

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-First Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
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LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
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LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
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MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
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WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 23, 2016

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

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

Please be seated.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** And prior to moving into government business, I would like to turn your attention to the public gallery where we have in the public gallery with us today a parliamentary delegation from the German Federal State of Bavaria, accompanied by the consul general of Germany in Toronto, Mr. Walter Stechel.

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

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** To accommodate some requests of the House I have a few leaves to ask.

Would you please canvass the House to see if there's leave to move the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training from room 254 to the Chamber permanently, to follow the Estimates of the Department of Infrastructure?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to move the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training from room 254 into the Chamber permanently, to follow the Estimates of the Department of Infrastructure?

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** To the House, would you further canvass the House to see if there's leave for the Estimates of the Department of Families in room 255 to be interrupted at 5 o'clock today to allow the

Estimates of the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage to commence at 5 p.m. and be considered until the committee recesses at 6 p.m., with that section reverting to Families Estimates in room 255 on Friday, June 24th?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave for the Estimates of the Department of Families in room 255 to be interrupted at 5 p.m. today to allow the Estimates of the Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage to commence at 5 p.m. and be considered until the committee recesses at 6 p.m., with that section reverting to Families Estimates in room 255 on Friday, June 24th?

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** And, finally, at this point, Madam Speaker, would you please further canvass the House to see if there's leave to move the Estimates of the Department of Sustainable Development from room 255 into room 254 permanently, to follow the Executive Council Estimates?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to move the Estimates of the Department of Sustainable Development from room 255 into room 254 permanently, to follow the Executive Council Estimates?

Is there leave? *Agreed? [Agreed]*

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**Mr. Goertzen:** Would you please resolve into Committee of Supply.

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

#### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

\*(10:10)

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

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

The floor is now open for questions.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** And good morning to everyone. I have a question for the Premier, Madam Chair. Following the budget, as is the annual practice, the Premier met with credit rating agencies. Amongst those he met with in Toronto was Sun Life. I understand from discussions with colleagues that this was a bit unusual to meet with Sun Life at this time, considering that Sun Life has nothing to do with credit rating.

Can the Premier elaborate on those discussions with Sun Life?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I thank the member for the question. We'll get the details for the member on the amount of money that we have borrowed through Sun Life. Her administration and this administration will be also working with them and others who lend money.

Sun Life issues bonds—I think they actually issued the previous government a number of bonds for 50-year obligations. So, given that, our government is in a position of needing to borrow considerable amount of money, inheriting, as we have, a very spend-friendly government and borrow-friendly government. It's hardly unusual to meet with a lending agency, and I would encourage the member to understand that being on good terms with such as those may well be useful going forward and at least helpful in terms of making sure there's a relationship there, which we hope we can rebuild to describe as a trusting relationship based on the failures of the previous government to keep any of its major commitments in respect of getting spending under control.

So that was the purpose of that meeting and, yes, we did meet with a number of bond rating agencies but also met with the company she mentioned because they do lend money to governments and it's important, as I said earlier, to have those relationships strengthened.

**Ms. Marcelino:** I thank the Premier for the answer.

Besides other bond rating agencies and Sun Life, did the Premier meet with other creditors as well, or lenders like Sun Life?

**Mr. Pallister:** The Finance Minister—I don't have his itinerary here, but I returned to the House; the Finance Minister remained and, yes, did meet with other lending bodies, but I don't have his itinerary in front of me to actually share with the member

specifically who they were and don't recall at this point.

Of course, the major banks are also money lenders to various governments, and I know that the Finance Minister either has or plans to have restorative relationships with each of those money-lending entities and will be working diligently to do his best, as we will as a government, to protect us against a further downgrade in our credit rating.

**Ms. Marcelino:** I thank the Premier for the answer.

Besides being a big lender, Sun Life is also the largest provider of defined-contribution programs in Canada. Did the Premier discuss private pensions in Manitoba with Sun Life?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, as I've told the member numerous times, I don't normally reveal the nature of private discussions despite questions about that. I wouldn't do that if I had a private discussion with her. But I see the purpose of her question is to create some sense of fear and consternation among people, so I will simply say, no, we didn't discuss those things, and encourage her to respect the fact that if we—she and I have a private conversation, I would want it to be one which was private.

