable or improving credit ratings in Manitoba, but—while at the same time his department was warning him about a coming credit downgrade. Most of it is blacked out, but that much is clear.

Did the Finance Minister deliberately mislead Manitobans and the financial community in his budget speech?

Mr. Dewar: We did not.

Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the member yet again that we came into office, we had a, under the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition and his party, a Aa3 ranking from Moody's. We're now a Aa2 ranking. I remind the member that, in fact, is a higher ranking.

I had a chance, as I said earlier, to meet with investors in New York and met with investors in Toronto. They have confidence in the Manitoba economy. Even today, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business have reported that, on behalf of their members, the business confidence have—has risen here in the province.

We had a tremendous debate earlier on in this House, Mr. Speaker, where the opposition brought forward a resolution full of gloom and doom about the Manitoba economy. You know, that is their vision.

Our vision on our side is to grow the economy, to highlight all the positive things that are happening here in the city of Winnipeg, and we're going to continue to do that.

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, a year earlier, the government was warned to get their fiscal house in order. They did nothing. Moody's downgraded the province's credit rating. As a result, Manitobans pay

millions more to service the debt. That's money that doesn't go to front-line services.

One small part of this briefing note that was not redacted is the key message. The key message states: A downgrade could increase the Province's cost of borrowing going forward. What was in this analysis that the Finance Minister didn't want Manitobans to see? What made him redact the rest of the content? The briefing note shows that the Finance Minister's misleading Manitobans in his budget speech.

Will the minister provide to the House, to members and to all Manitobans the background and analysis that is blacked out from this FIPPA request? This is an issue of confidence and competence, and he fails on both.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, you know, the—I want to remind the member that the—again, when we came into office, our ranking was a Aa3; now it's a Aa2 with Moody's. It's higher than what it was when they came into office.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, he should perhaps direct some of his anger to the—to his seatmate there, the Leader of the Opposition, who left us in that sorry state. We're spending more now on—to service our debt, the—a ratio to our expenditures than we did when they were in power, from 13 down to 5.6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to the House, of the City of Winnipeg and the finance chair of the committee, Mr. Marty Morantz, who was a former candidate of the members opposite, who said in the paper that, in his opinion, now is the time to invest in the economy with record low interest rates. They're doing so at the federal level; they're doing so at the City of Winnipeg; we're doing it here in Manitoba.

Why don't they get on side?

Education System Government Record

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education stated the other day that when he got into government, he found that the education system was a mess. I'd have to agree with him, considering both of us was—were elected in 2011.

When the NDP took over government in 1999, Manitoba was a leader in the country in education, and now we find ourselves, after 16 years of waste

and mismanagement by this NDP government, we're dead last in regards to math, science and literacy.

Why is this minister content in being dead last in the country when it comes to education?

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): I think, whatever Hansard might have recorded, what I wanted to say, of course, is that when we came into government in 1999, four terms ago, we found the education system in an utter state of disrepair.

And since that time, Mr. Speaker, we've invested at the rate of economic growth every single year so that we can ensure that there are proper supports for students, proper supports for parents, proper supports to make sure that our students are successful every single day.

Mr. Speaker, we have built 35 new schools since we came into government. We built new science labs, new gyms, new shops to ensure that our kids have the skills and the knowledge they need to go on into post-secondary education and then on from there to get a good job and continue to build this beautiful province together.

Mr. Ewasko: I know that the minister has every right to be angry with his predecessors within that NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, with the minister going on his promise-and-spending-spree tour this fall, he is merely vote buying because, as we have seen in the Fraser report in September, we've been dead last in Canada on education infrastructure spending and growth, which he just referenced to.

Why doesn't the minister just admit that he is just on a vote-buying campaign tour, making promises that he has no—not even going to be maintaining, Mr. Speaker? Can he answer that question?

*(14:20)

Mr. Allum: Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to set the record straight for the member because he put so much misinformation on the table.

It's important to remember exactly what we've done since we've begun in government: that is a total of \$1.4 billion in renovating and improving our public schools all across this province from north to south and east to west. Mr. Speaker, \$22.9 million have gone into building new child-care centres at our schools because they didn't exist when they were in

government; \$26.5 million for new gyms all across this province so that our children can be healthy in the body and then healthy in the mind; \$24.1 million to build new science labs all across this province so that our children have the skills they need to go forward into college and university; and then new shop classrooms worth \$30 million.

We stand with students. We stand with parents—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister's time on this question has elapsed.

Mr. Ewasko: Again, Mr. Speaker, the minister has every right to stand up and be very angry with his predecessors. He has to now catch up for 15 years of waste and mismanagement from his NDP Education ministers.

Manitoba should be very concerned with this minister. We have gone from being a leader in the country to dead last in math, science and literacy. Capital spending and infrastructure spending, we've gone dead last within education as well, Mr. Speaker. Manitobans need a change for the better.

Will the Minister of Education admit that he has no plan and that he is simply going on a vote-buying, promise-and-spending spree?

Mr. Allum: Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be the Minister of Education. I'm very proud of our public education system here in Manitoba. I'm really sorry that the member opposite, who's a teacher— who's a teacher—doesn't feel the same way about the very system that he's profited from as a teacher.

But let's review the record of the members opposite when they were in government: in 1993-94, cut of Education by 2 per cent; in 1994-95, cut to Education by 2.6 per cent; in 1995-96, frozen at zero per cent; in 1996-97, a cut of 2 per cent, Mr. Speaker; in 1997-1998, frozen again at zero per cent.

And now the Leader of the Opposition, the Conservative Leader of the Opposition, wants to cut a half a billion dollars from the budget. Mr. Speaker, that won't be good for schools. It won't be good for parents. It won't be good for students. The only thing, the biggest threat to the education system and the economy of Manitoban is the leader of the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable minister's time on this question has elapsed.

River Point Centre Update Addiction Treatment Beds

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): In an NDP news release dated 2010, it clearly states that 10 new long-term treatment beds would be added to the River Point Centre on Magnus Avenue.

Can the Minister of Housing please provide an update regarding these 10 long-term treatment beds? Are they presently being occupied?

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): I appreciate the question from the member opposite on an addictions issue. It's fantastic to talk about that issue in this room.

So we know that addictions have far-reaching effects on individuals and their families, and that's why we take prevention and treatment very seriously.

And that's why we invested in River Point Centre, which is a very unique model. It's a multi-agency addictions—excuse me—that provides—it's a facility in Point Douglas that provides outreach programming as well as 24 new treatment beds, with 10 additional beds expected to open in the coming months that will serve more than 700 Manitobans every year.

Mr. Schuler: Well, Mr. Speaker, in an April 2013 press release, the NDP corrected itself and released another release stating that the River Point Centre wouldn't open until winter of 2014. The release clearly states that an additional 10 new long-term treatment beds would be added to the centre's capacity.

Mr. Speaker, why has it taken five years and the beds are still not occupied?

Ms. Crothers: Mr. Speaker, River Point Centre was completely renovated, and we have multiple agencies working in River Point Centre to provide these services. It's not something that we're going to be able to flip on just at 2010. It is open. It is functioning, and as I said, the 10 additional beds will be open very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, we have no apologies to make on this side of the House in terms of our funding to addictions. In their time, their addictions funding was 14.4. What did we invest in the last year for addictions alone, \$34.5 million. They've got nothing to be snooty about.

Mr. Schuler: The reason why the minister couldn't flip on those 10 beds is she's too busy flipping on all the press releases. In fact, a third NDP news release, dated June 3rd, 2014, regarding the River Point Centre once again made the same promise.

It's been five years, yet those 10 long-term treatment beds are still not being used. Manitobans are tired of paying more and getting less.

Why doesn't the minister cut the news releases, save some trees and finally open those beds so Manitobans can receive the treatments that were promised five years ago? Why doesn't she do it for those men and women who need the treatments? Instead of having press releases, instead of having round tables and more discussions, open the 10 beds.

Ms. Crothers: Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that Manitobans who are struggling with addictions are getting the services they need at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner, because not everyone that's struggling with an addiction needs the same type of care.

I have every confidence that the organizations that are in River Point Centre are ensuring that those beds will be available, that all of the people that come to receive care at River Point Centre are going to get the care that they need. I've already stated in my first response that these beds would be available at the—in the very near future.

I have to say, though, Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite—when the Leader of the Opposition was in power, they cut funding to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba not once, not twice, not thrice, but four times, and that would be—that's \$1.5 million of reduced funding to one agency. They are in no position to be showing any kind of doubt about where our commitment is.

Thank you.

Land Transfer Tax Burden First-Time Homebuyers

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, in 1987, the NDP introduced a land transfer tax to pay for the Property Registry. In 2014, the government sold the Property Registry to Teranet. Teranet now raises its own funds by selling the services that used to be paid for by the land transfer tax. Land transfers are now also taxed.

This tax is an obstacle for many young professionals in Manitoba wanting to buy their first home.

I ask the government: Why is the Premier and his government making it more difficult for our young professionals to buy their first home here in Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the primary requirement for somebody to buy a home is to have a good job with a good salary, and that's why we've made a record investment in Manitoba. That's why we've got the best job creation record in the country—the best job creation record in the country—second lowest unemployment rate. When people have good jobs, they can afford to buy homes.

And every time we put resources in the budget—I hesitate to mention this again—that member, among all the other members in the opposition, have voted against measures that create employment and good jobs in Manitoba.

We're the good-jobs party; they're the cuts party.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, over the last 16 years of NDP government, we have seen a net loss of 76,855 people out of Manitoba to other provinces, a net loss.

One of the reasons has been that they continue to ignore our own young professionals with a system that provides the economic disincentive of a very high land transfer tax when purchasing a new home.

Will the Premier now admit the error of his ways and adopt the Liberal position that the land transfer tax on sales of homes to first-time homebuyers should be eliminated?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we have a growing population in Manitoba; over 15,000 people came to the province last year. We have a younger population: average age, 37 years old.

We have the lowest unemployment—one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. We have more people participating in the economy than we've ever seen before. We have the No.1 record for job creation.

* (14:30)

We've seen very significant growth in wages in the province of Manitoba. We've seen very significant increases in productivity, which allows us to be more competitive.

Those are the indicators of a healthy economy for good jobs for young people. When they have those jobs, they can buy homes.

And real estate sales have been very vigorous in this province. They're doing very well. We just had many of them down here this week to see this piece of real estate called the Manitoba Legislature, and they reported to us that their industry has had a good run while we've been in office. We'd like to keep that run going, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, and the net loss last year was equivalent to half of the people who came here.

Mr. Speaker, someone buying an average-priced home in Manitoba for the first time has to pay more than \$3,000 in land transfer tax. It's no wonder that people who are looking at buying their first home are not staying in Manitoba. The Premier's archaic land transfer tax policies remain a disincentive for people to stay and buy a home here in our province.

Can the Premier see how the Liberal position of removing the land transfer tax on sales of homes for first-time homebuyers would encourage people to stay here in Manitoba instead of moving elsewhere?

Mr. Selinger: Any young person—and we've all been there—who wants to buy a home, first thing they'd check: how reliable is my job? Will I be employed in Manitoba? Can I put some of my paycheque aside every week or every couple of weeks into a plan so I can afford to make a down payment?

That's what we're focusing on: good quality jobs, good skills, good training, Mr. Speaker, a good education system so—and a good opportunity to have a trade or a skill or an occupation or a profession. That's where we're focused.

The member opposite votes against all those initiatives in the budget, and then when I look at his platform, it's the same one he had before. He wants to cut \$450 million in payroll taxes. That means there will be less resources to build social housing. That means there will be less resources to ensure that people get good jobs and training and skills in Manitoba. The Liberal platform will not help young people buy homes, because they'll be unemployed.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: It is now time for petitions.

Provincial Trunk Highway 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank—Pedestrian Safety

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Every day, hundreds of Manitoba children walk to school in Oakbank and must cross PTH 206 at the intersection with Cedar Avenue.

(2) There have been many dangerous incidents where drivers use the right shoulder to pass vehicles that have stopped at the traffic light waiting to turn left at this intersection.

(3) Law enforcement officials have identified this intersection as a hot spot of concern for the safety of schoolchildren, drivers and emergency responders.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the provincial government improve the safety at the pedestrian corridor at the intersection of PTH 206 and Cedar Avenue in Oakbank by considering such steps as highlighting pavement markings to better indicate the location of the shoulders and crosswalk, as well as installing a lighted crosswalk structure.

This is signed by P. Raitt, E. McLeod, R. McLeod and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: In keeping with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business?

House Business

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker.

In accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce that the private member's resolution that'll be considered next Thursday is a resolution on Manitoba Hydro Rate Hikes Harming Manitoba Families, brought forward by the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, in keeping with our rule 31(9), that the private member's resolution that we consider next Thursday is the resolution on Manitoba Hydro Rate Hikes Harming Manitoba Families, brought forward and sponsored by the honourable member for Lakeside.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Further petitions?

**Beausejour District Hospital—
Weekend and Holiday Physician Availability**

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The Beausejour District Hospital is a 30-bed, acute-care facility that serves the communities of Beausejour and Brokenhead.

(2) The hospital and primary-care centre have had no doctor available on weekends and holidays for many months, jeopardizing the health and livelihoods of those in the northeast region of the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

(3) During the 2011 election, the provincial government promised to provide every Manitoban with access to a family doctor by 2015.

(4) This promise is far from being realized, and Manitobans are witnessing many emergency rooms limiting services or closing temporarily, with the majority of these reductions taking place in rural Manitoba.

(5) According to the Health Council of Canada, only 25 per cent of doctors in Manitoba reported that their patients had access to care on evenings and weekends.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government and the Minister of Health to ensure that the Beausejour District Hospital and primary-care centre have a primary-care physician available on weekends and holidays to better provide area residents with this essential service.

This petition is signed by I. Mostowy, B. Mozel, E. Kleinsassen and many, many more fine Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Are there any further petitions?

Seeing none, we'll move on to grievances.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY
(Continued)**

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no grievances, we'll move on to orders of the day, government business.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to set aside the Estimates of Executive Council and consider Education and Advanced Learning in the Chamber, with the change to apply for today only?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to set aside the Estimates of the Executive Council and to consider Education and Advanced Learning in the Chamber, with the change to apply only for today? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Government House Leader, on further House business.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to call Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: We'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Madam Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair, and various Chairs to the committee rooms.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

HEALTH, HEALTHY LIVING AND SENIORS

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to some semblance of order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors.

Seeing that there are no more specific questions for the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady), we will now proceed with the questions for the Minister responsible for Healthy Living and Seniors.

I'll put an open question out on the table. Do the minister and the critic wish to have opening statements or do you wish to proceed directly to questioning? It has already been established for this section of the Committee of Supply that the conversation will be global. But if you have opening statements, we can do that or skip it.

Hon. Deanne Crothers (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): I would like to make an opening statement.

Mr. Chairperson: Opening statement, okay. Well, please proceed, then.

Ms. Crothers: So I'm pleased to present the 2015-16 expenditure Estimates for Healthy Living and Seniors. This portfolio is committed to working with Manitobans to engage in healthy living for all ages. It's a diverse and important portfolio, and it's an honour to lead this department. Healthy Living and Seniors has a major role to play in the health and wellness of Manitobans and in contributing to the sustainability of the health system for the future. And I certainly have to say that I appreciate the great assistance that I get from the fine department staff that are in Healthy Living and Seniors.

We're responsible for a number of Healthy Living and Seniors policies, programs and initiatives, most of which will support Manitobans to avoid or delay the onset of chronic disease, addictions and mental health issues, to promote injury prevention and improve the overall health of Manitobans. Healthy Living strives to support Manitobans to maintain health and wellness through all stages and ages of life.

Close working relationships with colleagues in the department, other departments, regional health authorities, community and disease prevention and injury prevention groups, schools and school divisions, child-care centres, universities and workplaces allow the department to support Manitobans to make healthier choices and to live healthier lives.

In 2004, Manitoba was the first province in Canada to introduce a province-wide smoking ban in enclosed public places in indoor workplaces. And since then we've had many other achievements and remain committed and steadfast in our intention to reduce tobacco use.

Manitoba leads Canada in taxing tobacco products, making them less affordable, particularly for youth. Manitoba was one of the first provinces to introduce restrictions on the display, advertising and promotion of tobacco products in stores. In this province it is illegal to smoke in a private vehicle when someone under the age of 16 is present.

And on May 31st, 2013, as a result of legislation changes, tobacco sales were banned in pharmacies, stores containing a pharmacy, health-care facilities and vending machines. And in July 2014, Manitoba prohibited smoking on playgrounds and beaches in provincial parks. And just recently, legislative measures to address Manitobans' safe and appropriate use of e-cigarettes and to protect children and youth have been introduced and discussed in this Legislature. In this year's budget, we have committed

an extra \$2 million to increase our commitment to assisting Manitobans with smoking cessation and continue to work with our youth and their organizations, be it schools, workplaces and sports and recreational activities to remain smoke-free.

* (14:50)

Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors has dedicated funding to the development of initiatives in northern Manitoba to help reduce the cost of healthy foods that cannot be locally grown. In September, seven remote communities have begun to see a remarkable price difference in their local stores as they purchase milk, fruits and vegetables for their families. A \$6 reduction in a four-litre container of milk is one example of the differences this program will make to children and their families. And it was an announcement that was very exciting to be at, I have to say.

Another important Healthy Living initiative is the Wellness Works campaign in partnership with the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. The campaign targets employers, rather than individuals, and invites them to make a public commitment to creating an environment that supports health and wellness. The goal of the campaign is to have a healthier, more engaged adult workforce, which has multiple economic and social benefits. And I'm pleased to say that we have over 50 employers, large and small, representing 42,000 employees signed up to Wellness Works. And we're not done yet.

Through injury prevention partnerships, we have been able to distribute thousands of personal flotation devices and bicycle helmets across Manitoba. On June 3rd, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the low-cost bicycle helmet program that has assisted hundreds of children to be injury-free.

And this department pays attention to the needs of our aging population. Together the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat, the Manitoba Council on Aging and the Manitoba Caregiver Advisory Committee support and strengthen the voice of older as well as caregiving Manitobans. As Manitoba's population ages, our government continues to respond to the needs of older Manitobans. One innovation has been the implementation of the caregiver tax credit, which increased by 10 per cent this year.

In the area of mental health, our department supports agencies committed to preventing and addressing the mental health issues that many

Manitobans face. This year, we are pleased to be involved in the development of services and resources for children and youth at risk of mental health issues or who require mental health services. In the next few weeks, Minister Wight and I will be participating in an engagement in 10 communities across the province to discuss the mental health needs of our children and youth.