**Ms. Marcelino:** We're not interested in the personal or private discussions with the Premier—of the Premier with Sun Life, but we're also wanting to find out if, in the non-personal private discussions, was pension investments discussed in the official meeting with Sun Life.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, again, I've answered that question. We met with money lenders in an effort—and bond rating agencies in an effort to begin to restore a relationship of trust which is critical to ensuring that we have the ability to be heard with sincerity by those agencies when we make statements or commitments in respect of money-management issues, something which the previous administration had eroded over a number of years through broken commitments in respect of getting its spending problem under control, and which led to, as a consequence, a downgrade in our credit rating as a province and led to, as a consequence, additional millions of dollars going to those money—very money lenders the member is questioning me about and away from front-line services in areas of importance to Manitobans, such as health care, education, infrastructure, social services and the like.

So I'm sure the member would want to encourage us to continue, as we will, to restore a sense of trust in those relationships, and that's what we're committed to doing.

**Ms. Marcelino:** We're with the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and all of his team in restoring trust in social services and promoting—or in making sure that social programs are delivered to the best and most efficient way.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier if he still has a relationship, business relationship, with Sun Life.

**Mr. Pallister:** Yes, I do. I own a small business in Portage la Prairie which I started in 1980. The company that I had as the original sponsor for my licence was Sun Life. That would be, of course, a multinational Canadian company, the largest, at that time, distributor of financial products. The distribution of financial products at Sun Life is not handled by their bond issuing firm. In fact, they're totally different agencies of that company, so I would hope the member would not confuse the distribution of a life insurance contract by a retail distributor in Manitoba—in rural Manitoba with the responsibilities of a premier addressing the issue of borrowing tens—hundreds of millions of dollars in bonds from a company of the same name. They have different elements within their company that deal with different aspects, and so, certainly, there would be no difficulty on my part in explaining that to the member.

**Ms. Marcelino:** I personally have high regard for Sun Life. Some of our insurance products are with that company, and I have many friends and acquaintances who are employed by the company.

Madam Chair, is the Premier registered to sell Sun Life products in Manitoba and other cities in—or provinces in Canada? I'm sorry, the Premier's company.

**Mr. Pallister:** Our—my company is licensed in Manitoba. I have endeavoured to keep my licence by taking continuing education credits on an ongoing basis. For example, when I was in provincial politics in the '90s, I decided to leave, went back to the private sector, so I'm glad I kept my licence so that I was able to go back and support my family there. And I'm doing that now because politics is an uncertain career, as the member knows, as many of the former members of the House also recognize. And so staying qualified in your profession is an important aspect of that.

Know that our little firm is not licensed outside of Manitoba, unless my operating partner and friend has decided to pursue that. I'm not active in the company anymore, so I don't believe that there's any effort to become a multinational, though I'd be excited by the prospect if my partner decided to do that.

**Ms. Marcelino:** So I understand the Premier's company's still active in selling Sun Life products—is I'd want to verify. I didn't quite get it.

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, the definition of active would be a question and—our company is an independent financial advisory firm which offers products from a wide array of companies. I started with Sun Life. Presently, I don't know the breakdown of products my friend and partner places. I would expect he's doing some business with Sun Life, certainly. It is a great company, as the member's noted, and has a number of good products, but we don't—our company doesn't deal exclusively with one company or another.

**Ms. Marcelino:** I'd like to ask the Premier, besides Sun Life products, are there other products that the Premier's company is authorized to promote or sell outside of the jurisdictions of Canada?

**Mr. Pallister:** I'm sorry, I didn't get the last part because a truck went by or something and I couldn't hear the last part of the question.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Besides Sun Life products, does the—okay. Sun Life and other products: is the Premier also selling those products outside of Canada's jurisdiction?

**Mr. Pallister:** Again, as I've said to the member, I'm not active in the company. I'm the owner, but I have an operating manager who operates the company and, to my knowledge, there's not any intention to do business outside of Manitoba.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Madam Chair, I have—going on a different topic, the other day, the questions asked of the Premier were about social impact bonds. The Premier's letter to the Justice Minister says, quote, you will work to reduce the recidivism rate through an innovative social impact bond program, unquote.

\* (10:20)

I'd like to take a few minutes here so we can—the public can better understand more about the Premier's intention in proposing.

What is the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) proposing? What shape would the Premier might see him taking shape to fulfill this mandate?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I thank the member for her interest, though we did till this field pretty well with the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) the other day and, I think, had a good, productive discussion about it. I hope he would feel the same. So I'm reluctant to simply go back and cultivate that land all over again when we did all the work of discussing it.

If the member would like to refer to Hansard, I'm sure she could educate herself on the details that she's asking me about again today, and I'd encourage her to do that.

I'm sure there are other questions she might like to ask.

I'm excited about her interest, though, in the concept of reducing recidivism rates in Manitoba. It's something I think that we all want to see happen.

**Ms. Marcelino:** My interest was actually as a result of reading the Hansard, so I'd like to find out more about what the Premier and his government plans on social impact band-bonds.

Like, has the Premier's government budgeted dollars or created programs for the use of social impact bonds?

**Mr. Pallister:** Not as of yet. As I mentioned in some detail in our discussion the other day, these are conceptual only and in the planning stages at this point, and that's not something that necessarily requires a massive fiscal commitment by the taxpayers.

We are hopeful that we can proceed to make progress on reducing the rate of recidivism, and that's why the topic was raised in the letter to—the mandate letter to the minister. And this is only one, I should point out to the member, of course, as she's aware, this is only one—in fact, the member for Minto raised other suggestions in our discussion earlier this week of mechanisms that we can pursue.

Our intent would be to certainly make progress on these issues. We do want to be Manitoba's most improved province over the next four years in a number of categories, and I think this would be one that would be very desired, I think, among Manitobans, that we make progress on.

**Ms. Marcelino:** The Premier stated in Estimates two days ago that social impact bonds are innovative and

experimental programs to try to find different ways of addressing social problems and that it will be implemented in this government's first mandate.

Which community organizations or social agencies has the Premier or his ministers so far consulted?

And, specifically, what does first mandate mean? Is it within the first year of the mandate or within the first four years of the mandate?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, mandate means the term.

And consultation with numerous groups has occurred at various levels. I understand from my colleagues in our caucus, they are getting expressions of interest, actually, from community groups and interested individuals who want to see progress made on a variety of social areas where we have been lagging the country in terms of such progress, whether it be in poverty or in recidivism. The incarceration rates for young people in our province are very high, as the member knows; violent crime; teen pregnancy. There are many areas.

But, as I said to the member earlier, these are in the realm of discovery and exploration at this point. I have had contact from people in various areas of the city and around the province who are very, very interested in being part of this, or, at least, certainly many are interested in learning more because they are new, and so it's a new topic of discussion for many people.

But, as the member knows, there are opportunities to lead and opportunities to follow. For example, in the area of the CPP, the members of the opposition appear to want us to follow. They're very excited about us following. Other provinces were excited in using the opportunity to lead the discussion along the lines of benefiting Manitobans and Canadians more as a consequence of the modernization of Canada Pension Plan. Some enjoy following. We enjoy leading.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Concentrating on the social impact bonds and not on CPP yet, the Premier had mentioned he had made preliminary discussions with organizations or individuals interested in this endeavour.

Could the Premier let us know which organizations or individuals so far he has consulted?

**Mr. Pallister:** I'm sorry, again. I apologize to the member. I was distracted and I missed the second part of that too.

**Ms. Marcelino:** The Premier (Mr. Pallister) mentioned that he had made preliminary consultations with organizations and individuals in pursuit of exploring or discovering this new concept. Which individuals or organizations so far has the Premier consulted?

**Mr. Pallister:** Again, my meetings, apart from with lobbyists, which I believe the member can check a lobbyist registry that's publicly available, my meetings are private to me and private to the people who come forward to discuss things with me. And I would hope the member would respect that. I have certainly respected that when in opposition and continued to expect that that would be the right way to do things.

But, on the issue of the bonds, I would encourage the member to recognize there is great support for the concept out there. There's been a tremendous amount of work done on Social Enterprise Strategy around the province. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network has worked with the previous government in terms of developing a strategy on social enterprise and part of that with the Social Enterprise Working Group, which is a group of Winnipeg practitioners. There's been great consultation done, both by us in opposition and continuing in government by the previous government.