Manitoba is committed to building a better addictions system. River Point Centre began to phase in services in 2014. Its mandate is to—a continuum of services, including community-based outreach, new withdrawal management beds, new treatment preparation beds for those waiting for longer term treatment programs, primary residential treatment beds and temporary transitional housing units that will begin to receive tenants in January of 2016. This will increase services for Manitobans requiring addictions programs, alleviate pressure on existing addictions programs and promote increased coordination of services.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that this is a very diverse but exciting portfolio. We work with many partners in the delivery of many programs and services to support Manitobans to be healthy in many different aspects of their daily lives. We are committed to refining and adjusting our programs to meet the current economic climate, while still focusing on what matters most to the Manitobans we work with and partner with every day.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a few considerations that speak to the importance of the Healthy Living and Seniors portfolio. Every dollar invested in car and booster seats saves \$40 in avoided medical costs. Every dollar invested in workplace health and safety programs returns up to \$6 in avoided illness, injury and fatality. Every dollar invested in tobacco prevention programs save up to \$20 in future health-care costs. And every dollar spent on mental health and addictions saves \$7 in health costs and \$30 in lost productivity and social costs.

And, of course, I have to add that it's not just about the dollar value; it's also about the amount of grief and hardship that avoiding these kinds of things, the impact that that has on Manitobans, and that's really the focus that I have here.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Minister.

Honourable opposition critic?

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I think I'd just as soon start with the questions.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, very good.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Graydon: How many vacancies exist or are they being actively filled for a result of the lean management practices of the province by the 2013 budget?

Ms. Crothers: So right now there are two vacancies in Healthy Living and Healthy Populations; one is from retirement and another position opened after someone moved on. So we're currently recruiting right now.

Mr. Graydon: Were the staff in attendance hired through competition or by appointment?

Ms. Crothers: One of—in both instances these positions were competitions to get into the ADM position, and then it was made an appointment to the DM position after that.

* (15:00)

Mr. Graydon: Would the minister be so kind as to provide a list of all political staff, including names, positions and whether or not they're full time in the department? Would you do that going forward?

Ms. Crothers: Would you like me to get that right now and give it to you?

Mr. Graydon: Sorry, about that, Mr. Chair.

No, she can provide that at a later date, but certainly by the end of the week.

Ms. Crothers: Yes, that's fine. Absolutely, we'll give that to you.

Mr. Graydon: At the same time, would the minister provide me with a list of the total departmental staff?

Ms. Crothers: Of course.

Mr. Graydon: How many staff in the last year were hired on a contractual basis and, if so, for how long and for what projects?

Ms. Crothers: In this year no one was hired through a contract.

Mr. Graydon: How many positions have been relocated from northern Manitoba into Winnipeg and, if so, how many positions and what was the reasoning?

Ms. Crothers: We've moved no positions from the North.

Mr. Graydon: How has the RHA amalgamation affected total travel budgets of the RHA executives?

Ms. Crothers: We can get that information for you. It's not here with us at the moment, but if you would like, that's something we can certainly provide.

Mr. Graydon: That would be fine. I would appreciate that very much, Madam Minister.

How many hours has the minister spent out of the province while undertaking legislative duties?

Ms. Crothers: None.

Mr. Graydon: How many untendered contracts exceeding \$1,000 have been granted directly in the previous fiscal year, and what is the reasoning for the lack of tender?

Ms. Crothers: So we record all untendered contracts through—according to provincial requirements so we can get that information for you.

Mr. Graydon: If the minister would get me that information of what the untendered contracts were and at the same time provide the reasonings for the lack of tender, I would appreciate that.

Also, could the minister provide a copy of the awarded contracts and any special operating agencies that fall under its jurisdiction?

Ms. Crothers: We don't have any special operating agencies under Healthy Living and Seniors.

Mr. Graydon: Then can the minister provide me a copy of the awarded contracts?

Ms. Crothers: I've been asked for a little more guidance in terms of the specifics of what you are looking for, so we can get you exactly what you need.

Mr. Graydon: I had asked a question about the untendered contracts. There are tendered contracts as well, and I would like to have a copy of the awarded contracts and what they were for.

Ms. Crothers: We can get that for you, yes, thank you.

Mr. Graydon: And, at the same time, perhaps the minister would tell me how many of the contracts over \$1,000 are currently available.

Ms. Crothers: It's not a problem; we can provide that as well.

Mr. Graydon: Have there been any critical instances under the—this minister's watch since she became minister in her portfolio?

* (15:10)

Ms. Crothers: Thank you for your patience, sorry. One of the issues that I have discovered being Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors is that frequently things that are part of my purview have implications in Health, so I was just determining a couple of things before I answered.

So critical incident legislation requires reporting from facilities that are specific, like a very specific list of organizations—not organizations, but facilities like in-patient facilities when it comes to critical incidences. So in terms of people that would be at a facility that falls within my department, we'll have to—the staff here will look into any mental health in-patient facilities to see if there were any critical incidences listed there.

But we do have a—we do list on a website all of the critical incidences that take place. So we can get that information specifically for those that would seek services that fall under the Department of Healthy Living and Seniors.

Mr. Graydon: So these critical instances, when they do happen I assume that there is an investigation and there is some time prior to them being put up on the website. And then, do you then differentiate between your portfolio and Health's portfolio on the website?

Ms. Crothers: So, yes, there is definitely some time that's taken as the system investigates a critical incident, and I would say, also, that it takes time to determine if an incident is a critical incident before it would be posted.

Once it's determined that it is, it's reported in accordance with the legislation. When it's recorded, it's not split. I think my comments that I made before are much more from my perspective of determining when something falls within my department, or Health, in terms of critical incidents. If they're identified, they're reported. That's not split in any way and then those are reported on a periodic basis with the minister.

Mr. Graydon: If these are reported on a periodic time frame with the minister, then how do they ever get to be on the website?

Ms. Crothers: In terms of periodic, I mean, there are dates, so I'm looking right now at the website where these reports are listed, and so they go from, for

example, July 1st of 2014, is the one I'm looking at here, to September 30th, 2014, and the next one is April 1st, 2014, to June 30th, 2014. So they're collected over a period of time and posted as such.

Mr. Graydon: So it would appear, then, that this is a quarterly report, and that if the public were, in most cases, would know of a critical incident, would find that out in the paper unless we checked every quarterly report, because that seems to be the time frame that the minister has put forward.

I would like to ask the minister what reasoning she might be able to give the seniors that have been misled for three straight years about having complete education property tax relief.

Ms. Crothers: I'm not quite sure what you mean in terms of misleading.

* (15:20)

Mr. Graydon: Well, three years ago it was clear that that was the promise in the election that seniors would have a complete education property tax relief. Three years later that still has not taken place. It's been piecemeal, handed out, capped, and so how does the minister feel about misleading the seniors for such a long time?

Ms. Crothers: You know, I feel that seniors told us that they were looking for education tax rebate, and we have provided seniors the opportunity to do that. If you would like to take that up with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar), which is a more appropriate place for that, I encourage you to do so.

Mr. Graydon: So is the minister, then, suggesting that the Minister of Finance could tell me how the minister of seniors and healthy living feels about misleading the seniors for three years?

Ms. Crothers: No, what I am telling you is that I don't feel we've misled the seniors on the education tax rebate and I'm telling you that directly. So you don't need to ask him that question, but if you feel we've misled them, then maybe you can take that up with the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Graydon: So, when the election promise was made, was that only made with the minister of Finance? Or was it everyone in the NDP government that agreed with that election promise to completely remove it—remove the education property tax for seniors?

I need to better understand how government works. I'm new at this.

Ms. Crothers: I'm not going to speak for anyone else, but I'll speak for myself when I tell you that I believe in what we've done to help seniors by accessing this rebate and there's nothing else I can tell you. If you don't understand that, I'm sorry.

Mr. Chairperson: Just before recognizing the member for Emerson, I'll just remind everyone that questions and answers should go through the Chair rather than directly.

Mr. Graydon: Thank you very much for that, Mr. Chairman, and I'll try my best to do that.

Perhaps, then, the minister can explain to me, through the Chair, why its seniors have been misled for three straight years about balancing the budget. Why should anyone believe anything that—and especially the seniors believe anything that they're being told today?

Ms. Crothers: Mr. Chair, I'm going to tell you how I feel about seniors in Manitoba.

Manitoba seniors have helped build this province. They deserve to live with dignity and know that the services they count on are there for them. We have invested much funding into programs that help seniors. We have an Aging in Place strategy. We are committed to helping seniors stay in their homes longer and giving them options to continue to contribute to the social, civic and economic life of the community which benefits not only them, but the rest of us. We want them to be involved and engaged in their communities.

We're investing over \$9 million to provide approximately 140 new additional safe, affordable homes for seniors. This builds on our original commitment of more than 500 units that already were delivered over the past five years. Through a variety of programs we provide support to over 15,500 units of seniors housing across the province, and since we formed government in 1999 we've gone from only 69 supportive housing units for seniors in the whole province under opposition to over 700 today. And that's more than a tenfold increase that this government has provided to seniors compared to the members opposite.

And we've done more than that. We have invested in health care. Our long-term-care strategy includes \$200 million to build hundreds more personal-care-home beds, which I know the Minister of Health (Ms. Blady) has talked about as recently as today. We have a new, innovative rehabilitation program to quickly help seniors regain and maintain

their independence following an injury or surgery, and a new income protection benefit to make supportive housing an affordable alternative to a personal-care home for low-income seniors.

We've made additional commitments to help seniors improve their health and stay in their homes longer, including increasing home-care hours for clients who need the extra support, increasing the number of hospital home teams in Winnipeg which include health-care professionals making home visits to seniors in fragile health, expanding home care in Brandon with additional evening and weekend staffing to support seniors who are ready to go home from the hospital seven days per week, and continuing to expand prescription coverage under the Manitoba Pharmacare program, one of the most comprehensive drug programs in Canada.

And, in terms of affordability, we have also increased the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit, which is something that I feel very proud of. I wish more people knew about it. Maybe if some of the members opposite on the other side of the House would be happy to help us share that information with seniors, since they're so interested in providing them services. We also have the Seniors' School Tax Rebate, and I think that, combined with many of the things if not all of the things that I've just outlined, indicates that we're interested in providing supports to seniors in helping them to enjoy their retirement years.

And while I hear what the MLA here is saying, I cannot speak to his frustration or what he thinks we aren't doing. When I look at the amount of investments and the way we've listened to seniors and communicated with them and contributed and collaborated on a variety of things, I have no concerns at all that I need to convince him of anything, and I think at this point, Mr. Chair, if he still has an issue with it, it will be his own.

Mr. Graydon: Just to set the record straight, when the minister spoke of providing all of these extra PCH beds that have been mentioned now a couple of different times, there's a net of 68 in the last five years. So just for her information, I know that it's not her department, but at the same time, that is public statistical information she might want to keep in the back of her mind.

The question, Mr. Chair, is that the government conducted a—has the government conducted a study to analyze the detrimental effects to seniors regarding the recent broadening of the tax base and

also the associated hiking of the PST? How has that affected seniors?

Ms. Crothers: If you're asking—sorry—if the MLA is asking if we've done a study, we have not.

Mr. Graydon: Could I have the minister repeat that answer? I didn't quite get it.

Ms. Crothers: We have not.

Mr. Graydon: So the genuine concern, Mr. Chair, that the minister has for seniors is only limited to making announcements, not to find out what's really is an issue for them, what is costing them money, what is hurting them? That's not an issue for the minister. Just to make announcements. That seems to be what it is, then. So why has the Manitoba government refused to index the age exemption on the MB428 since 2003?

Ms. Crothers: You know, Mr. Chair, I'm not finished yet. You know, on Caregiver Recognition Day, we announced a 10 per cent increase to the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit for a maximum refundable credit eligibility for up to \$4,200 per year. That's over 1,750 primary caregivers that have benefited as of August 2015, and that's something we do keep track of.

We have doubled the Seniors' School Tax Rebate this year and senior homeowners can now save up to \$1,570 off their property taxes. This means that this year, nearly 24,000 senior households will no longer pay school taxes, and while this MLA may pooh-pooh that number and say that we don't really care about seniors, I think these numbers speak for themselves. We are committed to eliminating the school tax portion from principal residence property taxes for those ages 65 and over by 2016, and I know a number of seniors in my own community and beyond that I've talked with that are very appreciative of these things, and I know that that is a meaningful thing for them, and it is meaningful for me as a result.

* (15:30)

We value the great work that seniors before us have done. We are happy to do these things and to continue to work with seniors. I know I have advisory committees and other organizations and folks in the community that frequently give me advice on what they would like to see, and I'm happy to say that we have a very collaborative relationship and that they are key to helping this government

invest in these kinds of things and develop these kinds of things, frankly.

Mr. Graydon: I'm sure that the minister canvassed a lot of seniors, asking them if they wanted the sales tax broadened and, of course, the 14 per cent increase in the PST. I'm sure she canvassed a lot of them to get that type of information.

But I—the question I have for the minister, Mr. Chair, is: Why has the Manitoba government refused to index their age exemption clawbacks since 2003 but the federal government has increased their allowance by \$6,680 since then?

Ms. Crothers: You know, I have the opportunity, Mr. Chair, to deal with many issues in this department that have overlap with other departments, such as Housing, for example, and Health, as well as a number of other colleagues, and I frequently discuss the issues that seniors raise with me with those colleagues. So I have certainly had the opportunity to engage in discussions with other ministers on issues that impact both this department and theirs, and that has been very valuable.

So I suggest that, as those conversations have taken place, that the MLA might wish to pursue that line of questioning with the Department of Finance in the Committee of Supply, and he might be able to get a specific response, based on information that I've shared with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dewar), that will satisfy him.

Mr. Graydon: That's about the best non-answer I've had all day.

Would the minister agree that most of the patients or clients in the personal-care home are seniors?

Ms. Crothers: Yes, in personal-care homes the majority of folks that are in personal-care homes are seniors, but not all are. There are some individuals that might be in a personal-care home for other reasons, such as acquired brain injury, or maybe they've suffered some kind of catastrophic injury. So there are others that might be in a personal-home along with seniors.

Mr. Graydon: The—I thank the minister for the answer because she's quite right, but the majority of the patients, clients, people in the PCHs are seniors and I think we can all agree that there is quite a waiting list for them as well.

But, as the minister pointed before, she was quick to point out that, oh, well, we've done this and

we've done that and we've done this, but since the amalgamation of the RHAs what we've noticed and seen is that not only are the residents, the seniors in Manitoba, been burdened with the broadening of the taxes, the raising of the PST by 14 per cent, but now they're burdened for user fees or rentals for essential equipment in the PCHs where they weren't charged for these items in the past.

Can the minister explain why there's a user fee now?

Ms. Crothers: I'd like some more clarity. Can you provide a specific example?

Mr. Graydon: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I just get so excited sometimes I forget myself.

But one of them would be a lift sling.

* (15:40)

Ms. Crothers: Yes, so if there is a device or a product that's provided by a personal-care home, but a client has asked for a different brand, for example, the department is aware that there have been examples of a personal-care home requesting that a client pay for that product if it's different than the one that's offered in the personal-care home.

However, if there is a specific casework or a concern that the family has, we'd be happy to look into it.

Mr. Graydon: I would say to the minister that there has been some and they have been brought forward in the past, and the equipment was recommended by the physician to be changed in order to deal with the individuals. The relatives were not only asked but forced to pay the additional costs. That didn't happen in the past, and so I would be happy to provide it again for the minister's department. It has been provided in the past.

However, going forward, does the government have any plans to institute a home renovation tax credit for retrofit catering to seniors' suites?

Ms. Crothers: I am aware that there is a program in Housing to retrofit granny suites; however, I think that the question that's being asked is one that would be appropriate to raise with the correct department, which is Finance.

Mr. Graydon: And then, perhaps, the minister can explain to me the program, because she thought that I should be promoting a program that I haven't heard of about seniors and I don't know whether that's family care or—what was your terminology for the

program that I haven't heard of, so perhaps there's lots of people in the province that haven't heard of it either.

Ms. Crothers: Well, I'm really happy that the MLA raised this again, because I think that the point that I was attempting to make was that we have many great programs in this province—many great programs in this province—that help seniors, and I'm not sure that all the MLAs in the Legislature are keen to share some of the good programs that we have in place that will benefit their seniors.

In fact, I know—quite recently I went to a assisted living establishment and had a fantastic—I was invited by some seniors that lived there, and I had an excellent meeting with them. I sat with them for about an hour and a half, about 12 folks from Portsmouth living establishment.

And when we were discussing some of their concerns, I was happy to show them that we had programs in place that responded to many of the concerns that they have, and very surprisingly, one of them volunteered that they had talked to their MLA, asking for some advice and some guidance on where they could find information, and the MLA from that area responded that there was really nothing.

And so I asked if they had seen the Seniors' Guide and they had not seen the Seniors' Guide and I'm quite sure that every member of our Chamber has seen the Seniors' Guide, because I know my predecessor has talked about it in great detail. And, as they were surprised that their MLA didn't point them in that direction, I made sure that the very next day we had 30 copies hand delivered to that establishment and made sure that not only did each of the people I met with could have one, but I made sure that there were enough for them to share with other members of Portsmouth.

So, when I referenced earlier having programs in place that would be nice for this MLA and others to share, I think it's important to remember that we're here for all Manitobans and, in this case, we have information that would be very beneficial for seniors who sometimes don't have an interest or a comfort level to go on the internet and google something to see if it's available for them, which is why we print hard copies of the Seniors' Guide to make sure that they have access to not only the programs, but a toll-free number that they can call and get some guidance and help on. I don't know about this MLA or any others on the other side of the House, but I do

know that when someone comes to me and asks for help, I make sure I look into what we have available for them, because the most important thing is helping Manitobans. It's not important whether they are a supporter of mine, and it's certainly not important for me to get some kind of one-upmanship on a political party and deny people access to information that would actually benefit their lives.

Mr. Graydon: Now, if the minister could answer the question. The program that she specifically referred to—would be nice to have that answer.

Ms. Crothers: Well, since I didn't just mention one, I mentioned many, I'll tell them to you all again because I think, clearly, you didn't hear it the first time.

So we have, in terms of Aging in Place, we are investing over \$9 million to provide approximately 140 new, additional, safe, affordable homes for seniors. This builds on our original commitment of more than 500 units already delivered over the past five years. Through a variety of programs, we provide supports to over 15,500 units of seniors housing across the province, and I'd be happy to get the Minister of Housing to provide that information to this MLA if he's not sure what those programs are.

And we have increased supportive housing units for seniors in our time in government dramatically, more than tenfold from their 69 to our 700.

As well, in terms of our long-term health-care strategy, we are investing \$200 million to build more personal-care-home beds and facilities.

We have a new innovation—innovative rehabilitation program to help seniors regain and maintain their independence following an injury or a surgery.

We have a new income-protection benefit to make supportive housing an affordable alternative to a personal-care home for low-income seniors.

We have increased homecare hours for clients; that's a good thing to be able to share with your constituents if they are in need of that.

We've increased the number of hospital home teams, and that includes health-care professionals making home visits to seniors who are in fragile health, and we continue to expand prescription coverage under the Manitoba Pharmacare program.

As well, in case he didn't catch it the first time, the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit was increased, and we've doubled the senior school tax rebate.

* (15:50)

Now, if there's anything specific that he feels he hasn't received, I'd be happy to share that with him, and I can even put it on paper if that would make it any easier.

Thank you.

Mr. Graydon: We will have a specific question for her as we go forward, Mr. Chair, and it may not be today, but she'll like it.

Does the government have any plans to place—in place to begin publicly funding, subsidizing, insulin pumps for all Manitobans?

Ms. Crothers: We do currently provide insulin pumps for children, and there are tax credits available for medical expenses, and at this point that is what we have in place.

Mr. Graydon: Why has the rural Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program service not seen a funding increase since the inception in 2001?

Ms. Crothers: So this department provides funding to something called Transportation Options Network for Seniors, or TONS, and that funding is meant to be—it's a grant for municipalities. It's meant for municipalities so that they can plan their transportation in their local area and they would work with stakeholders. So that funding is to help them with planning in terms of the specific company that the MLA stated.

I can do some follow-up with the minister responsible for funding for those types of organizations. It's probably through municipalities, and I'm happy to share that information with the minister.

* (16:00)

Mr. Graydon: And I would appreciate if she would share the results of her conversation with me going forward.

At the same time I think the minister and I both agree that seniors—a lot of people volunteer to work with seniors, and that's great. The seniors appreciate that; they need a lot of volunteers. They certainly cut the costs of health care, for certain, in all departments when people that are capable of helping do help and step up to the plate to do that. And it keeps some of the seniors that are active—it keeps them active and healthy, as well.

I'm wondering why the criminal record checks and vulnerable persons checks, essential documents required to promote volunteerism, are prohibitively expensive in the city of Winnipeg relative to the RCMP checks in rural communities. Has the government looked into addressing this discrepancy? Has the minister, in her department, looked into addressing that discrepancy?

Ms. Crothers: This is something that I would be happy to look into with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) and to ask this question, and also to seek advice from the Minister of Justice, and then I'd be happy to circle back with the MLA.

Mr. Graydon: If I could give the minister some advice, I would ask her to mention to the Minister of Justice that it would be better to come down instead of go up in costs. It would be beneficial to her department; it would be beneficial to the health-care system and very, very beneficial to the seniors.

My question—next question is how many calls did the seniors abuse helpline respond to over the last year.

Ms. Crothers: Okay, so calls to the Seniors Abuse Support Line, this is between the dates of April 1st, 2014, and March 31st of 2015: 666 calls. There's also the A & O support services for older adults elder abuse services line, and between those same dates they have 815 clients.

Mr. Graydon: We've heard the minister claim that she is and her government have been very age friendly, and with these types of numbers of calls I'm quite sure that she's aware that there's a number of abuses that go unreported. We hear them as we tour a lot of the seniors' facilities, people say, well, what's the point or who do I trust.

And it's—I know in the seniors facility that my mother was in there was a number of thefts that went on, and finally a lady had lost a brand new dress and it showed up at lunch the next day on another body. And they returned a ring the next day that belonged to my great-grandmother that was taken from my mother's suite. It was never reported, because what's the point, my mom said; why should I, because they aren't going to do anything anyway. And it took over a year for this to take place.

So we know that there's lots of unreported different types of abuse, and it prompted me to bring in a bill, Bill 205, the seniors rights act, and it was voted against by this minister and her government. How can she claim to be age friendly when there's so

many reported cases and many, many more that aren't reported?

* (16:10)

Ms. Crothers: Absolutely any Manitoban that's experiencing physical, psychological or financial abuse is something that we want to end, and we certainly want to encourage all Manitobans to be kind to our seniors. But often, as the member indicated, when older Manitobans experience abuse, they don't talk about it because they could be afraid or embarrassed or they don't know where to go for help, and we certainly want to make sure that they're as well supported as possible and removed from abusive situations or find ways to end that abuse.

In 2002 we established a comprehensive Provincial Elder Abuse Strategy and it helps support the Senior's Abuse Support Line which we've discussed already. We also have the Safe Suite Program, which provides emergency accommodations to older adults who are experiencing abuse. We have Prevent Elder Abuse Manitoba, a provincial network that promotes information and awareness on how to prevent elder abuse, and it also helps us get the word out about where you can go and what number you can call to seek help if you yourself, as a senior, are experiencing abuse or if you have family members who are concerned that abuse is taking place.

An A & O: Support Services for Older Adults that my department works with to provide elder abuse counselling services is another agency I'm happy to partner with.

Now, when we came into office we took action to make personal-care homes safer, and that's why we created the Protection for Persons in Care Office in 2001 and in 2005 put in place rigorous PCH standards to address the kinds of issues that the member has raised here. And we've also added over 1,000 PCH and supportive housing beds and have hundreds more in development right now to ensure our loved ones can age safely and closer to home, and we have hired hundreds more nurses and health-care aides to our personal-care homes to ensure that each resident gets more dedicated staff time.

Each and every PCH is visited every two years to be inspected against standards that include infection control and ensuring a safe and secure resident environment. We introduced unannounced inspections in 2004 and have since increased the frequency of these visits. Should a facility not meet a

standard, they are required to develop an action plan within 60 days and implement it within another 60 days. So we're committed to ensuring that the Protection for Persons in Care Office operates as intended to independently investigate any allegations of any kind of abuse of a person in care, be they between residents, involving family members or staff in any designated health facility.

So, in light of the example that the member has provided, I would say that if that situation wasn't resolved satisfactorily it should be brought to the attention of the minister responsible for PCHs or to me, as he has, and I'd be happy to share that with that department and that minister to follow up, because we want to make sure that our seniors, wherever they live, feel that if there is something that is making them uncomfortable or if there is someone that's hurting them that we address it quickly and make sure that they can move on to enjoy the rest of their retirement years.

Mr. Graydon: Well, I thank the minister for that.

There are a number of things that—making seniors uncomfortable, and one of them was the broadening of the PST, the other was the raising of the PST. And it's nice to know that the minister is willing to address that going forward and I hope that she is—has good luck doing that and perhaps she can have something change very quickly.

I would ask the minister, how many communities in Manitoba are now considered to be age-friendly?

Ms. Crothers: One—over 100.

Mr. Graydon: Could the minister provide me with a list of them, not today, but going forward could she provide me with a list of those?

Ms. Crothers: I'd be happy to.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Chairman, the—one of the big issues that we hear—and I've heard it from my family members, but also heard it from many members in seniors housing and especially in support of—and supportive living or assisted living facilities—but not necessarily just that. But in the southeast after the amalgamation of the RHAs the south central and the south east RHA the ambulance fees rose dramatically, and what I'm hearing from a number of seniors is when there's an issue don't call an ambulance—don't call an ambulance, I can't afford it. I don't have the money, don't call them. That isn't

helpful for seniors at all, ever, the stress that they can't afford this.

So what is the minister doing to combat that rising ambulance fee?

Mr. Matt Wiebe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

* (16:20)

Ms. Crothers: Yes, I want to thank the member for raising this. This is something that concerns me as well, and I'm sure I'm not alone.

But I do want to highlight that the provincial Manitoba EMS system report was released to the public in April 2013, and the purpose of the report was to examine emergency medical services system in Manitoba and develop recommendations for prehospital patient care and interfacility transport system that is integrated, responsive, reliable, equitable and sustainable for Manitobans.

And we know that when you look at emergency services across the province, it becomes quite complex because depending on where this—the service is provided, it's provided by different groups. So, for example, in the city of Winnipeg, it's the City that provides ambulatory services. In other areas, it's some RHAs. We know that there are some First Nations groups that have their own ambulatory service. So, if we're looking at implementing the recommendations, then we are changing and working with a variety of groups to change the fees.

So the EMS report provided 54 recommendations which were accepted by then-minister of Health Theresa Oswald, and in June of 2013 a provincial EMS task force was struck, achieving the first recommendation of the EMS report, which was to do that. And the review task force is chaired by the ADM, regional policy and programs, and membership includes the executive director, health emergency management; director of EMS branch; Manitoba Health comptroller; CEO, Prairie Mountain Health; associate EMS medical director; director, Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre; Red River College; paramedic, northern RHA; paramedic, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service; rural EMS manager representative; and a Winnipeg RHA representative.

And of the 54 recommendations, implementation has been completed for 20 of those, 23 are in process and 11 have proposals either in the planning phase or approved but haven't been implemented.

But I know that fees certainly was one of these recommendations that we will be moving on.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Before I recognize the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), just like to remind all members that when referring to other members of the Assembly, refer them—to them by their constituency name or portfolio.

Mr. Graydon: I thank the minister for acknowledging that the fees are all over the board and what—but people are being overcharged for them, there's no question about that. I look forward to her addressing that in the near future.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

I mean, after all, the seniors have—they have paid in advance with the broadening of the PST and the raising of the PST. They have—and not having the education tax rebate done as it was supposed to be done; it's only been done partially.

But I—moving on, I'd—the question I have for the minister is: There was an Alzheimer's framework that was put forward, a wonderful document. We on this side of the House agree that this document was one of the greatest documents that we have seen in a long time, and we wonder why the government fails so dismally to implement it.

And what's the government's response to achieving a scathing grade on the report card provided on behalf of the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba?

* (16:30)

Ms. Crothers: I would like to thank the member from Emerson for raising the—this Alzheimer's framework. In Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors in partnership with Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and in consultation with various stakeholders, including the Alzheimer's Society of Manitoba, we developed the renewed strategy entitled, Manitoba's Framework for Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias which the member just referenced.

The framework is reflective of other existing provincial initiatives and will serve as a roadmap over the next five years to guide Manitoba's health system planning and investment to improve care and support for Manitobans with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in their families. So the framework was released publically on June 13th, 2014, which was only last year, and it is a five-year plan. So we

are implementing things over the five years that the plan indicates; we'll be implementing them.

And the framework outlines recommendations in five key areas that follow the responses to dementia, that people would experience in their dementia journey including raising awareness and understanding, early recognition, initial assessment and diagnosis, management, care and support, end-of-life care, and research and evaluation.

A number of opportunities for improvements in care and services for those affected by dementia have been identified through a collaborative process and validated through focused consultations with caregivers and service providers. Excuse me. Healthy Living and Seniors will continue to work with the establish framework development and implementation advisory committee to prioritize initiatives for implementation.

The framework also builds on investments made to provide information, education and supports to people and families affected by Alzheimer's disease or related dementia, and that includes training for people that are working in personal-care homes and other facilities. The Province has provided more than \$630,000 over three years to the ASM to support the delivery of the First Link program. After three years, an evaluation of the program was conducted and showed positive results which demonstrates evidence that the program is valuable and making a difference in the lives of those with dementia and for their caregivers.

As a result, Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors has confirmed ongoing funding to support the program beyond 2015-16. Five hundred and nineteen referrals to the program were received in 2014-15, and this program links individuals and families with services and support as soon as possible after diagnosis. Formal referral by physicians and health professionals allows for proactive support from ASM to help the family better cope with its situation. Supports available include information, support groups, education sessions and referral to other health resources as needed. While physicians and health-care providers can make referrals via First Link, individuals and their families can also contact ASM directly for assistance.

Since 2008, the government of Manitoba has supported the implementation of a comprehensive dementia-care education program. The P.I.E.C.E.S. training program has been the preferred method of

engaging PCH staff in dementia-care education. The program has been delivered through a partnership between the WRHA and the ASM. In 2011, the Province announced expansion of the P.I.E.C.E.S. dementia education to include workers in other care sectors, such as the home-care program. However, excuse me, prior to investing in expansion of the program, it was deemed necessary to conduct an assessment of its impact and effectiveness. I'm sorry, excuse me. I'm not done. Sorry. Overall, P.I.E.C.E.S. has been well received by participants. Thank you very much.

Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors continues to work with various stakeholders through the frameworks DIAC, the Continuing Care council and directly with the regional health authorities to problem solve around the delivery of dementia education. We are collaborating with stakeholders—thank you so much—to develop an approach that can reach a greater number of staff in a cost-effective, sustainable manner for the entire province. The approach still continues to use P.I.E.C.E.S. training along with other methods and tools; funds have flowed to the RHAs to develop educational models that work best for them.

Manitoba's been recognized as a leader in respect to its support of caregivers. Manitoba's Primary Caregiver Tax Credit provides a refundable credit of up to \$1,400 a year to people who act as primary caregivers for spouses, relatives, neighbours or friends who live at home. Additionally,

The Caregiver Recognition Act was proclaimed in 2011 with overall purpose to develop a framework to support caregivers. Since its proclamation, the act has led to increased awareness and recognition of the needs of caregivers, the establishment of a caregiver advisory council, the development of an inter-departmental working group, the creation of a minister's report, and the completion of consultation on caregivers' needs. Advancing Continuing Care: A Blueprint to Support System Change also includes many dementia-care-related initiatives.

And I just would like to remind the member that this is a five-year plan and we're only in the first year. We have worked with the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba in developing this plan and I'm sure that they would understand, as well, that as we continue to implement the recommendations from the framework, that it is going to take time to implement them, but we will get there.

Mr. Graydon: I just want to respond to the minister and thank her very much for not answering the question, and she can explain that to the Alzheimer Society that she has got more five-year plans than anybody else. But thank her very much for participating today, and I'll turn it over to my colleague.

Mr. Chairperson: Well, I have to give the minister an opportunity to respond if she would like.

Ms. Crothers: There's no need.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): We're ready to move to the appropriations on this department, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Very good.

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

Resolution 21.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$34,050,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Provincial Policy and Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,578,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Health Workforce Secretariat, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

* (16:40)

Resolution 21.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$27,634,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Public Health and Primary Health Care, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,690,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Regional Policy and Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$47,852,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Healthy Living and Seniors, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,317,671,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Health Services Insurance Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$185,403,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Capital Funding, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,744,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 21.10: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$664,000 for Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates in this department is item 21.1.(a) the ministers' salary, as contained in resolution 21.1.

The floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Chair, I would move that line item 21.1.(a) be reduced to 37.001, and I would indicate that what we are doing with that—[interjection] Oh, sorry.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Charleswood that line item 21.1.(a) be reduced to thirty-seven dollars point—cents. It's a period.

Mr. Goertzen: Matter of clarification?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Goertzen: Looking at the member's motion, I think that there is a punctuation issue and it should be \$37,001. She's more generous than her initial motion suggested.

Mr. Chairperson: I think we need to amend the motion or remove, drop it and remove it.

I'll turn it over to the honourable member for Charleswood to sort this out.

The honourable member for Charleswood has the floor.

Mrs. Driedger: Thank you. I would move that line item 21.1.(a) be reduced to \$37,001.

Mr. Chairperson: It's always good to be punctual.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is in order.

Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Chair, we would just like to indicate that the reduction in salary is pertaining to the Minister of Health's (Ms. Blady) failures in health care and that we are only putting forward a recommendation of her salary to be increased by \$1. This does not affect the salary of the Minister of Healthy Living.

So we just want to be clear on that, and the reason we are recommending that the salary for the Minister of Health be dropped is because of the many failures that are current still in our health-care system, and there are some very serious challenges and she has not addressed them.

Mr. Chairperson: Are there any further comments or debate on the motion?

Seeing none, committee is ready for the question.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I heard a no. *[interjection]* There was a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my honest opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: Recorded vote, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has—a formal vote has been requested by two members.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now recess to allow this matter to be reported, and for members to proceed to the Chamber for the vote.

If the bells continue past 5 o'clock, this section will consider to have risen for the day.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

* (14:40)

Mr. Chairperson (Jim Maloway): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Jobs and the Economy. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): It's great to be back in Estimates again, and just wanted to ask the minister some questions surrounding some comparisons between the Estimates book from this year as compared to last year. And it's really just probably more for just clarification on my part, just, sort of, understanding how it all works.

I noted on page 4 of the Estimates book from this year, as compared to page 4 of last year, it says that the mission of the department—to achieve its mission the department is organized in five divisions. And, in the Estimates book from last year, the five areas are the Administration and Finance Division, the Business Services Division, the Workforce Development and Income Support Division, international relations and trades division, Business Transformation and Technology.

And I note in the Estimates book from this year, it also says that there are organize—that it's organized in five divisions. But it seems to only list four divisions there and one that is omitted is the Business Transformation and Technology. Just wondering,

was—is that just a typo or is there something that is missing here?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Jobs and the Economy): I thank the member for the question.

I just want to say for the record, say for the member, that I'm here joined by Craig Halwachs, assistant deputy minister of corporate services; Jan Forster, the assistant deputy minister of Workforce Development and Income Support; and Amy Thiessen, the acting executive director of finance and accountability; and Hugh Eliasson, as well, is the deputy minister for Jobs and the Economy.

I want to thank the member for the question. She is correct. The—there is a typo. It should—on page 4 it should read: to achieve its mission, the department is organized in four divisions. The business transmission and technology division has been transferred to Finance, and it's part of this year's budget.

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank you to the minister for clarifying that for me.

In the transfer over to the Department of Finance, did the jobs follow that as well, and if the jobs did follow with the division over there, were there any changes? Is it still the same number of people that are employed in that department?

Mr. Chief: Thank the member for the question.

Yes, the jobs did follow with—the staff did transfer there. It is the same number as the time of the transfer.

Mrs. Stefanson: Can the minister indicate—I did want to ask—it does say on—just on page 5 that—not reflected in this chart is—the Manitoba Development Corporation. I know that that has been the same in other years as well. Where does that fall under within this organizational chart, though? Who would be responsible for that?

* (14:50)

Mr. Chief: Thanks for the question. The Manitoba Development Corporation, as a Crown corporation, produces its own annual report. I am the minister responsible for the Manitoba Development Corporation. The member can find it on page 6, The Manitoba Development Corporation Act, D 60.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm just wondering, is there a specific assistant deputy minister that oversees that, or is that—or, a deputy minister who oversees that?

Mr. Chief: Yes. There's a board that consists of civil servants. The chair of the board is our Deputy

Minister, Hugh Eliasson, the—another member of the board is the secretary of Treasury Board. Also, there's our director of Financial Services, is on the board. There is no staff for that board. The department staff are the ones who carry out the duties for the Manitoba Development Corporation board.