I would encourage the member to recognize that the strategies her own government laid out were supportive of social impact bonds. I would encourage her to understand. She could consult with the present member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief) or the former member for Fort Garry, and she would find that both of them put their signature on a plan which endorsed the use of social impact bonds and encouraged their adoption by the previous government. It wasn't the case that they did choose to act, to lead. They chose not to act, in fact, but that was not necessarily the view and certainly was not the view of some of their Cabinet members.

And so there is certainly been a lot of consultation done. I'll just read from the Social Enterprise Strategy report itself, which says that social impact bonds, I'm quoting now, are social finance instruments that enable public-private social enterprise partnerships in which the government pays a return on private sector investment in social enterprises that provide evidence-based preventative savings to the government through financial and

social returns on investment. Payments or returns to the private investor are tied to successful outcome.

So the actual—the government's own report recommends that these be something that are pursued. That wasn't the case. We expect we will be looking at options, continuing in our work to pursue them.

Under the signature of the member for Point Douglas and the former member for Fort Garry, there is a—there are comments here talking in support of these things: inspiring solutions, focused on a social mission, innovative vehicle to create jobs, train workers, provide opportunities for those who otherwise might not have been given a chance, by providing a path to work that otherwise may not have been there, changing lives, families and communities. It's very favourable, you know, comments from members of the former government. And I would share the hope that we're open to innovation in these areas and would want to make sure that we explore every avenue for improving our social circumstances here in the province.

**Ms. Marcelino:** I'd—of the organizations mentioned by the Premier, I thought I did hear SEED Winnipeg being part of the organizations consulted. Has the Premier consulted with SEED Winnipeg?

\* (10:30)

**Mr. Pallister:** We've actually consulted not only with agencies around the city and around the province, we've consulted with other provinces and provincial governments as well, some of whom have been proceeding with the development of social impact bonds.

I can share with the member that, though the concept is relatively new and the results are early days, there is some hope that there may be some success.

Certainly, in the United States in 2012, the city of New York, Mayor Bloomberg, which he calls his program pay-for-success financing, introduced the first program in his area called ABLE, and it was focused on recidivism and reducing recidivism rates of adolescent offenders using mechanisms like training and counselling. Interestingly, the financier of that interesting program was Goldman Sachs.

In November of 2012, later that same year, the federal government announced through the new—through the what is called now Employment and Social Development Department, announced that

it was open to facilitating social impact bonds. So consultation has occurred at the national-interprovincial level as well as at the local level.

The current federal government is also exploring the use of instruments such as social impact bonds. In fact, the mandate letter for the now-Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jean-Yves Duclos, includes direction to work with the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour to develop social innovation and social finance strategy. So the concept is being explored by other levels of government.

Here in Manitoba, unfortunately, we lead in many social problems; I would believe we should lead in finding innovative solutions to address those social problems, and this is the focus that our government will have.

In May, two years ago now, Saskatchewan became the first province to implement a social impact bond. But I would mention, and I mentioned this to the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) earlier, that, as well, a New Brunswick-led government, now defeated—in Nova Scotia also, was very strong and encouraged by the possibility of developing a social impact bond strategy in their province. So this is not an issue that—as you can see, Madam Chair, I mean, this is a concept that's being explored by a Republican mayor, Democratic governors, Labour governments, NDP—provincially led NDP provinces, a federally led Liberal government and a Saskatchewan Party-led Saskatchewan government. This isn't—doesn't have to be an issue of partisanship. If the members choose not to make it that, that would be wise.

In May of 2014, Saskatchewan developed an SIB, a social impact bond. Its purpose was to support at-risk single moms. It was called the Sweet Dreams program. And it's a project that, in its early days, according to Premier Wall, is experiencing some good success. Of course, what we're after, what all of us are after, is sustained success. And this is, of course, the fundamental challenge we face in a province that has been so poorly fiscally managed for a long time that with the massive debt accumulation and ongoing structural deficits, sustainability of any program is put into question and doubt.

I just met this morning with some social agencies and their representatives who are very, very concerned, of course, about the fiscal situation in our province. They understand it and they understand the

risks that it entails. They understand the risks of a credit rating downgrade. They've seen that. They've seen the consequences of poor financial management within their work as social planners or as social service workers. As child-care workers, they've seen the challenges faced by children in households that are poorly managed, financially and otherwise.

So bringing a level of sustainable management that incorporates innovative practices to the province of Manitoba is our aim, and that is where we will continue to focus.