Mrs. Stefanson: Also, missing out of the org chart is the Manitoba Education, Research and Learning Information Networks, known as MERLIN.

Did that also get transferred over to the Department of Finance?

Mr. Chief: That's correct.

Mrs. Stefanson: Just flipping over, and, again, I'm just, sort of, looking for clarification, trying to understand some of the numbers here.

If we switch over to page 13 of the Estimates book, under Financial and Administrative Services, if you look at—it says 31 full-time employees at \$2.042 million, and if you look at the Estimates—and that's for, sorry, 2014-2015. If I look at the estimate of expenditures for last year, it had the same number of employees, again, it's also the estimates of expenditure under 2014-15, it has two million point oh-one-eight.

Why would there be a difference in those two numbers when both are Estimates of the expenditure and both are the same year?

Mr. Chief: I just want to ask the member, she referenced the number two-one-oh-eight. We're just trying to—where did you reference that from?

Mrs. Stefanson: Yes, it's actually two-oh-one-eight and it was referenced from the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for 2014-15 from the department—or from the expenditure Estimates book from last year.

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question.

So it is the—so there is the same amount of staff, but when someone leaves they're often replaced with somebody else that comes in with a different salary amount. Often that salary amount is usually lower, not always, so the adjustment was made to reflect the overall change in the salaries.

Mrs. Stefanson: And can I just ask: Who is the staff person who left and—the name of the staff person who left and who is the new staff person who came in?

Mr. Chief: So I don't think there would be just one person that—it could be a number of people, you know, for a number of reasons, you know, someone goes on maternity leave or they get another job, but we'll get the number of people and I'll get that information for the member as soon as we possibly can.

Mrs. Stefanson: I think the member—the minister for that.

* (15:00)

I'm wondering also if he could indicate, both on the political staff side as well as the civil servant side, if he could indicate whether or not there was a movement of staff away and a movement, you know, if some of your political staff, for example, have left and gone to work elsewhere, if they did and where did they go and who has replaced them.

This is probably some information that you'll probably have to get back to me on, and that's fine. But, also, if you're looking into who left specifically here and who's replaced, if we could do that just across the board and just say who has left the department, where have they gone and who has replaced them.

Mr. Chief: I'm going to try to give the member as much info as I can now. I do want to say for the record, though, I will be able to be, you know, forthcoming with some more information. We—I'm not sure if—the people who left, but I do want to just put on the record who's currently working with me.

Clair Cerilli is our project manager; Delaney Coelho is our special assistant; Jim Thompson's our executive assistant. So those—they would be political staff.

Annachie Baskier-Pasternak is our intake co-ordinator. He's not political staff. He's with the minister's office and he deals directly with phone calls in the public, helps route them to the appropriate supports in the department.

Kathy Dobriansky's our scheduling co-ordinator and secretary to the minister. She deals with scheduling meetings, tours. Kathy did replace our former—the former scheduling co-ordinator, Linda Freed, who retired.

Sheila Babaian, the administrative secretary. She deals with day-to-day administrative tasks such as

answering incoming phone calls to the office, correspondence and routing and tracking information to and from the department. Sheila replaced Alison DePauw, the former administrative assistant.

Vivian Jack is our correspondence secretary. She logs and processes all signature items, including outgoing correspondence, Cabinet and Treasury Board submissions, various certificates and agreements, proclamations, monitors pending status, manages archiving and AIMS maintenance. She also acts as backup to scheduling co-ordinator and helps with answering, screening and redirecting telephone calls. And Vivian replaced former correspondence secretary, Cindy Field.

So that's some of the information I have. I will—but I will—I know there is more information that I can find with regards to the member's question, and I will certainly get her the answers to that question.

Mrs. Stefanson: I appreciate the minister getting that information to me.

Just another clarification on the numbers, just in the Estimates of Expenditure for 2014-15 as listed on page 13 of this year's Estimates book, it states, just at the bottom of the list of the number of full-time employees, it says a total of 344.8 employees. And if—again, if we look at the Estimates of Expenditure from last year for 2014-15, it indicates there's 339.8.

I'm just wondering if you could indicate why that would be the—why there would be a difference there. Does that mean that five more people have—were hired on at some point during the year before the end of the year?

* (15:10)

Mr. Chief: So, to the member's question, there were five positions that were transferred in from elsewhere in government that came into our department, and that's why there's an adjustment there.

Mrs. Stefanson: And I'll just note that this year, there's four—or, sorry, three less employees. Where were those people transferred in from first, and then was it the same people that were transferred elsewhere? I'm just trying to—because there were three losses.

Mr. Chief: So the transfers in came from the Department of Family Services and the—there was a reduction for three positions.

Mrs. Stefanson: So where was the deduction of those three positions? I'm just trying to see—it should

be indicated here somewhere, but I do see that there was an increase from 16 full-time employees to 21 in employment income and rental assistance service delivery, again, over—from one Estimates book to the next. So that's the five more. But where were the loss of the three, I guess? I guess one was from employment income and rental assistance. Where were the other two?

Oh, I'm just looking. I think I see it now. Never mind. Easy question.

Mr. Chief: If I can go through, but I—do you—are you good with the answer?

An Honourable Member: Yes, I think so. Yes.

Mr. Chief: Okay.

Mrs. Stefanson: Yes, no, I think I see. I appreciate that. I do see the changeover in staff from last year to this year, so I've got the answer to that and understand the other area as well.

So I'd like to just move on to page 14, really just a very quick question here, and I'm going to pass the floor over to my colleague from Portage la Prairie, who, I know, has some questions as well. But I did want to ask, under International Relations on page 14, if you look at the Estimates of expenditures again from 2014-15 in this year's Estimates book, if you compare it to last year, there were 11—there were 10 employees last year for the same 907,000 but there's 11 that is indicated in this year's. Can you just explain that to me, please?

Mr. Chief: So the increase of one is in the office of the military envoy, the support staff.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm just wondering why, and again just for clarification, there's an increase in an employee but the amount stays the same from last year. But then—and then for the Estimates of expenditures for 2015-16 it goes down from 907 to 903. Can you just explain that to me?

Mr. Chief: Yes, the—so the difference would be is a—you know, the consequence of staff turnover. So it's—it would be something similar to what we talked about in terms of bringing somebody on that might come in at a reduced salary or a different salary.

Mrs. Stefanson: So I—and just again before I hand the floor over to the member for Portage la Prairie, I'd asked the minister earlier to get the information about those who have come in the department and the names of those and those who have left. So

would that be—that should be part of the information that you will get me—or that he will get me?

Mr. Chief: We can get you a number on that, yes.

Mrs. Stefanson: Is it possible to get the names or is that not something that can be disclosed?

Mr. Chief: We'll certainly look into—to see if we can provide names. If we can then we will, and if we can't then we can't. But we'll certainly look into that.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I have a few questions around trade relations and international relations file, in particular related to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the negotiations that occurred.

What is your role? Do you—how closely do you monitor the negotiation process and are there updates regularly?

* (15:20)

Mr. Chief: I thank the member for the question.

So I'm sure as the member knows, the—when it comes to international trade agreements, those are led by, of course, the federal government, but we do have a branch in our department called Policy Planning and Coordination. The director in that branch would have extensive experience and expertise in trade negotiations.

There are—there is a staff member there responsible for representing Manitoba at the table. That staff person, as well as the director, would obviously pay close attention to what's going on in an international agreement and, when possible, they would provide input for any interest that we see that Manitoba would have to the federal negotiator for the international trade agreement.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that.

So, is there still a regular process of updates that would go back to the sectors that were impacted? There was a time during trade negotiations when there were regular updates provided to the sector as negotiations went forward. Is that still done?

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question.

So the federal government would have a process where they would consult with stakeholders. They would, you know, look to give updates, provide, you know, feedback, get some advice. So you have the federal government doing that, but Manitoba, as well, would be, as much as possible and when we

can, also provide a Manitoba voice to that process and, you know, do the same things, consult, provide information, try to get regular updates, work with people on that.

When possible, we do our best to make sure that we're doing that in a co-ordinated way. You know, we do recognize that, particularly with international trade agreements, some of these things can happen fast; things move pretty quick, and trying to get details from—as you know, if you get details from one person and the more it passes down through another can at times cause confusion.

So what we do try to do, although there is two processes where the federal government has one way of working with stakeholders and providing information, Manitoba wants to continue to make sure our voice is heard in that. But we do work as closely as we can with the federal representative and the federal government to make sure that that information and that feedback and—is provided in the most co-ordinated way to alleviate any confusion or, if there are problems that arise, that we're trying to do it as best we can at that point.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that, and I'll leave that for now.

I just wanted to touch on a few of the tax credits that you have listed here, and what I'm curious about is how much uptake is there in some of these things like Small Business Venture Capital Tax Credit, the labour-sponsored investment fund program, Commercialization Support for Business Program.

Can you provide us with some information in terms of the amount of usage and whether that has risen or dropped over the years?

*(15:30)

Mr. Chief: Yes, I want to thank the member for the question.

The small business 'ventuder'—venture capital tax is very popular. In fact, there was a 30 to 45 per cent increase in 2014. There's a high level of activity with that tax credit. You know, the scope and scale of the tax credit, of course, depends on the size of the company, the success rate of the company. The Commercialization Support for Business, I can let the member know, is incredibly popular.

We continue to work with people in the business community. We work with start-up companies. So these are the kind of things that we consistently hear, that they are making a difference. In fact, just this

morning we heard from one company that was at Yes! Winnipeg that is using the Small Business Venture Capital Tax Credit, and it was probably, they said, one of the single important things for the success and prosperity of that company, and it's continuing to grow.

The Commercialization Support for Business, I can let the member know that I hear consistently, and these are some of the things that we heard from the business community and we were able to do. Another great example is our digital media tax credit where we just—not only did we do it with the advice from people in the business, particularly and, of course, with digital media and Innovation Tech, but they asked us to renew that and we were able to do that. And when you look at the combination of all these things, and I've been able to share, and I think all members, including the member from Portage la Prairie, I know, would be proud when he goes down to Innovation Alley where you see that Winnipeg is becoming a hub of start-up companies for innovation tech. A part of that success, of course, is when you listen to what the advice from start-up companies are. It's from these things—and that's why we continue to do them. In fact, you know, in Winnipeg you got the SkiptheDishes. So, you know, the member doesn't even have to leave his home here in Winnipeg and he can get food from anywhere, and that's one of the fastest growing start-ups in the country.

So we're seeing an incredible amount of success stories. People who are using the digital media tax credit, as an example, I mean, these guys are working literally all over the world. They're working with Disney and Nickelodeon and major companies; they're working with NASA. So, I mean, these are—these tax credits do make a difference and do give the support that these start-up companies have, and we continue to work closely with members of—people like Dave Angus and Michael Legary and Chris Johnson and the list goes on and on of people who helped us with this and continue to use them, and I tell you, it's one of the most exciting things that goes on for young people is innovation tech.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for those answers.

I did want to ask a few questions around the Canada-Manitoba labour market development agreement. And, of course, given my critic's role where I work with a lot of the people that are on income assistance, I do find it, and they find it, often very confusing how to get from income assistance

through the process of training and back into the workplace. It seems as though we go from someone who's there to help them with the EIA process and then there is not a solid stream of follow through to get them back into the workplace through the training process, through any other assistance that they might need, which includes things like housing and child care.

Can the minister comment on whether he has staff or through this agreement there are staff available to actually work with individual case files, or is this a general agreement in nature and doesn't work specific?

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member from Portage, I know that he does spend a lot of time supporting some of those vulnerable people in his—in the area he represents and beyond. And I know that he often brings—making sure that we're doing everything we can to support those people, and I appreciate that. I do want to let the member know that we do provide individual support to individuals to try to make the system, and remove as many barriers as we can to make it as seamless as possible for them.

You know, I do say it's a big system, so if there is ever a time that he feels he knows somebody, a constituent or somebody beyond that is struggling, I would commit to him that if he brought that information forward to me, I would certainly, you know, move forward on it to get the support that's necessary as the member knows. I represent Point Douglas and I probably have one of the busiest offices when it comes to both employment insurance and EIA, but to his question, we do provide that individual support.

That individual support may not directly come from the labour market development agreement, but it's certainly in place and we have put a tremendous amount of effort to making sure that we're doing everything we can to remove barriers, to try to make it as seamless and as less confusing as possible coming into our system. So if there is at anything at any point that the member needs, I would certainly just let him know to let us know and we would move on that very fast.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that offer. He may regret it because the Minister of Family Services (Ms. Irvin-Ross) describes me as her most frequent correspondent. So we can shift some of those over to, possibly, to you.

Area Rent Assist and the programs now starting to be in place, and of course anyone who's on income assistance that is eligible is flagged fairly quickly, but there are, of course, people beyond income assistance. I just wondered if the minister could make us familiar with how they're reaching out to those people and informing them of the potential that they may be eligible for this program?

* (15:40)

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member for the question. So we are trying to increase the amount of people who know about the Rent Assist program. We try to do that in a number of ways.

One of the ways in which we do it is, people who are currently in the system, we want to make sure that they know about the low income, so, you know, they would know immediately from there. We certainly would let them, the people that are in the system, know to let their family members know, to let other individuals know to do that.

As the member knows, we have very strong and robust non-profit organizations that we work quite closely with, everything from family resource centres to poverty groups to labour, including, actually, members of our business community and from programs like Manitoba Works!

So we're trying to share that as much as we can with people who work directly with people in the community. And so we'll continue to do that. In fact, I've been able to meet often with members of the community to provide that information.

We would also, of course, try to use social media. We would try to use websites. Any time that we have the opportunity to communicate that, we do that. We certainly hope that all MLAs, including the member and—would also be helping us share that information to people as much as we possibly can.

But I would say that probably the strength of that, of getting that information out to people, would be people who have very strong networks, which would be probably some of our non-profit organizations, on top of the people letting them know who are currently in the system to let their family and friends know. And we'll continue to work hard to make sure that people know about that and can tell those stories and to make sure that people recognize that support is there for low-income people as well.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Wishart: –for that answer.

I had reason to deal with Service Canada on behalf of a client the other day, and they were actually unaware of the program. So I would suggest that that might be a good place to go. They are certainly exposed to some of the same people. Now that's–

Mr. Chairperson: The member for Tuxedo.

Mrs. Stefanson: I just want to thank the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) for putting his questions. We–I know that we've had good dialogue back and forth. I appreciate the minister answering some of the questions that we brought forward. I have asked for some information.

And I think, at this point in time, I know the member for Morris (Mr. Martin) is my critic, or our critic responsible for Conservation, is anxious to come forward in this Estimates process and ask the minister for Conservation a number of issues as well. And so I think at this point in time we're prepared to move on and look at going line by line.

I just wanted to have just one clarification for the minister because–or from the minister, just because we are not going to continue necessarily in Estimates, will he still endeavour to get that information back to me, to my office? And when will he be able to get that information to us?

Mr. Chief: I want to thank the member from Tuxedo, as well as the member from Portage la Prairie. I did appreciate the questions and I, of course, will be following up with any information that we have committed to provide to the member. We'll certainly do that. What I can commit to is that we will get her that information as soon as we possibly can.

Mrs. Stefanson: I thank the minister for that. And, of course, I do know we have a whole litany of questions that we would love to continue this dialogue. In the Estimates process, unfortunately, you know, time is of the essence here, and I do appreciate the time that we've had. I appreciate the staff from your department and the time that they have taken out of their schedules to be here as well.

And I thank you, Mr. Minister, and I think at this point we're prepared to go line by line in the Estimates.

Mr. Chairperson: Seeing no further questions, we'll deal with the resolutions.

Resolution 10.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$28,908,000 for Jobs and the Economy, Business Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$618,711,000 for Jobs and the Economy, Workforce Development and Income Support, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,297,000 for Jobs and the Economy, International Relations and Trade, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty the sum not exceeding \$1,905,000 for Jobs and the Economy, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is the item 10.1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 10.1

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

Floor is open for questions.

Resolve that–resolution 10.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,053,000 for Jobs and the Economy, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Jobs and the Economy.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

And we will briefly recess to allow the minister and critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next department.

* (15:50)

CONSERVATION AND WATER STEWARDSHIP

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

This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Thomas Nevakshonoff (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): I do, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of the Department of Conservation, it is my pleasure to be here today as Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, and I would like to first acknowledge the department's Deputy Minister, Mr. Grant Doak, who is with us today, as well, and some of the other senior officials of the department, including Mr. Bruce Gray, ADM of Water Stewardship and Biodiversity; Jocelyn Baker, ADM and—of Environmental Stewardship; Matt Wiebe, ADM of Finance and Crown Lands; as well as Mike Gilbertson, director of Parks and Protected Spaces; Mr. Blair McTavish, director of headquarters operations.

I'd like to commend their hard work and the devoted departmental staff that make it possible to undertake many initiatives, address challenges and concerns and simultaneously enhance services for the public while finding efficiencies where they exist.

I'd like to begin by providing some opening comments, context and provide a high-level overview of some of the excellent work the department is doing for the citizens of Manitoba.

As you know, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship is committed to delivering programs and services that result in a strong and healthy environment while managing and balancing the many attributes that make up our environment. As part of that effort we are updating the Parks Strategy in a way that reflects and responds to what we have heard since 2013 in our public consultation process. TomorrowNow—Manitoba's Green Plan, committed to Building The Parks Province. Through the updated Parks Strategy, Manitoba will continue to respond to this commitment.

The renewed Parks Strategy will be released this fiscal year. This strategy describes an eight-year capital plan valued at \$100 million.

In general, the park strategy commits to the expansion and strengthening of the compilation of parks and protected spaces in Manitoba. We have designated two new parks, expanded onto existing parks, designated two new ecological reserves and expanded on two existing ecological reserves. The protected area designation has also been increased in three existing provincial parks.

Over the last three years Conservation and Water Stewardship has invested \$44 million in upgrading and expanding park infrastructure. This year we continue to expand our efforts in the parks that Manitobans enjoy. This includes completion of lake and beach expansion in Birds Hill Provincial Park. Our continued process of public consultation with regard to parks will include the proposed polar bear park study area.

We've also been developing a new protected areas strategy, and our department will be undertaking a public consultation process to garner feedback on this initiative.

I am very pleased with the efforts departmental staff have put into completing the UNESCO submission for Pimachiowin Aki on January 26th of 2015. A recent site visit, which included committee attendees viewing the site, meeting Aboriginal communities and speaking with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and myself, was very positive and illustrates our continued partnerships and progress on this file.