**Ms. Marcelino:** I appreciate the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) reference of the situations obtaining in other jurisdictions, but I didn't hear the answer to my question if the Premier or the department tasked with exploring social impact bonds have met or consulted with SEED Winnipeg?

**Mr. Pallister:** I appreciate the irony and I hope the member does, too, of her questions in respect of our desire to consult. I have noted with regularity the ridicule with which any response we make in question period to a question that references consultation is met by members of the opposition. And it's disappointing to me when members rise to say they are working on a project and consulting with people. Unfortunately, members of the questioner's party catcall and say we should take immediate action. They are doing that now, of course, with the Canada Pension Plan. They're saying jump on behind every other province and take immediate action. They haven't asked us about consultation. It's interesting. If we were to offer it as a solution, they'd ridicule it. Yet, today, the member says, who are you consulting with a specific group she names. We're consulting regularly. We'll continue to consult. We believe in consultation. We believe in listening to front-line workers, as an example. We believe in listening to the agencies who work on our social challenges.

I just this morning met with representatives from more than 10 agencies around the city that work with children at risk. This is the kind of consultation all our caucus members and Cabinet members pursue. This is as a matter of course. And so, as far as specific agencies, I won't start listing off private meetings. I told the member I will not, but I will assure her and all Manitobans that we are very, very open to listening and we are learning as we listen from Manitobans.

And I would encourage the member to remind her colleagues that when one of our Cabinet



members in a question period response talks about their willingness to listen and talks about consulting with Manitobans, that that should never be, never, a subject for ridicule.

**Ms. Marcelino:** There was—there's no intent whatsoever to ridicule the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or his colleagues. Consultation is very important and it's not a matter to be treated lightly. And about CPP, the Premier—or the Finance Minister had been the Finance critic for years now, and the question of CPP had been a hot topic since 2013 or so. So the Premier now and his Finance Minister should have had some stand or—on this issue, but so far we found out that that's not so.

Anyway, I didn't hear a response to my question, so I'll take it that the Premier or his Cabinet minister has not consulted with SEED Winnipeg, and I'm fine with that.

Will the Premier give us some indication if his government will provide upfront grants to private agencies or individuals who will undertake the bold and innovative move of solving social problems through social impact bonds?

**Mr. Pallister:** The member reveals in her question that she did not read Hansard in respect to the discussion because, as the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) knows full well, there are no upfront grants involved in this model. That's not the concept. The concept is for private sector funding to fund these programs and, if it works, for them to receive some small return on the investment they make. So the answer, of course, to that question is unnecessary given my previous detailed explanation of the program to the member.

But the member talks about consultation and then attacks the Finance Minister as if to say that he should have, as Finance critic for the last year and half, have consulted with Manitobans to have a position on the CPP when her own party didn't have a position on the CPP, didn't make public. It wasn't a position developed by a government that was in power for 17 years. That's interesting. It's interesting that a government wouldn't have a position on an issue of that importance as government, but now in opposition, claims it has a position. The position it's taken is that we should follow along with other provinces because they all agreed and we haven't. That's not a position at all. That's just a followership advocacy program. There's opportunities in this. There's a perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime, once in maybe two generations opportunity to discuss the

Canada Pension Plan, which is germane and important to a very, very big number of Canadians, and to get it right would be something that we should do. We shouldn't miss that opportunity. The previous government missed that opportunity.

\* (10:40)

The previous government claims it consulted. It did pre-budget consultations which led to no budget. It did pre-budget consultations which led to massive increases in taxes no one asked for. There's real consultation, and that's what we're doing. And there's the kind of pretend consultation the previous administration did, that it should be embarrassed about, and I hope is, in hindsight. Certainly, the people in Manitoba rejected that type of approach.

It wasn't pre-budget consultation that led to a difference in family—average family income of \$4,000 between people living in Regina and people living in Winnipeg. It was a lack of consultation, certainly a lack of listening; massive tax hikes that have penalized Manitobans, made it harder for them, harder than any other Canadians, given the rapid increase in taxation imposed on Manitobans, to save for retirement.

That's the reality of the previous administration: extreme difficulty faced by many Manitoba families to find the money to save, to find the money—

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** The—

**Mr. Pallister:** Oh, I'm not done, not even close, unless you're going to shut me off.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Not at all.