Our new application is scheduled to be considered by the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session in June of 2016. The designation of this unique and beautiful area as a World Heritage Site would be a tremendous accomplishment of co-operation between Manitoba, five First Nations, and the governments of Ontario and Canada. The UNESCO World Heritage Site designation is being sought because Manitoba has placed priorities on boreal forest protection, ecotourism development, land-use planning, and co-management in partnership with First Nations and Aboriginal people.

This region also represents an opportunity to mitigate and adapt to climate change while addressing interests like conservation of woodland caribou habitat.

I am also pleased with the ongoing work the department has put into our boreal plan, which involves ongoing partnerships and conversations with First Nations communities, industry, environmental non-government organizations and other stakeholders. Our inaugural meeting in The Pas was very positive, and an initial document on what was heard at the meeting has been issued to the 80-plus attendees at the event.

The new Conservation Officers Act formerly changes the designation from natural resource officer to conservation officer. This new act means more than just a title change for conservation officers. Through this act, the conservation officer is properly recognized as part of a modern law enforcement agency and ensures compliance with a variety of provincial and federal statutes. Through this act, public safety is enhanced because conservation officers have the necessary authority to more fully serve the public.

A code of conduct for conservation officers accompanies The Conservation Officers Act to ensure there is a basis for an independent review process for any complaints against our officers.

This fall will mark the transition to the new conservation officer branding, which will reflect this new designation. Over time the public will see updates to uniforms, badges, and vehicles.

Conservation and Water Stewardship staff are working diligently on a review of drainage regulation. The purpose of this work is to determine how to streamline basic drainage regulations and to clamp down on illegal drainage practices. This includes an objective of no net loss of wetlands benefits to further our efforts to protect Manitoba's wetlands.

* (16:00)

Over the years, Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship has worked to mitigate damage from Dutch elm disease by running a Dutch elm disease program. Last year, the department began transitioning so that the program could be offered by rural municipalities while maintaining provincial funding levels. Addressing the spread of Dutch elm disease is important work and the department will continue to facilitate this transition so that the work can continue.

My department recognizes the importance of the services that conservation districts provide to communities in Manitoba. As a result, conservation

districts will be receiving additional funding this fiscal year.

The government is also committed to our continuing fight against climate change, and to that end we have built into the department's budget a new \$1-million fund for climate change initiatives.

Funding for zebra mussel programing has also been increased within this budget, and we recently announced doubling this again next year.

While reducing the overall budget of Conservation and Water Stewardship the department has endeavoured to ensure that front-line services to the public are not compromised. This has meant the general redistribution of workloads and restricting of some branches. This was done by way of finding efficiencies and new ways of doing business while at the same time not negatively impacting public service. Specifically, to preserve front-line programs a majority of reductions were based on higher level management positions, management support and central functions.

The two branches of Wildlife and Fisheries were amalgamated, which is a similar organizational structure to that of other provinces. Front-line services were maintained and protected in this amalgamation and will lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency moving forward.

Overall efficiencies are being sought out and improving every day, such as reducing red tape and looking for organizational streamlining. Budget savings have been achieved in this way and the department is committed to moving forward with finding efficiencies and considering more effective ways of doing business.

To close my opening remarks, this outline is just some of the major initiatives that Conservation and Water Stewardship has been involved in and continues to be involved in. As you can see, there are many initiatives being undertaken, and we will continue to involve our partners and the general public while we continue to offer great service to the public and to ensure our environment continues to thrive.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

Does the official opposition critic have any opening statement?

Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris): I won't consume as much time as my honourable colleague did, in my opening remarks.

I look forward to, obviously, getting involved in the Estimates process and digging a little deeper into some of the comments that the minister made. Obviously, in my role as critic, there's a lot of overlap in terms of the priorities that we share with the minister, what differs obviously is a matter of perspective.

But, notwithstanding, zebra mussels is obviously something that is first and foremost in terms of an area of concern with a great deal of Manitobans. In fact, today just at the Jewish association luncheon, I had a long conversation with a individual, Rachel [*phonetic*], who owns some property along Lake Winnipeg, and was, indeed, quite concerned about the financial impact on her property on Lake Winnipeg due to the infestation of zebra mussels. Obviously, I continue to hear and I have no doubt that the minister continues to hear from cottage owners throughout this province.

The NDP have gone to great lengths vilifying the approximately 6,600 cottage owners in our provincial parks as somehow rich fat cats who need to be extracted in terms of 750 per cent increase in terms of their service fees. Cottage owners have pointed out a number of discrepancies in the government's information that's provided to them. And to the government's—to the minister's credit, I do recognize, at least one instance, a significant overcharge was finally identified after about a two-year fight and was reversed. And it makes one wonder how many other overcharges exist within cottage owners and the bills that they're facing and the impact that will have on the long-term viability of owning a cottage for the average Manitoban.

The minister touched on it a little bit, and one wonders what the amalgamation of Fisheries and Wildlife will have on the big game crisis that we have here in the province of Manitoba. Obviously, and I've brought it up before, the situation with the moose population here in Manitoba. Unfortunately, I know previously the NDP have treated that with—as a joke. I remember once I asked a question, actually, about the moose population, and the minister's response had to do with, perhaps they were hiding under a bridge in Morris.

And I don't think it's that kind of response that the hunters of Manitoba, the First Nations or the Metis that all want to see the continuation of this species in Manitoba, want to hear from their minister who obviously represents them.

And the minister's well aware, obviously, there's been a great deal of discussion lately on night hunting, and, again, to the department's credit, there was some very good news this morning, or late—I think it was released actually late yesterday, in terms of some—a number of charges of individuals, I believe, in the Swan Valley area, and the minister can correct that if I'm wrong. But there was a couple of individuals charged, with vehicles and weapons seized who were illegally nightlighting and night hunting, obviously something that is dangerous not only for the individuals involved but for the general public.

The minister made reference to his desire and efforts to find efficiencies within the department. I know, just since 2012, his department has seen cuts of just under \$18 million or 11 and a half per cent. One has to wonder what kind of impact that's having on the delivery of those front-line services that the minister purports to protect and that his focus is on, obviously, the, as he put it, I believe, the managerial levels, Mr. Speaker. But I don't think that can be entirely accurate, especially when we see, I believe, Water Sciences has seen a cut of about 15 per cent, and Fisheries has seen a cut about 20 per cent, and so, against the backdrop of a aquatic invasive species crisis again, one wonders what kind of long-term impact those short-term decisions on the part of the NDP will have.

As well, the minister will, I believe—has met with the Health Products Stewardship Association as well. And oddly enough, to my own surprise, somehow they fall under the minister's department as well. They've got some concerns about red tape and, obviously, the efficient use of the funding they provide, the negotiation tactics—or imperatives might be a better word to use, by the department.

And then, as an individual who's very proud to represent the constituency of Morris in which the Red and the Assiniboine run through, even in my short-term tenure, I've obviously witnessed the wrath of Mother Nature and what can occur in a very quick time frame. And so, issues surrounding plans for drainage and flood mitigation come up no matter where I go within my own constituency. I don't even

have to leave my own boundaries to get an earful on that file.

One last comment to the minister through the Chair is that I'm—what I recognize, obviously, the minister, regardless of experience and such, won't have all the information at hand, even with staff at the ready, and I appreciate that in many instances questions have to be taken on a notice with a commitment to provide the information at a later date, that the minister make every best effort in terms of the timeframe in delivery of that information. His predecessor did not raise the bar very high. In fact, it took his predecessor, I think it was 350 something days from the end of Estimates to provide the outstanding questions from Estimates.

* (16:10)

So, to get a package of information—I think it was actually on the day that the minister—former minister left that department that that outstanding Estimates questions were sent to me really, I think, emphasized the unwillingness on the part of the NDP to provide information to legislatures to ensure that they have that information to properly do their job, Mr. Speaker.

And, I mean, we see that in the House every day, Mr. Speaker. We saw that in the House today with the 200-some-odd pages of blacked-out and redacted information.

But, with that, I congratulate the member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) on his appointment as minister. I know he's—he takes his duties seriously, and I think he's—he's enjoyed the opportunities that the portfolio has provided to him. I know in discussing with a number of individuals and organizations that have engaged the minister that they've been pleased with the minister's engagement to date.

And, so with that, we'll get this party started.

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

Under Manitoba practice, the debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for the department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now confer the consideration of line item 12.1.(a) contained in resolution 12.1.

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

Mr. Nevakshonoff: I thank the member for his opening remarks.

I would like to begin with introduction of the staff who are with me here today, beginning with the Deputy Minister, Mr. Grant Doak; assistant deputy minister of Finance and Crown lands, Mr. Matt Wiebe; assistant deputy minister of Environmental Stewardship, Jocelyn Baker; director of headquarters operations, Mr. Blair McTavish; we have Dr. Brian Parker with us as well; and Mr. Dan Bulloch from the Wildlife and Fisheries branch; as well as Mr. Mike Gilbertson, director of parks and protected areas. Those are the staff in attendance.

Before I turn it—chair back to the honourable member, I just wanted a clarification. He made reference to the minister suggesting that moose were hiding under the bridge in Morris, and I'm assuming he's referring to another minister of Conservation. I don't recall myself making comments to that effect. So just as a point of clarification, if you will, and on that note, I would return the floor to the honourable member.

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

Mr. Martin: Global would be the preference, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you. It's agreed—oh, is it agreed that we proceed on a global basis? [*Agreed*]

It's agreed, then, that questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner with all resolutions to be passed once questioning has concluded.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Martin: And I will take that opportunity to make the clarification, and I appreciate the minister practising questions. I suspect that will be a career change for him in the near future, but it was your predecessor who made that comment and—to me and to many people within the wildlife community. It did speak volumes to this government's commitment in terms of big game hunting and the status of moose population, and its willingness to take the necessary action.

Mr. Chair, I don't believe that there's a single file that so exemplifies this current administration's failure on the environment than that of zebra mussels. Recently, the minister in question period

noted that they've actually been aware, in working on this file, I think, going back to 1990, Mr. Speaker, the first zebra mussel was identified in the Red River basin back in 2009.

So I'm wondering if the minister can outline the budgetary expense in terms of addressing zebra mussels since coming to office, since he indicated that their awareness and their concern about this issue actually predated their assuming of government in 1999.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: First of all, I just want to assure the honourable member of my personal commitment to wildlife in this province.

I have spent my entire life in rural Manitoba and many years in Alberta, as well, have been a hunter and a fisherman for all of those years. I'm also a rancher out in the Poplarfield area, so I understand the interactions with wildlife in that regard, you know, in terms of dealing with problem predators and so forth or what have you. And I know that, sometimes, this causes some difficulties, but there are also proactive ways to engage with wildlife.

My family also owned a fishing lodge for many, many years. My brother currently owns it. So I've been on the lakes from a sport-fishing perspective for almost 50 years of my life and was guiding at 12 years of age, so I have a pretty good grasp of that. And I am very committed to the preservation of our wildlife stocks here in Manitoba, and I think an indicator of that might be the fact that, just recently, we ordered closed areas 29 and 29A, I believe it were—was, down in the southwest of the province, and I will keep that closed until such time that the moose populations survive.

I come from the Interlake and there's a very good elk population there, as well. It was a population that had been, basically, eradicated many, many years ago and then was restocked back into the Interlake in the early 1970s, I believe. And the species or subspecies of elk is called *manitobensis*, which is a rare and unique subspecies of elk found nowhere else in the world, frankly, and may, in fact, now be unique to the Interlake region, something that I've engaged our staff in—to actually look into, as a matter of fact, you know, considering that the animals were brought out of the Ducks and the Porcupines and so forth.

So I feel I have sufficient experience in that regard to manage the game populations, and I know there's a range of factors inherent in that. Whether it's

disease challenges such as brainworm, for instance, which can cross over from the white-tail population to the moose population, that is a significant factor, and then, of course, impacts—loss of habitat for instance or hunting pressures. All of these factors combined can have an impact.

* (16:20)

And I have full faith in the staff within the department. I've got to know many of them in recent times, but many of them over the years as well, the 16 years that I've been in office here. And I know of their level of commitment in this regard as well. So working together with positive attitude I think will be able to sustain these populations and engender recovery where necessary so that future generations will benefit as we are currently.

As to the question which was zebra mussels, your question was what was the current budget is \$522 million or, sorry, \$522,000 for '15-16, projected to go up to \$1.183 million in '16-17.

And I just might add that we have had a prevention program in place in this province for 15 or more years that, you know, even previous Conservative ministers have been aware that this problem was pending, given that it was present in the Red River basin south of the border. Even former minister Glen Cummings 23 years ago acknowledged that the arrival of zebra mussels is, quote, probably imminent, and that is, quote, virtually impossible to guarantee that they will never arrive in Manitoba. So this is nothing new to any of us, really.

But to try and stop the movement of these veligers, which are literally microscopic, coming down the river when each zebra mussel can produce over a million eggs and can reproduce and breed, reproduce more than once in a season, the challenge is immense.

Now we did, in 2013, they were originally detected in Lake Winnipeg. They were found in harbours close to Gimli, or Winnipeg Beach—Gimli, I believe it was. Had not yet been detected in the Red in the Manitoba portion, therefore the conclusion was that they may have or quite likely had been brought in by boat. And, as a result of that, we attempted something very unique here in Manitoba, which was an attempt to actually eradicate them within those harbours before they had a chance to spread.

And I do want to acknowledge the good works of my predecessor in that regard because if we'd been successful in that regard that may have staved off an infestation for who knows how much longer in Lake Winnipeg. But the experiment was also relevant in terms of other lakes. Lake Winnipeg is problematic because we have the Red River flowing into it with zebra mussels to the south, but in other lakes, 100,000 lakes in Manitoba, say a zebra mussel were to appear somewhere else that weren't in that same scenario, that particular tactic since experimented in Lake Winnipeg might be applicable there.

So even though ultimately we were unsuccessful in preventing the infestation through those actions, still that experience was gathered, garnered and can be applied elsewhere. It was an exercise that was well thought out, well executed and well worthwhile. So, you know, zebra mussels are here now.

And I'm sure the member has other questions on this so why don't I just conclude at this point and return the floor back to him.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker, not to date myself but I was a—as a young man, a big fan of the Back to the Future series, so I appreciate the minister's trip in the DeLorean back to Glen Findlay's day. But, if we can just maybe back it up just a little bit into the current millennium, and in 2009, Mr. Chair, when zebra mussels were first identified in the Red River basin, so in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, can the minister advise what the department's expenditures were in terms of zebra mussels, dealing with the pending arrival? I believe he had indicated it was \$522,000 last year. I want to see if that number has been consistent since it was identified in 2009.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: The zebra mussels first being discovered in the Red in 2009, you have to bear in mind that this was in the very upper headwaters of the Red which extends a considerable distance into the United States. So, at that time, staff began operations monitoring and so forth, particularly in the border area. There was some public outreach as well. There were no funds specific to that, but, you know, working internally within the department with existing resources, we began that process.

I think what's really incumbent upon us at this point is to emphatically make the point to the general population that we're not giving up the fight against zebra mussels in any way, shape or form. Yes, we've got them in a couple of bodies of water now, and those bodies of water will experience change, but this is something that is not unique to Manitoba.

Zebra mussels have been a problem elsewhere for literally decades. I think to Lake Erie, which is a good commercial fishery, has had zebra mussels for almost three decades, I believe, 20-plus years at least. And the fishery experienced a decline, but it was not a dramatic decline. It might have been in the range of 10 per cent or something to that effect.

So, you know, we have to not panic, I think, and the most important thing at this point in time is to try and protect the other lakes across our province, and, you know, I hope that all of us as legislators, regardless of party affiliation, can co-operate in this regard so that, you know, we address this together. And what we have to do, most importantly, is get the message out to the general public. This whole campaign, Don't Move a Mussel, you know, clean, drain, dry your boats, dispose of, you know, bait, things like that, or any weeds you might pick up off your boat.

*(16:30)

That's the message that we have to disseminate across our province and engage the general public in this regard, bearing in mind that old advertising adage that somebody sitting watching a television actually has to see a commercial 17 times before it dawns on him what product is being advertised. So that just means that we really have to continue getting this message out. That's what our main objective is going into the winter season now.

And we want to create a positive mindset in the general population. We don't want to, you know, have our conservation officers chasing people around. We don't want them running away. We want them to recognize and realize that these are our lakes; they're not the government's lakes. They belong to all of us as Manitobans. And it serves all our interests to play a role. And that's the real solution here, is getting that message across to the public, convincing them to take proper actions and bear in mind that the vast majority of our water bodies in this province are still free of this particular infestation.

And, of course, there are other invasive species as well which I could go into, but I won't.

Mr. Martin: And the minister is absolutely right with the 100,000 lakes and two identified as being infested; although, I mean, those two being the largest and fourth largest, I think, is a cause for concern. In the minister's response, he can add whether or not there's been any additional identification of

infestation in any other water bodies that haven't been made public to date.

I agree with the minister; obviously, public education is crucial. And we know it's—any government's going to be challenged in—when you have that number of bodies of water in terms of dealing with it. And also, I mean, the spread isn't just human-spread; I mean, there is some indication that the spread may be a result of waterfowl.

That being said, I mean, the minister did put on the record that in 2009-2010 the amount of funding that was specific to dealing with the zebra mussel threat, when it was first identified in the Red River Basin, was zero.

I'm just wondering what fiscal year the department formally allocated funding to the zebra mussel threat and, specifically, how much that was in that fiscal year.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Well, first of all, I would, you know, take some exception to the suggestion that zero dollars were going into it. As I'd mentioned, we had staff who were engaged under the normal course of their duties, so I don't characterize that as no money whatsoever. These are people whose jobs are fisheries and so forth. So, you know, saying that was zero dollars I think is not entirely accurate.

In 2013, prior to zebra mussels being discovered in Lake Winnipeg, we had already consigned approximately \$100,000 for two decontamination units. And I stress these numbers are approximate.

If the member opposite wants specific amounts, then we will take that under advisement and go back to the department and come back with exact numbers. But just for the sake of the discussion today: \$100,000, two decon units in '13; 2014, we added three more decontamination units at a cost of about \$120,000. So now you've got five decon units in. And in 2015, the approximate amount was \$522 million expended, and, of course, our commitment—*[interjection]*—522—what did I say? Million? No, no, no, \$522,000 in '15, and, of course, as the member well knows, we've committed to doubling that fee to more than \$1 million for the season coming, which, you know, again, our focus over the winter will be on communication, education so that the six months of freeze-up that we're entering into will be a period when we can try and get that message out to the consumers I described earlier, the general population, so.

Mr. Martin: So if I understand correctly, then, a separate budget line to deal with this situation was established in 2014 of an amount of approximately \$100,000 that was used to purchase two decontamination units, and then three more were purchased in 2014-15 fiscal year. It's my understanding that last year, Manitoba Hydro donated four units. So I'm up to—there's nine portable decontamination units in possession or available for use by the Conservation Department, the two in 2013, the three more in 2014 and the four donated by Manitoba Hydro last summer?