**Mr. Pallister:** No, Manitobans that we've consulted with are not happy about their reduced—because of the high NDP taxes—their reduced ability to save for retirement. They're not happy about it at all.

In fact, Manitobans, in many categories, lead the country in living cheque to cheque. And they've been put there because of higher taxes by a previous administration that couldn't get its spending under control and simply jacked up their taxes.

Now they—in opposition they have all the answers. They say, of course, we should jump in on the CPP.

Well, Manitobans, working families, are concerned because they're paying, for example, on their benefits at work now an 8 per cent surcharge

they didn't have to pay a few years ago; 8 per cent on their benefits at work, 8 per cent on their house insurance. There's money they don't have to save. It's gone—went to the government; previous administration had it, didn't seem to be able to reduce their deficits with it and continued to have an appetite for raising taxes and went ahead and raised the PST, went to court to fight for the right to do it, took more money off the kitchen tables of Manitobans. Manitobans have less money to save as a consequence of that. Disposable incomes went down in many households.

Now they come in, they say, we'll jump on board with the CPP proposal that's been developed very quickly, when we have an opportunity to actually consider the impact that these changes may have on working families, and particularly low-income families, a lot of whom are led by single moms. This is the type of thing we're using the opportunity to advocate for. These are the people we're concerned about.

This plan does nothing; this proposed plan does next to nothing for low-income people. It simply proposes to displace the guaranteed income supplement and other supports for working families with a slightly higher CPP benefit but doesn't leave anybody netting any more than they had before.

This program's designed for millennials in good income circumstances. And the premise of the design of this plan is that that is the focus. And so an enhanced CPP will solve the problem for millennials in 25 years who don't put aside enough money for their own retirement by raising the premium for everyone else, including people between—people the age of the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), for example, will be forced to pay more in premiums but won't receive any of the benefits.

That's the consequence of this; will take money away from working families and it will take money away without benefit to them.

This isn't a generous thing. CPP is not a federal handout program. It's a program funded by working people and their employers, and they've—

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** The honourable First Minister's time is up.

**Ms. Marcelino:** We fully appreciate how CPP is funded. And we disagreed with the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) perspective on millennials that being benefited by enhanced or expanded CPP. But we'll leave it at that. We'll agree to disagree.

And we'll proceed with the resolutions now.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Seeing no further questions, I will now deal with the resolution.

The last item to be considered for these Estimates is item 1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 2.1.

At this point, we would ask that the First Minister's staff leave the table for consideration of this last item.

The floor is now open for questions.

Seeing none, we'll move to consideration of the resolution.

Resolution 2.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,107,000 for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

Shall the resolution pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** The resolution is accordingly passed.

This completes the Estimates of Executive Council—

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, not yet, you haven't mentioned item 2 here.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** To avoid any confusion, we're just going to redo what we just did.

The last item to be considered for these Estimates is item 1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 2.1.

At this point, we would ask that the First Minister's staff leave the table for consideration of this last item.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Ms. Marcelino:** We did some research, Madam Chair, and what we found is that when you raise the minimum wage by 50 cents, it's a 4.5 per cent increase, pretty small in comparison to a 39 per cent raise. The last time the Premier sat in Cabinet, he froze minimum wage seven times.

Just a few weeks ago, the Premier and his Cabinet gave themselves a significant salary

increase, but refused to commit to raising the minimum wage for those who need it most.

At the very least, Madam Chair, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his Cabinet should hold the line on their salaries and take a reduction until they keep their promise of presenting a budget without deficit.

So, in the spirit of ensuring that the voices of those who need it most are heard, I urge this Premier and his Cabinet to reconsider the wage they gave themselves while working to cut funds from the services families rely on and supports to families who need it—who need them most.

So, in line item 2.1.(a), we propose that the Premier and president of the council's salary be reduced to \$56,000.

**Mr. Pallister:** The member disrespects the process that all members supported, which was that salaries for all members of the Legislature and Cabinet are determined in legislation by an independent commissioner.

The member puts false information on the record when she misstates the reality that members do not set their own salaries; they are set by this independent commissioner.