Mr. Nevakshonoff: I was listening to the member closely, and I think he suggested that 2014 was when we got the first two units—

An Honourable Member: Thirteen.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: —and, well, it was 2013, just so that we have that clear. It's my understanding that the department bought two units, that Hydro donated three units and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, federally, contributed one unit, but this unit was antiquated, wasn't really effective and not put into operation, I think is fairly accurate.

Mr. Martin: So there's five working portable decontamination units currently available to Department of Conservation staff?

Mr. Nevakshonoff: That is correct.

Mr. Martin: Of those five units, can the minister confirm that the two that were purchased in 2013-14 for approximately \$100,000, was that departmental funding or was that funding made available through the fish enhancement fund?

* (16:40)

Mr. Nevakshonoff: The government made an application to the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund for funding to put toward the purchase of the two units, and the board of the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund, which is not a governmental board—it's individual Manitobans—approved that request.

Mr. Martin: So I just want a clarification. The minister said in 2013-14, approximately—that his department expended approximately \$100,000 toward the purchase of two portable decontamination units. And the minister's also indicating that they applied and received funding through the fish enhancement fund for two units. So I'm just trying to clarify where this \$100,000 and—for the purchase of two units came from.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: The money was applied for by the department to the fish enhancement fund. Fish enhancement fund approved the application, gave the money to the department. The department used that money to purchase the two decontamination units.

Mr. Martin: So, then, is the minister confirming, then, that in the 2013-14 fiscal year, that there was no separate budget line then to deal with this invasive species? Previously, the minister had said there was \$100,000 expended from his department, but the minister is now sending—indicating, actually, that funding was received from an outside agency, that they actually applied for that funding so that it wasn't actually until 2014-15 that a separate budget line to deal with this pending arrival was created.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Well, the member can split hairs, I guess, if that's his desire. The fact is that the department applied to the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund a specific request, and it was a specific allocation granted back to the department for this purpose, at which point the department went and made the purchase. So that's pretty straightforward.

Mr. Martin: Well, then, we'll continue to split hairs, Mr. Chair. In the 2014-15 fiscal year when the minister identified \$120,000 as a separate budget line, was that funding through the Department of Conservation or was that funding received from an outside agency whose board members were not appointed by government as the minister pointed out?

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Of the \$120,000 referenced, a portion of that was to consign a zebra mussel expert, so to speak. That individual was brought in to focus exclusively on this particular challenge, and then two individual inspectors were hired, basically, to operate the equipment.

Mr. Martin: Could the minister advise where this zebra mussel expert was consigned from and whom that person was?

Mr. Nevakshonoff: The zebra mussel expert was a person from within the department. If the member wants the name of the individual, her name is Candace Parks. She was a water science manager, given her degree of expertise, was brought over into this program to focus exclusively on this particular challenge.

Mr. Martin: I mean, I've had the opportunity to hear a presentation by Ms. Parks up at the Red River Basin micro conference in Gimli several weeks ago, and I thought Ms. Parks did a very good job in

providing an overview of the zebra mussel infestation currently—that we're currently have here in Manitoba.

Now the minister made a comment earlier about—that you need to see an advertisement for approximately 17 times, I believe the minister's figure was, before it really starts to have an impact in terms of an individual's behaviour. I'm wondering if the minister can advise when their Clean, Drain, Dry advertising Don't Move a Mussel program—public education program began.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. A formal vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. I am 'herefore' recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

If the bells ring—continue past 5 o'clock, this section will be considered to have risen for the day.

EDUCATION AND ADVANCED LEARNING

*(14:40)

Madam Chairperson (Jennifer Howard): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Education and Advanced Learning.

At this point I would like to invite the staff who are working with the minister and the official opposition to please enter the Chamber.

I wonder if before we continue, since it's been a while since we've been together, if I could ask the minister to introduce the staff that are joining him.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm more than happy to do so.

Of course we have Dr. Gerald Farthing, deputy minister; Scott Sinclair, ADM for Advanced Learning Division; Claude Fortier, acting executive director of admin and finance; Claire Breul, acting EFO for the department.

Madam Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister for that.

As has been previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner, and the floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I welcome the staff back into the Chamber. I know it's been a few months since

we've had this opportunity to ask some questions, so I'm hoping that today's discussion and the next few days goes well.

So I guess I'll start off. We had a news article in the Winnipeg Free Press not too long ago in regards to the student financial aid software. And, if the minister can let me know, you know, roughly—it's been reported 15-plus million dollars has been spent on that student financial aid software, and I know the minister's going to talk about phase 1, which was roughly—and he will correct the record right away if I'm wrong—but roughly 300 to 400 thousand dollars is what phase 1 cost.

The rest of the software is not up and running. It was supposed to be running by June of 2011. It's not there yet. I just want to know what the status of that is.

Mr. Allum: Like my colleague from Lac du Bonnet, looking forward to the next number of hours, days that we get to spend together and to have a good discussion about advanced education and about our K-to-12 system as well.

With respect to the student financial aid system—and I'll just start off quite generally for him and then we can get into some specifics. He and I have had this conversation many times, and so I just try to clarify that one more time.

He is well aware that were he to use student financial aid today, were he to go online, he would be well served by the existing system. It's correct to say that we engaged in a plan a few years back to upgrade and update the system. IT systems need to be upgraded no different than any other piece of—kind of infrastructure, be that a road or a bridge or—and so it's understandable that we would need to go through that process.

He's quite right in saying that phase 1 of that project was completed, I believe, in 2011. I can't—I will get him the exact costs on that. We actually don't have those. So, if there was something out of scope in relation to the budget, we'll certainly supply that information to him. That's only fair.

And, then, as he well notes, as we entered into phase 2, we did experience some complications on what was an extraordinarily complex process because we're—endeavour to make, you know, life easier for students and more affordable and to make sure that they have the opportunity to have the supports they need. So I think it's fair to say that stage 2 experienced some difficulties and didn't get

off the ground in the manner that we had anticipated and hoped for. But having said that, I think he also knows that the—we just recently issued a RFP for phase 2 and look forward to that being taken care of and being completed within a responsible timeline.

At the end of the day, of course, we want to make sure that our students have the supports they need to become successful students and position themselves for the job market, and a very healthy job market here in Manitoba. There are any number of advantages to getting student aid here in Manitoba, whether there's no interest on your loan, as we recently passed, or other possibilities for student aid to ensure that there are many, many pathways in which to get the kind of support you need to be a successful student.

* (14:50)

Mr. Ewasko: I thank the minister for the roundabout answer there.

I don't quite understand why you do not have the final figures. I mean, the figure that I think we've been tossing around here is about \$350,000 for the phase 1, which was the financial portion. But the rest of the computer software program, I mean, the original budget for phase 1 and 2 was supposed to be \$12.1 million, and from what I understand, we're—we've spent \$15 million and there's nothing to show for it. I know that you've sent out another RFP but I thought that had closed at the end of July. So then, you know, what has been spent to date on—you know, I know that you've had some glitches or whatever else in trying to bring that software so that you could launch it or turn it on or have access for students. But so far, to date, what is the price tag on it? And I'll leave it at that for now.

Mr. Allum: Of course, I thank the member for the question.

I think at this stage, because phase 2 has not proceeded in the way that we envisioned when we first ventured down this path, at this point it's not possible to put an accurate price tag on what the cost, as he wants to put it as—because it's actually a service that serves Manitoba students—it's not possible at this stage to put a precise number on that.

I think the important point for him to realize, and I've been quite open about this, phase 2 did not go forward in the manner in which we anticipated. Consequently, additional work is being done. We've issued, as he knows, an RFP again so that phase 2 can proceed, so that we can continue to serve

students to the very, very best of our ability. And so there will be a full accounting of the costs as we proceed through the process and after it's completed, and I would remind him that that's understandable. There was a particular budget associated with this project when we first started off two or three years ago, and what we expect is that phase 2 will be undertaken once the RFP process is completed, and then we'll be able to provide a full and complete cost on—of all the costs.

But I want to remind him again of what the benefits of that student aid system are, and I think he knows this. This is something that we do and have done as a government, is to ensure that we invest in our universities and in colleges and we work to make life better and easier for students. And that—whether that's zero interest on student loans or whether that's the provision for grants and bursaries to make it easier for those to afford to go to university, whether that's among the lowest tuition rates in Canada, third for universities, second for colleges, we work every day to ensure that students have the supports that they need to get the kind of skills and knowledge they need at the college or university level and then go on and join a very healthy job market.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Chairperson, thank the minister for the answer. Looking back at some notes, the original budget was \$12.1 million. The past—of the previous Advanced Education ministers, the member for Southdale, now Ms. Selby, had mentioned that phase 1 and phase 2 we were up above the \$15.3-million mark for phase 2. Now, you know, being a teacher myself and being—using the old system and also just sort of doing some basic math here, you've retendered it out. Phase 2, you had complications with, and those are your words as well, so I'm wondering did Deloitte & Touche, the company who won the first original tender, were they paid out the \$15.3 million for phase 1 and phase 2 and now you've retendered it out.

Mr. Allum: Madam Deputy Speaker, the difficulty in this conversation with the member, and I know that he's received information from the department, so he knows essentially what the numbers have been, the difficulty is is that because of the complications with—because of the complications with the phase 2 of that particular project and the manner in which it was developed, we're unable to know exactly, concretely, what the final cost will be when all is said and done, and I think it's premature to be out there throwing numbers around that would not really

reflect in any real accuracy what the final ultimate cost will be.

I think he's received information so he understands what those expenditures have been to date, and that's as it should be. Our department is open and transparent on these matters, but what he wants me to say, I think, is to pick a number out of the air around the implementation of phase 2 and the completion of the project, and I could say to him quite sincerely, it's premature for us to talk about that because we don't know what the final cost will be when you put all the various elements of the project together and understanding, of course, that we did experience the very complications that he and I have discussed.

* (15:00)

And so I would suggest to him that those expenditures, the full cost, the full and complete cost, the ultimate cost, will be known in due course and, at the end of the day, he and I can have a conversation about that. But I want to remind him, because I think, sometimes, in going down this path, he fails to remember that the student aid system is working just as it should be right now. It offers significant supports to students in a variety of ways that provides many, many different levels of support to ensure that our students have the—have their needs met as they go through college and university.

You know, it's—we're not the first jurisdiction to experience these kinds of challenges with an IT system, and I think he probably knows that. We're certainly not the first department across the country to experience these issues. There are—whether in the public sector or for that matter, frankly, in a private sector, there's any number of instances where IT systems you set out with the best intentions because you want to improve service for students and you want to make sure that it lasts for generations to come. So 'alls' we're wanting to do is to be thoughtful in this process, to do it in the right way, ensure that students as they are now are well served, and get on with phase 2 in completion of the project. But the ultimate and final costs, and I say this again quite sincerely, are unknown at this date, and at some point in the future, they will be clear and transparent and we can have a conversation about that.

Mr. Ewasko: So, original budget \$12.1 million. Phase 1 was completed for roughly \$350,000. Total spent, according to the member from Southdale, Erin Selby, was 15.3 that was to date—that was in 2013 that has been spent somewhere, that's off and gone

somewhere. You've put out a new tender in July. So being conservative and if you get a smoking deal on phase 2, the original budget was 12.1, so if I subtract the \$350,000, we're looking at phase 2, and that's if you get a great deal on it, it comes out to \$11.7 million which basically goes back to the 2008-2009 when you were first throwing around this idea. So if I add those two numbers up at the very low end and, of course, that's without taking into account your PST increase that's happened in the last couple of years, we're looking at approximately 27 to 30 million dollars for the upgrade of the Student Financial Aid software, right or wrong?

Mr. Allum: Sorry, just what was the number that the member in his calculations—the final number please?

Mr. Ewasko: It's the total if this number is actually—comes to fruition and as tender is out there, we're looking at anywhere between 27 to 30 million dollars.

Mr. Allum: You know, I can understand how the member might work hard to do a mathematical calculation that gets him to a point to make it seem that it could be this exorbitantly high number, but the truth of the matter is, as I just tried to explain to him a few minutes ago, is that we actually don't know what the ultimate final cost of the project will be, owing to the fact that as a result of the complications with phase 2 of the project and the work that will continue to be done under the RFP, but I have to tell him we don't expect it to be anywhere near the number that he just frankly invented. But I want to be clear about this, again, because of the absence of the—of all the knowns at this stage, we simply are not able to say what the final and ultimate cost will be. And so, in short order, whatever that might mean, we'll have a better understanding of what the full cost will be. It will be utterly and completely transparent for all to see, and then we'll have a good conversation about that after.

Mr. Ewasko: So, as far as the numbers go, they're not really overly inventive here. I mean, we are taking the numbers from your department as far as the Estimates and also looking at what the minister for Advanced Education had said in 2013 in regards to what was spent to date.

So, when we're talking about re-tendering the same project, I took a look at some of the asks and the nuances within that tendering—tender that was put out, and to me, it doesn't look a whole lot different than the original tender.

So, again, I'm just going on some very conservative numbers of roughly \$11.7 million on the original—off the original tender. So I'm actually using your numbers. This is not invented numbers. And, if I add up the original tender to what the member from Southdale had said, you know, that's just about \$27 million.

So that's a big chunk of change, and, of course, we're five years late for when it was initially supposed to be launched at the end of June 2011.

Mr. Allum: As I just said, Madam Deputy Speaker, as I just said a moment ago, I want to concede that if you do the math in the way in which the member has articulated, he can get to a certain number.

And then I want to reiterate that the fact of the matter is we simply do not know at this stage what the ultimate and final cost will be after the phase 2 process is completed and we have the new system up and running.

And I'm saying this quite sincerely. He's welcome to put numbers on the record if he so desires, and I don't blame him for doing so in any way. As I say, I can easily concede how he could get to that calculation. But the truth of the matter is that he doesn't know and we're not—we don't know. At this stage, there's certainly more work that needs to be done on phase 2, and then at the end of the day when all is completed and implemented and online and working well for students and making life easier for them, we'll know the true costs.

And at that point, we can have a conversation on whether or not that investment was worthwhile or not worthwhile. I venture to say that it was—will be worthwhile. It will serve Manitoban—Manitoba students for generations to come. It will position them to be able to take advantage of the very good deal they get by staying and going to college or university here in Manitoba.

I also want to just quickly say that he needs to remember that, for phase 1, when he talks about the \$350,000, that item element is simply for the—was for the scoping exercise. In fact, the costs for phase 1 far exceeded the \$350,000, but the \$350,000, just to be accurate, was for the scoping exercise as they began to design and deal with the system.

Mr. Ewasko: It just upsets me a little bit to know that roughly \$15.3 million has been spent, the minister doesn't know where that's gone, or if it's gone, who's it been paid to. So I guess we'll park that topic for a few seconds here or a few minutes.

But—so what is the launch date of the new request for proposal and when that tender gets—I was under the impression that the tenders closed at the end of July. So what is the new launch guesstimate date?

* (15:10)

Mr. Allum: So, as he knows, the RFP has been issued at this point. We have proposals that are—have been made under the RFP. They're—of course, then there's the process of going through the proposals and making sure that they meet the requirements of the RFP as expressed. And so that process is under way right now.

I can tell him that the anticipated engagement, or start date on the project, would be really very, very early in the new year, January, February 2016, once we complete the proposal process as laid out.

Mr. Ewasko: So, Minister, in the last year's school year of 2014-2015, how many students received special-needs funding in the province?

Mr. Allum: The member will forgive me, I don't have my earpiece in, so I'm not hearing him, so I just—up the volume a little bit for me, so I don't have to reuse the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) earpiece at the same time. Forgive me for that.

Madam Chairperson: We can get you a fresh earpiece if that's going to help. Okay. Maybe—do you want to get yours from your desk?

Can I just ask the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) to—member for Lac du Bonnet, if I can ask you to just repeat your last question.

Mr. Ewasko: Yes.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you.

Mr. Ewasko: So, to repeat the question, I'm just asking the minister, in the 2014-15 school year, how many students received special needs funding.

Mr. Allum: So, I just want to—I do have the numbers that the member wanted. I just want to preface my answer by simply saying that there's a rule of thumb in our department and it starts with Dr. Farthing and works all the way through the department, and that's that every child counts in Manitoba.

And we work extraordinarily hard to ensure that they have the supports all the way through the system and to ensure that they—especially with special needs but in a whole variety of ways, that there are supports there for students to help them

through this—supports as they head through the K-to-12 system. We're very proud of the work we do with special needs with our division partners. We work tremendously hard with our partners across the system to ensure that every child who needs our support gets it, and we want to be sure that we continue to do so in the future. That's, quite frankly, why this government continues to invest in education every single year since we were first came into power at the rate of economic growth or better so that there are—so that every child has a chance and that every kid counts.

So, in total, the number of students who received special needs funding in the '14-15 year with 5,708.

An Honourable Member: But for clarity, is it level 2 or level 3 students?

Madam Chairperson: Member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Ewasko: Okay. For clarity?

Mr. Allum: For clarity, that would be level 2 and level 3 students.

Mr. Ewasko: Can the minister divide that up between the level 2 and level 3? How many of each?

Mr. Allum: So the number of level 2 students receiving support was 3,899 and the number of level 3 was 1,809 for a total of 5,708.

Mr. Ewasko: How many applications—and thank the minister for the answer—but how many applications were made last year in the 2014-15 school year?

Mr. Allum: We'll get you the exact number of applications as you requested. What I can tell you for certain, or tell the member for certain through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that approximately 80 per cent of students who apply receive the requested support; four out of every five applications are approved. The number of—the approval rating across the province has remained very steady over the years, but the specific number we'll endeavour to get to him immediately.

* (15:20)

Mr. Ewasko: So, when the minister—and thank him for that answer of almost 80 per cent approval rate. So, when you say immediately, are you meaning, like, today sometime, or are you talking early next week, as far as those numbers? What does immediately mean?

Mr. Allum: We're going to make absolutely every effort to get it to you today.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you and I'd appreciate that, thank you.

The—for when you receive level 2 or level 3 funding, what are the dollar amounts attached to each student who receives level 2 and then level 3?

Mr. Allum: So I'm going to give the member I believe what he asked for which is the per pupil amount. Funding for pupils approved for level 2 support is \$9,220 per eligible FTE pupil. Funding for pupils approved for level 3 support is \$20,515 per eligible FTE pupil. Thank you

Madam Chair, \$9,220 per eligible FTE pupil for level 2; \$20,515 for level 3.

Mr. Ewasko: So, question. So if we've got, you know, based on the 80 per cent approval rate, so you're looking at roughly what, 7,500, I guess, total applicants? So maybe not quite that much.

How many processes, and I know that your deputy is with you as well, so he'll know this quite well, how many school divisions in the province sit down and filter through the funding applications to sort of weed out the ones that they think that they've got a better chance of getting approved?

Do we have any idea of how many at each school level is weeded out, and then, as it moves up to the divisional level, how many gets weeded out, and then actually, how many gets submitted? Or in his past practice and experience, does he think that all the ones that actually come into the department are the only ones that are being submitted for approval for funding?

Mr. Dave Gaudreau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Allum: Well, I think the member wants to suggest that there's data for the unknowns, and, quite simply, there aren't. It's not possible to determine the applications; quite simply, that didn't come forward. What I can tell him and—is that we have no caps. There have been no cuts to this program. We fund all those who require the supports as determined by the application process. We don't go fishing for data that's not particularly relevant. We're concerned with the applications that do come forward, and we're concerned to ensure that kids with special needs, and I know he'd agree with this, kids with special needs get the kind of support that they require.

Mr. Ewasko: So I do understand that you do not have the data for the unknown, but what has the department done, what is the process, not process—

has the department encouraged the various special needs, whether it's resource teachers, student services teams, to apply for all of the students that they see that require funding, because I don't think, then, that 80 per cent approval rule would come to play? But I'd like to find out actually how many applications would come in if you actually threw it out there to the various student services teams throughout the province, saying, you know, your government has a, you know, an 80 per cent approval rate, so that means every—four out of every five kids who get applied for will receive funding. I haven't seen that document hit student services desks or mailboxes over the last many years that I've been involved.

Mr. Allum: Well, I guess the way I'll—I think it's best to characterize the system as it currently operates, is that we operate in the most positive way that we can think of in order to ensure the kids who need the supports get the supports. So, for us, we, in our—for the department's conversations, which—with school divisions, and then as that reaches down into individual schools, we simply make the point that if the child meets the criteria for the level 2 or level 3, they should certainly make an application. And so we operate on a proactive model to encourage that no one is left on the outside; no one's uncertain as to what kind of supports may be available. There is a—it's a rigorous process, I believe, and there is clear criteria.

* (15:30)

We encourage school divisions to abide by that criteria. If there are questions, there, of course, is a very close relationship between the department, social support services. And so there's plenty of opportunity for dialogue, as well, to clarify what the criteria is.

So I think, instead of trying to create a—and I don't mean to say that the member's trying to do this, but to create a negative context around it, I think we are very, very forthcoming in saying here's the criteria for level 2, here's the criteria for level 3. If you believe said school, said school division, that a child should meet this criteria, then you should absolutely and almost certainly apply.

And in that context we can say that the approval rate is approximately around 80 per cent, and so we know—I feel quite confident in saying that the system is working well. It's providing the supports that's required and, despite what some might want to say, and I don't think the member's done this at all, but despite what some might want to say about the

system, I want to reiterate, again, there'll be no cuts, no caps and every child—every child that meets the requirements that's set out in the criteria receives support and we want to ensure that that child does get that support.

Mr. Ewasko: Now, on the 80 per cent approval rate, based on the 5,708 students that received special needs funding last year, that brings it to roughly 7,100 and change—applications that have been put in.

If we go back to the \$15.3 million that was spent on the student financial aid software that have—has gone missing, I really don't have an answer yet as far as where that money has gone—it's gone somewhere—we're looking at an additional—if you go on this 20,000—the level 3 funded students, we're looking at an additional 700 students that could get funding. And you don't know where the \$15.3 million has gone in regards to the student financial aid software.

It's just—I don't even know what else to say on that, and I guess—because I don't, at the same time, want to sit here for 10 minutes for a rebuttal on that, but the fact is that we have students who are requiring some sort of special needs programming; we've got \$15.3 million that are—that's gone on a student financial aid software, five years, you know, past the time when it was supposed to—well, four and a half years past the time that it was supposed to be launched; and we're looking at roughly 700 extra students at the level 3 level that could be funded with that \$15.3 million. I just think that's horrendous, and I don't think—and, again, maybe this can be a to-do—put on the to-do list for the department, but I don't think that student services teams across the province are putting in the applications for all the students because I think that their past experience with the government is that they have not been getting the funding.

So, to sit here and tell me that the 80 per cent support and that all students require support and deserve support, that's absolutely true; I agree with you on that. But the history of this, and from looking at these numbers, it's not true. And it's upsetting that we see these types of numbers and dollar figures being thrown around and you don't know where those dollars are.

I look forward to just a quick comment from the minister.

Mr. Allum: Well, I want to respond to him. I—actually, I've tried to keep my answers as brief as humanly possible while getting the member the

information that he so justly deserves, so I will try to be short. But I think it is a kind of an apples and oranges circumstance that he's making, or is presenting, and then, in addition to that, trying to throw a little bit of confusion into the circumstances to try to create an atmosphere that doesn't, frankly, exist.

So, on student aid, what we have said, and what I said here today, is that the actual, final known costs are not known at this point, because of the complications that we've encountered on it. And, at the day, there will be a final reckoning and we will know what the numbers are.

But, then, to take that and to suggest that, if only we had money, then we could have funded more students. I would suggest to him, if he have evidence of applications that were good and met the requirements, and met the criteria, and could have been submitted but, for some reason, weren't, then he should bring that forward—I'd certainly like to see it—rather than throwing around rumour and innuendo about something that, I don't think is, frankly, accurate and, really, throws a system that has worked very, very well—I'm talking here about special needs students—a system that's worked very, very well to reach and ensure that every student—every child who needs those supports gets them.

His notion that 700—I think he said 700—children could have received level 2 or 3, I forget what he said, thereabout, one or the other—would something else—some other circumstance have happened on student aid, is really, frankly, there's no logical connection between the two, and I'm disappointed to see him try to make such a connection.

What we've said is that there have been no cuts to that program, no caps, and that approval rates have remained consistent throughout the years. We know the number of applications. We know that four out of every five children is, it would seem, getting the supports they need. Every child who meets that requirement gets the support that they need—who meets the criteria gets the support they need. There is no budget circumstance in which we say well, we've hit a ceiling here and, sorry, the child A or child B, you're out of luck—parent A, parent B, you're out of luck. That, frankly, does not happen. So to invent 700 children who he's suggesting may have gotten support that otherwise didn't is not correct, not based in reality and, I think, does not reflect the very positive and proactive model for special needs funding that we currently—and have used in the

province to ensure that every child who needs our support gets it. And, I think, he would be with us on that line, that every child who met the criteria would get approved, and receive the support that they're eligible for.

So to mix apples and oranges here, I think, is not appropriate. It's certainly not rational; it's certainly not logical. When the known costs for the student aid system are ultimately known, we will make it clear. He and I will have a good conversation about that, I know that. At that point he can make allegations in one direction or another, but until we actually know the final result, let's leave that where it is. On the other hand, I want to be crystal clear: No caps to special needs funding. No cuts to the program. It is a proactive model that's there to meet the needs of our children every single day, and that's what this department endeavours to do.

Mr. Ewasko: I didn't invent the numbers at all.

I, basically, took the \$15.3 million that has supposedly been spent to date. That's coming from, again, the member from Southdale. I divided by roughly \$20,000, came up with 700. You told me that there's an 80 per cent approval rate. I took your word on that. You said 5,708 students received special needs funding so—you do the math—7,135 applications.

So, as far as inventing numbers, I'm not inventing numbers. Roughly 1,400 have been denied for funding.

* (15:40)

So to say that I'm inventing numbers—I'm not inventing numbers. I'm taking your numbers, doing some basic, basic math, coming up with some facts, and, actually, I can't even believe that the minister would put that on the record as far as allegations in inventing. I'm looking to see, to make sure that our students in Manitoba are getting the services and the programming that they need.

I don't think that yourself, as far as—or your predecessors, have possibly sent out the information to the various student services teams. You're telling me that there's no caps on special needs funding. I think, because of today, we're going to be receiving some very interesting emails on this matter.

So I hope that you're prepared to be answering each and every one of those emails, Minister. Because I think some of the things you've put on the record today are, I think, they're on the shade of grey.

There's no basis to it. So I've given you the numbers. I'm working on the approximate numbers that you've given as far as the 80 per cent approval rate.

So—but with that, does the minister know of the specific training that various student services personnel or resource teachers are receiving in regards to the application process? And how many times a year is that provided to the various school divisions or professionals? And who's offering that up?

Mr. Allum: Look, I guess, you know, because I really—it's important to me, and I know it's important to the member, that we're talking about actual data, actual facts. And what he did is he combined one set of circumstances with another, put them together in a very loose equation and they came out with a number. And I have to say that it's—he's leaving on the record the impression that somehow 700 children did not get the support that they deserve, that was required, that they were eligible for, that they met the criteria for. That simply, categorically is not true.

What we have tried to say is that we—the department works with school divisions and our school partners to ensure that, and encourage them, when they believe a child meets the criteria for level 2 or level 3 funding, that they submit that application. And as we've said, four out of five students receive that support.

Now, if, for some reason, they do not believe that the ultimate judgment on that file was appropriate, that perhaps there wasn't a proper understanding of the child's needs, a proper explanation, understanding of how the criteria matches with the child's needs, then there is an appeal process for those applications that were initially denied. And we do that as a matter of strict principle, that every child who qualifies, who meets criteria, is, in fact, receives the support that they need.

So I have to say that I don't, in this case, think his math is very good when he puts together a bunch of different numbers to make out an illogical equation that does not really stand the test of scrutiny.

Now, there are, as he knows, student services administrators in every division who have a leadership role in the process. The criteria and the decision-making rubric, the contexts, have been sent to every school division and independent funded school, and it's posted on the website.

To his point about training, then, additional training is done by department staff on request. Questions are answered by department staff throughout the year. It's a process, I think, that school divisions, schools, the department have great experience with. There's an understanding that it's—that there's a open-door policy, a pick-up-the-phone, open-line policy. If there's a question, if there's a—some uncertainty, if it requires more information, if it requires an explanation, that happens in any number of ways.

So I, frankly, feel very—and I hope he does too—very proud of the special needs program we have in Manitoba that is highly inclusive, that has very good criteria that we can utilize in order to ensure that every student who needs support gets it. And if there's some dispute about the nature of that dispute, then there's an appeal process that can be utilized to get to the bottom of it and ensure that we're taking—that every kid counts and every kid gets the support they need.

He wouldn't have it any other way. I wouldn't have it any other way. Dr. Farthing and the department staff wouldn't have it any other way, because this department is ultimately—ultimately and profoundly—engaged in the well-being of every child in Manitoba. No one's being left out. No one's being left behind. Everybody counts.

Mr. Ewasko: And I know as educators we're very passionate on this topic, as well as others in regards to the kids, the students that we serve in this province of ours.

All I was basically stating was that there is an awful lot of time put into these applications from student service personnel, whether that's resource teachers, guidance counsellors, senior admin within school divisions. And so somebody along the lines within there felt that these kids required some additional support.

Now, there's—I know the minister is saying that I am clouding the waters, I guess, with bringing in the fact on the student financial aid software. But there's \$15.3 million that has been spent to date, so I guess I'll ask this question, I guess, a little bit clearer or pointed, is: To date, what has Deloitte & Touche received as a financial payout for their contributions or not—non-contributions to the student financial aid software that was supposed to be launched June 2011? What was spent, what was paid to Deloitte & Touche?

* (15:50)

Mr. Allum: We're having a discussion over here on a variety of topics because we don't—I want to get to the question that he asked, but I just wanted—I don't want to leave on the record any impression that in the event that a child does not receive level 2 or level 3 funding for whatever reason, that there aren't other multiple supports out there for that child to take advantage of.

And, as I said, in addition to that, that there's an appeal process on the applications themselves, and, in fact, student services supports in the last 2014-15 we're almost \$65 million outside of the level 2 and level 3 funding. Were you do add all of the—all of those supports for students including level 2 and level 3 and 2014-2015, this government's spent close to \$166 million to ensure that every child counts in Manitoba. And it's important to me to get that on the record, because I think it's important for parents to know and for schools to know that we're on the side of their children and we're going to work very hard every single day to ensure that we create an inclusive education community as I've said more than a few times now, where every child counts.

Now, as to his question, he's wanting very specific numbers in relation to the vendor. He's wanting to make assertions around dollars spent, dollars missing, those kinds of things. And I've tried to be crystal clear with him on how stage 1 evolved and developed. We did indicate that stage 2 had some issues and complications that require more work, but we are now back on track in terms of the RFP.

We expect to have proper engagement on the project right at the very beginning of 2016, just a few short months around the corner. But it's fair to say that there are matters that need to be resolved between the vendor and that's why it's impossible—between the vendor and the government, and that's why it's impossible to state in any certainty, with any precise, factual certainty what the numbers will ultimately be. And so we have been as transparent as we possibly can on how phase 1 and phase 2 have evolved to date, but there are, as I said, complications that make it practically and quite honestly, impossible to determine what the value proposition will be when phase 2 is ultimately completed.

When that time comes, he and I, whatever side of the House we happen to be on, we'll have a good conversation about that. I look forward to that, and I can assure him, and I think he knows this about me,

that I will be very accountable for whatever the final number happens to me—happens to be. But at this stage—this stage, we do not know with any certainty what the final amount will be in.

So it's pointless, it seems, an exercise to go on quibbling about what happened here or there or anywhere when it all comes out in the wash, we will be a transparent about it, we will be accountable for it, but most importantly, students be—will be well served by the investments that we are making in the student aid system, by the investments that we're making in universities and colleges, by the investments that we're making through the K-to-12 system, and the kind of continuum of education that we envision to ensure that there are no wrong doors for students, there are no dead ends but multiple pathways to students success and a good job in the future. That's the objective of this department and that's the one that we're going to continue to work on even if we experience challenges and complications along the way.

Mr. Ewasko: So the Minister of Education is saying that the tender that was awarded originally for phase 1 and phase 2 on the student financial aid software to Deloitte & Touche, they worked on it for, roughly, let's say three and a half years, just shy of four years. They've done all of that after the minister's department decided that there was a glitch and for one reason or another they weren't able to fulfill their obligations in regards to the tender. So they did all that for free. That's what he's basically saying. And you don't know, to date, how much has been spent or what type of cheque was given over to Deloitte & Touche for that time that they've put in?

Mr. Allum: Well, I've never once said that, Mr. Acting Chair, and I don't know how he comes—my friend across the floor, comes to that conclusion.

What I've tried to say is that we do not know what the final cost of the project will be when all is said and done, owing to the very complications that he and I have discussed, it seems quite endlessly, and that it is not a fair way of debate to engage in a conversation where we don't know what the final outcomes will be.

So I have been more than transparent in trying to describe the process that we've been through in dealing with the student financial aid system, I want to remind him that the system is still up and running and would serve him or his kids, when the time comes, very, very well. Our investments in that system when it's fully implemented will be clear, will

be transparent, everybody will see what the final number is, but it's not possible at this point to know that owing to the very complications and challenges we've experienced in implementing the system. I don't think that that's anything other than being as frankly honest and sincere as I possibly can be about the subject.

Mr. Ewasko: Okay, so Deloitte & Touche wins the tender in 2008-09, somewhere in there, for an estimated price tag on that student financial aid software, phase 1 and phase 2 was supposed to \$12.1 million. We know that there's been \$15.3 million spent to date. We don't know where that money's gone, whether it's gone to them or not.

So what the minister is saying—and, again, he'll get on the record right away and correct me if I'm wrong—so what the minister is saying that the most recent request for proposals tender can technically be awarded to Deloitte & Touche again, even though they've had a crack at the phase 1 and phase 2, and they were—and the project was pulled from them or halted.

Mr. Allum: I guess my reaction to the question is to simply say that the RFP has been issued. Proposals have been submitted. What the outcome of that process is will become clear in short order, as I said, and we expect engagement on the project toward the—at the beginning of the new year.

* (16:00)

But, so he wants to continually make allegations around this or that kind of thing, and what we're trying to say is that the banking system, that's been implemented already, which we characterize as phase 1, is working extraordinarily well. Phase 2 has experienced, really, quite significant challenges along the way. Government has worked with the vendor in order to try to clarify the road map that was taken that got us to this particular point. The discussions are ongoing about how to settle that particular matter, and that's as it should be, that's good business practice on both sides. It's done in very good faith and we'll see what transpires there.

In the meantime, we're moving forward. Proposals are before the—have been submitted under the RFP. We'll see what comes out in the wash when the time comes, and then it'll all become crystal clear to the member at that point.

Mr. Ewasko: All I have to say is it's a lot of money and for glitches to be happening to that amount is absolutely unbelievable. And, that, to date, I can't get

a number for what has been spent. There is a—in the Estimates booklet, page 55, there's an allocation in the funds from the Department of Education to Finance for \$2.6 million. Do you know what that money's going towards?

Mr. Allum: Well, in order to make year-over-year comparisons meaningful, adjustments to the previous year's Estimates figures may be necessary from time to time. I think that would be common sense.

These adjustments reflect organization changes, as well as any other adjustments that may be required to provide comparability; 2015-16, the responsibility for accommodation services was transferred to Finance from MIT. I think the member probably knows that. With the centralization of these services, departmental operating budgets for accommodation service previously paid to MIT were transferred to Finance.

In Education and Advanced Learning these costs were budgeted by individual program areas under the heading, quote, repairs and maintenance rentals, unquote. And the aggregate amount was just over \$2.5 million, as the member indicated. It was transferred as reflected on page 9 of the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review.

Mr. Ewasko: That was a more concise answer to that \$2.6 million that I received in Finance because, actually, that's where I went first of all, thinking that you wouldn't have an answer. So I went to Finance and Finance Minister had a tough time answering that question. So you've given a little bit better of a statement than the Finance Minister, and maybe that's a future position for you, Minister of Education. Just throwing it out there.

When we speak about special needs funding and we talk about core funding, infrastructure funding, back in early Estimates and, as well as last year's Estimates, I had asked a couple questions in regards to the University College of the North was having some dealings and problems with their ventilation systems. And I know that that's an MIT issue overall, as far as when we talk about problems with the various infrastructure. But there had been various reports that have come to the department basically expressing concern for the lack of ventilation at the UCN for their various shops. And that's with exhaust and that's with gas fumes, and, basically, with all of that odour getting right into some of the other classrooms at UCN, and I'd like to know if the minister has an update whether that has been fixed or not.

Mr. Allum: Yes, I just want to be clear from the member before we start down this path, because it's a good conversation to have, we're uncertain whether he—does he mean UCN or does he mean ACC? UCN? University College of the North. Thank you.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): The honourable—oh.

The honourable minister.

Mr. Allum: Thank you. Sorry, Mr. Chair.

The reason is—we ask for clarification around that is that the circumstances he's described didn't really accord with our understanding of the circumstances at UCN in any manner.

Admittedly, I think there are some minor issues around ventilation and in the labs. Accommodation Services, along with the department, are working together in concert with the—with UCN to address those issues.

But there's a severity to the way in which the member characterized the issue that doesn't ring true to us, so I'm wondering if he could just provide maybe a little bit more clarification, and we certainly want to be able to provide him with the information that he's asking for.

Mr. Ewasko: The report was actually done, I believe, two years ago. And I know that—almost wish that I could ask questions of other members that are in the House, because they would possibly know.

I don't have that report right in front of me, but basically, I know the departments have it; I just don't believe that it's been rectified. I believe the estimated repair costs were in the tune of about \$150,000 to bring it up to standard.

And went on a tour in there and then had basically asked, you know, why, in the hallways and with the students who are, you know, taking some of the health-care programs and that, why I could smell such fumes. And so some of the responses were that they had already done a study and it just hasn't been fixed yet.

So it's interesting that you would not have received some sort of emails as far as health concerns with those issues.

Madam Chairperson in the Chair

* (16:10)

Mr. Allum: So, but just quite generally on where we're at, the member and I will, hopefully, continue

this conversation in the days to come so we can return to the matter when we're both more certain of the actual context that we're trying to talk about here. So what I wanted to do was simply to articulate for him the—at a general level, what the circumstance is at UCN, and then he can have the opportunity at some later point or today if he wants, but some later point to get more into the details.

But there are some and have been some concerns related to material handling and storage and exhaust stations and decontamination showers at UCN in the science labs. That's fair to say. So maybe that's where some of our mutual confusion might be, if that's what you want to talk about, or the way in which you want to characterize it. Some ventilation hoods upgrades have been required to reflect, you know, contemporary, modern standards, safety standards, and such.

But, honestly, we're thinking quite hard here—no known issues related to fumes or gases in the way that he's characterized it or that might potentially pose a risk to students. But, you know, as I'd said, invite him and encourage him to have that conversation or we can continue that conversation at a later date. These are important issues.

Of course, he knows that we're very proud of UCN, very proud of the investments that have been made there. The new campus at UCN is really quite extraordinary. And we're very, very, very proud to be partners with our friends in the North, with the—our indigenous partners in the North, be it in The Pas or in Thompson, where, of course, he knows that there are two campuses, as well as the many satellite campuses that serve UCN.

But as to the matter that he's referring to, and I think he's suggesting to me here that he has a bit more information, as I say, there have been some issues, but none of the severity that he seemed to indicate. So, if he wants to provide further clarification that would be great.

Mr. Ewasko: And so looking through some more information and the name of the report actually did light up here, so it's the Lobdell report. And I'm just trying to think the date of our Estimates, and it was you in the Chair, Mr. Minister, and you had mentioned about the Lobdell report. You did have—you did answer a little bit.

So, basically, now that I've sort of retweaked the name of the report, if you can sort of let me know, has all the ventilation issues and the other concerns

that were in that report, have those things been rectified?

Mr. Allum: Well, first, I want to make clear a few things. Number one, Lobdell report was something that was commissioned. I think it's an annual five-year review. It's now, seems to me, two or three years old or four years old. It was done some time ago, anyways.

In fact, the member's quite correct that when he and I last had the opportunity to have this discussion between us, we probably did talk about the Lobdell report. But I would suggest to him, that if memory serves correctly, the Lobdell report was a governance report primarily on the status of governance practices at UCN, and so that if there was information in there related to the condition of labs and/or any other facilities there, if—it seems to me unlikely that there would be. But because if memory serves correctly, it was very much about governance matters at UCN—*[interjection]*—yes. There may have been other side issues that were raised in the context of governance, but what I can tell him is what I just said previously, is that some concerns related to handling and—material handling and storage, exhaust stations and decontamination showers have been identified at UCN. Hood—ventilation hood upgrades required to reflect modern contemporary standards have been also—been raised and are being addressed in partnership between ASD, the department and UCN. And we're continuing to act on those.

We certainly want to be sure, as best we can, that conditions are at their maximum ability for maximum student learning. I'm confident that the issues that I've just described will be addressed and taken care of, and we can continue to utilize and rely on UCN to provide the kind of training and education, to provide good education, good skill development and ensure those students, very important students to us in northern Manitoba, very important indigenous students in northern Manitoba, have access to the very best quality education, the very best quality facilities. And I said there is a brand new campus. I hope the member's been up to see it and check it out. It's—really is quite spectacular. I know it's a matter of great pride in Thompson, and I know that the renovations and reconstructions that were done at The Pas campus and the Lathlin Library, where we've had any number of great events, has also been met with great satisfaction across the north, particularly in The Pas, of course, but those using those services who might come from elsewhere.

So we're working diligently to ensure the very best facilities—the very best equipment is in place for our students at UCN, so that they can get the very best quality education and go and find the job of their dreams in the future.

Mr. Ewasko: So I would like to ask the minister if he could take a look back into the Lobdell report and if he could possibly, within the next week or so, give me an update as far as some of the recommendations that were in that report and how many, sort of, have been completed, how many are, you know, in the process of, and all those types of things.

We were up there, and it's interesting that the defibrillator, the EED machines, that were there at The Pas campus—it's very interesting that some of them are owned by MIT and then some of them are owned by UCN themselves and that I see the dysfunction of services where MIT would have the ability—or not the ability but the obligation—not the obligation either—the responsibility to be checking on these AED machines. And so because MIT owns one of the machines in all of the UCN The Pas campus, that is the only one that they check, and I just find that some of the services and things that—the efficiencies that are out of whack, it seems to me, is unbelievable. The amount of AED machines that are there, I don't quite know why that would be an obligation of UCN campus themselves. But there are quite a few machines, and I don't—whether MIT owns the building or not, you would think that that would be up to the—up to MIT to be checking those and just making sure that they're in a working manner.

* (16:20)

I do have a question in regards to the ex-ex—or, I guess, the ex-deputy minister here in Manitoba. I guess my question to the minister for Mr. Levin—or about Mr. Levin is what types of checks and balances has he and the department have done to make sure that some of the things that not only Mr. Levin has been sentenced to but some of the allegations that it has not happened here in Manitoba under—when he was deputy Education minister.

Mr. Allum: Well, I'm perplexed, to be honest with you, with the member's question, and its relevancy to our proceedings here today are obscure to me. I think anyone who is knowledgeable about the circumstances surrounding the matter that he's raising here recognize that the circumstances played out in the courts in Ontario were not related to anything that relates to the department of Education

and Advanced Learning here in Manitoba, and, frankly, I'd like to leave it at that.

Mr. Ewasko: I do understand that the present Minister of Education would like to leave it at that. But, I guess, that doesn't really leave me with a nice, warm fuzzy feeling that he and his department have done everything in their manner to—or their mandate to check back and to make sure that there was no harm done to kids or to staff or anybody else within this province. And so, if he wants me to tie it into this process, then I will, and that basic question is, is there anybody within his department did—were they ever either seconded or asked to participate in the proceedings in Ontario and, if so, who are they and were there any charges or expenses incurred and basically paid for by the taxpayers of Manitoba?

Madam Chairperson: Just before we proceed, I do just want to suggest that we do try to stay within the relevance of the Estimates for this year that are being examined. I understand the member is endeavouring to that with his question, but I think some of the subject of the question, talking about an employee who has not worked in the department for years, about a criminal proceeding in another province stretches the relevance for these Estimates. But I appreciate his recent question is about expenditures that may or may not be related to that, and so we'll await the answer. But just if we could try to keep the discussion as relevant as possible to the Estimates that are in front of us.

Mr. Allum: I want to say two things about this line of questioning, and the answer to his question is no, But we're so taken aback by the nature of the question that, if under further investigation we find something, we'll come—we'll be clear about it, but to our knowledge, right this minute, the answer is no, but, you know, because it's so out of left field and so odd to me that we'll need to make a double check on that question.

I want to say just something else to the member. The family that he's referring to actually live around the corner from me. The daughters and my children are very close friends. It's been a very, very difficult circumstance for our neighbourhood and our community and our circle of friends, and I believe this matter took place long past when the person he's referring to worked for this government. He was in Ontario. That matter played out in the courts of Ontario. He has, to my knowledge, been sentenced, serving the sentence that he received. This is a very, very difficult issue that he's raising from a very—for

me personally. I want him to know that and I'm very reluctant to think that he would in any manner try to politicize a terrible, terrible incident, and I prefer to leave it at that.

Mr. Ewasko: I understand that the minister was saying, you know, in regards to his relationship to Mr. Levin, but I had no idea about that, and the reason for my line of questioning is just—this is something that has come out, charged. We know that he was deputy minister in Manitoba, and so, frankly, I'm asking on behalf of Manitobans, has the Department of Education in Manitoba run any type of checks in the past of the ex-deputy minister of Education here in the province?

And, back to my original point, is—was there anybody that was within the Department of Education, submitted expenses to either go to Ontario and be a character reference or anything along those lines, anybody that is paid from the taxpayers of Manitoba that worked for the Department of Education that possibly travelled to Ontario, did anybody submit expense claims for those trips?

Madam Chairperson: So, just for the advice of the member asking the question, the second part of your question, certainly, about expenses, I think would be relevant to this discussion. The first part of your question is clearly not relevant to Estimates, and that is my advice to you. But certainly the second part of your question about expenses, that is relevant to Estimates and we'll have that question put.

* (16:30)

Mr. Allum: I want to say, again that, first of all, Mr. Levin has been gone for quite a long time here, and Gerald Farthing—Dr. Farthing's been deputy of this department for 10 years—*[interjection]*—into his 11th year now. At no time has—was there any sign-offs or any approvals or anything of the kind he's suggesting or knowledge of any expenses that this department would have signed off on for someone to take part in that proceeding. But I'm so perplexed by the line of questioning and really kind of distraught about it. I can't think of a circumstance in what—that it might have happened, but, in answer to his question, the question—answer is no.

Mr. Ewasko: Just to—for clarification there—and I thank the minister for answering, I guess—the fact is that the budget was brought down in April, so if I would have asked these questions in Estimates a little bit earlier on, I guess maybe he would have

seen why I was asking those types of questions. And, basically, it is in regards to the protection of our kids and just making sure that the department who had hired Mr. Levin back in the day roughly 11 years ago had done their checks and balances to make sure that there was no wrongdoings here in the province of Manitoba.

That's basically it for my line of questioning on that matter, but that's all I was asking was did the department do its due diligence to make sure that kids were safe back then considering this was the deputy minister of Education.

Now, we're going to go a complete 180 here, but when we talk about new schools, I know that Brandon School Division has been asking for more space and just to get some feedback from the minister on what some plans are for the city of Brandon in regards to schools.

Mr. Allum: The member's quite right. The growth in Brandon has been quite significant, and I personally ascribe that, and I think probably the numbers would suggest as much, ascribe that to the dynamic economy that's occurring across Manitoba under the watch of this government as a result of our investments in infrastructure. He knows that we have among the lowest unemployment rates in the country, one of the fastest growing economies in the country, and as the information we received today makes—or in the last 24 hours, that our population is growing across this province, and it's no different in Brandon.

And as I—when I was down to talk to the school board there, who we have great relationship with, I said to them quite matter-of-factly that this is a—we have a good problem. I much prefer to be talking about—with them about a growing community, a developing community with many, many new people moving to Brandon and keeping that great city going.

My own daughter went to Brandon U, and we got to know the community very, very well. And it brought back fond memories of some of the places that I personally have gone to school. It certainly reminded me of one my alma maters in Peterborough, Trent University, in terms of a great university in a small town.

So, yes, Brandon is certainly growing. The—when I met with the school division, we had a very, very good dialogue on their needs. They made it—they presented a very compelling case about their needs for a new school and other kinds of

educational amenities in that great city, and we agreed that we would continue to talk and we would assess the analysis that they provided us, which I said to them, and said a few minutes ago and say again, was compelling. So I would invite the member to stay tuned on that particular issue.

Mr. Ewasko: In regards to the \$150-million promise over to the University of Manitoba, how is that going to be disbursed, or what is the amount of money or stages when it's going to be disbursed? Is it an agreement, or is it a contract? Have they just received one big cheque? How does that work?

Mr. Allum: I want to thank you and I thank the member for the question.

You know we were delighted, absolutely delighted to be part of the Front and Centre campaign at the U of M, and to have a real critical partnership in that event. I know it means a lot to my colleague from St. Norbert whose community sits adjacent to the University of Manitoba, a great institution in its own right. I know it means a great deal to me as the MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview, and my friend from Fort Richmond who also—whose constituency at the U of M is actually in.

So we were utterly and completely delighted to be a part of a very great celebration in which the university itself set out to raise \$500 million in order to ensure that there are a significant student and amenities and good pot of money for indigenous students, because we know they're the youngest and fastest growing part of our population here in Manitoba. So there was student services, I think was part of the campaign—indigenous education, of course, was part of the campaign. Capital infrastructure, of course, is part of the campaign.

And so this government which has an extraordinarily strong record of investing in our post-secondary institutions and investing in our K-to-12 system, who work with our universities and colleges in partnership every single day to develop the kind of institutions that, as I said earlier in our conversation this afternoon, have no wrong doors and no dead ends, and multiple pathways for student success

It was just a quite a remarkable occasion. We were very pleased to be there. The Premier (Mr. Selinger), of course, made the announcement on behalf of the government of Manitoba. The \$150 million is a very solid commitment from this government because it leverages 350 million more dollars in donations from the private sector and

others to the university, all going to ensure that the University of Manitoba remains a vibrant and strong institution for years and generations to come.

The actual nature of the Province's contribution, how it will be broken down, is a subject of discussion between the university and government, including officials from my department. I know that to date those discussions have proven very productive, and there is—both sides are excited about the possibilities that are there. So, at this stage, I can tell the member that those—the nature of the specifics which will become evidently clear in short order are still under discussion by the university. They're good with that; we're good with that. But, most importantly, we're very, very pleased to be on board with that campaign and to play a critical role in the development of the university as we all are in—with all of our institutions.

* (16:40)

We have capital investments at the University of Winnipeg, as he well knows, that had made that from the time when I was teaching there in the late '90s and early 2000s has really transformed that campus into a real, genuine campus. It's amazing when you go down there to see it. When you go to Red River, now, and see both the downtown campus and the Notre Dame campus, how magnificent it really is. The UCN, we talked about just a few minutes ago. We talked about Brandon and the work that we're doing there on a whole range of issues. Assiniboine Community College and the project to move to the North Hill, another exciting development on our post-secondary landscape.

So we're excited to be part of that. I know the member, when he was asked about it, was not too excited about the Province's contribution. We certainly were excited to be a part of it, proud to stand with our partners at the university in order to ensure the well-being of that institution for years and decades to come.

Mr. Ewasko: So, to put some truth facts on the record, it was—

Madam Chairperson: Order. All members are honourable members. All members are assumed to be bringing accurate and truthful information to the Chamber so I just ask the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet to, perhaps, be a little more cautious.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I will bide my words coming up here, but to put some additional words on the record to add to what the

minister has said as far as the University of Manitoba goes, as far as the announcement of \$150 million, I had asked, basically, what the plan was, and he basically said that they're still working on the plan, and that those conversations are happening between his department and the University of Manitoba. It would be interesting for Manitobans to know the plan and, also, it's very interesting that this minister is making yet another promise with, again, not necessarily any plan to back it up.

So we know that this minister, as well as 56 of his colleagues, had travelled throughout the province in fall of 2011, including the Finance Minister, Madam Chair, and—promising to not raise that PST. And, matter of fact, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) himself said that it was absolutely nonsense. We've heard those promises before and, so, basically I'm looking at it from the standpoint of the University of Manitoba making sure that this minister is standing by his word. But, at that point, we have a tough time taking him at his word because he went door to door with 56 other colleagues in the last election promising one thing and then delivering something or other later on.

So my question was: What is the plan to deliver on the \$150 million to the University of Manitoba, because I really do feel that this minister is making promises that he's not willing to back up?

So, with that, I'm going to turn it over for a couple minutes—lines of questioning to the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Mr. Allum: Really not going to comment on any of the aspersions that the member made. That's making politics of this thing. And I've tried to answer the—as sincerely as I could.

The University of Manitoba established the Front and Centre campaign, a groundbreaking \$500-million campaign to reinvigorate that university for years, decades and generations to come. They've identified four—five areas of priorities, \$43 million of which would go to indigenous—28.5 for indigenous achievement, \$43 million for research excellence, \$100 million for outstanding student experience, \$186 million for places and spaces and, finally, \$150 million for graduate student support.

So, within that government, our government agreed that we would be a full and comprehensive and willing and excited partner by providing \$150 million to that campaign. The university was thrilled with us; they welcomed us to the campus.

We had a incredible event there with a whole range of university folks that were there, including UMSU and other scientists, researchers, faculty, administration, the president. We were also very lucky to be participants with a whole range of private sector partners, including Paul Soubry from New Flyer, who was the fundraising campaign chair. He and I and the Premier we're all very, very pleased to be part of this event, along with Dr. Barnard.

And so we're good for \$150 million. We're going to live up to our commitment. And, but, it's not so surprising that we would continue to discuss the specific details of the plan going forward. And when that, when those details are clear and there's an agreement between the U of M and the government broadly, government come to an agreement, we'll share there's details—I'm not sure if the member is interested in listening to the answer or talking to my friend from Finance.

Madam Chairperson: Order.

It's getting a little bit loud in here so we maybe we can just try to keep our focus on the discussion that's happening. If members want to have other conversations, there are loges available for them to do that.

The honourable minister, to conclude his comments.

Mr. Allum: I'll leave it for that.

Just to summarize, we're thrilled to be part of that campaign; we are great partners with the University of Manitoba; and we're going to continue to work with all of our institutions to build a strong university and college sector for years and decades and generations to come.

Report

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254): In this section of Committee of Supply meeting in room 255 considering the Estimates of the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) moved the following motion, that line item 21.1.(a) be reduced to \$37,001.

Madam Deputy Speaker this motion was defeated on a voice vote; subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

Madam Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

Madam Chairperson: In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254, considering the Estimates of the Department of Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), moved that line item 21.1(a) be reduced to \$37,001.

The motion was defeated on a voice vote, and, subsequently, two members requested a recorded vote.

The question before the committee, then, is the motion of the honourable member for Charleswood.

*A **COUNT-OUT VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 17, Nays 30.*

Madam Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

Madam Chairperson: The hour being past 5 o'clock, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 29, 2015

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