\* (10:50)

The member fails to acknowledge in her preamble that her own previous Cabinet ministers broke those rules in principle, that they disrespected the laws which set the stage for the establishment of this mechanism in the first place, that they went to court to fight to take away the right of Manitobans to actually have a vote on major tax hike proposals, and that, in so doing, they demonstrated complete disrespect for the structures established to protect Manitobans in the first place.

Now they mistakenly put on the record, deliberately and maliciously, that they are in support of the old system which would have members set their own compensation. This is not a system we support. We support the system of an independent commissioner. We believe that is the right and fair way for members of the Legislature to be—to have their compensation determined and that is what we support. The members—if the members support going back to the old system, as is indicated by the member's preamble, then they should come out publicly and say they want to set their own salaries.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** To do this procedurally correct, the interim leader had moved a motion.

It has been moved by the honourable interim leader, that line item 2.1.(a), the Premier and the president of the council's salary be reduced to \$56,000.

The motion is in order. Are there any questions or comments on the motion?

**Mr. Pallister:** I really appreciate the opportunity to explain further to all members the danger of what the members of the opposition and the NDP are now proposing.

What they are proposing, just to go back in time to an old model, a previous model which the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), I believe, is the only one who has experience at this table, besides myself, and that member knows the challenges that created for all members of the Legislative Assembly when they were voting on their own compensation, when they were deciding what their salaries would be and what their benefits would be. They were put into a tremendously difficult situation when they went back to their constituencies.

Now the reality of the new situation is that all elected members of this place have their salaries determined by an independent commissioner, independent of them. In this way, they are able to explain to their constituents that they are not the people responsible for determining what their compensation is.

What the member proposes in her resolution is that we return to the old way of doing things and arbitrarily we, at this table, are responsible for making those determinations, not an independent commissioner.

In other words, we will be put back into a position of constantly being evaluated based on self-interest determinations as opposed to independent determinations. This is the wrong way to do this. It is not going to serve the members of the opposition or the members of the third party at all well.

If this resolution was to succeed in its intent, it would essentially change the nature of how we determine our compensation here, and, in so doing, the member would do an extreme disservice to her own colleagues. She would do an extreme disservice, I think, to the people of Manitoba at the same time,

and she would certainly return us to the old, tired approach that was discarded by this government years ago. So she's actually proposing a resolution which runs counter to what Gary Doer stood for, for years, and which he certainly, were he here, and if he had the opportunity, would tell the member and her colleagues they were deeply, deeply, misguided in their intent under this resolution.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Again, we will agree to disagree with the Premier (Mr. Pallister). We respect the independent counsel's decision. What we lament is that the Premier and his government refuse to hear the pleas and the situation of many, many, everyday Manitobans who need an increase in minimum wage.

So I move, that line item 2.1.(a), the Premier and the president of the council's salary be reduced to 56 per cent—\$56,000.

**Mr. Pallister:** Again, there is no greater disregard for the working people of our province ever demonstrated, in my opinion, in the history of Manitoba, than by the previous administration. The total disregard, the total disrespect for working Manitobans and families and seniors, of going to them, knocking at their door, promising them eyeball to eyeball they wouldn't raise their taxes, and then inflicting on them the largest taxes in the history of the province of Manitoba, and in so many different categories. It impacted virtually every family, every individual in the province of Manitoba negatively, took money right off their kitchen tables, and now the member states that her concern is for those same people whose incomes were eroded by the very decision she was part of, at the Cabinet table.

Now she proposes as a solution, in an attempt at an optical illusion she's trying to create that she somehow has and her colleagues have some compassion for these very people who they raided, who they took money away from, who they took rights away from, is—it's specious. It's specious, Madam Chair. It is incorrect. The assertion is wrong. The assumption is wrong. The intent of the bill is wrong. The proposal the member makes is wrong, and were Gary Doer sitting beside me right now, he'd agree with me in every single respect.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Madam Chair, the Premier is saying our government knocked on doors saying there'll be no tax increase. The Premier, during the campaign, also made a promise that he won't claw back seniors' tax rebate, and what happened?

But, anyway, my—I would like the question to be posed. Thank you.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Shall the motion pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

#### Voice Vote

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

#### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Yes, recorded vote, Madam Chair.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** A formal vote has been requested by two members.

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

*The committee recessed at 10:56 a.m.*

*The committee resumed at 11:09 a.m.*

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Okay. We will now come to order.

And we're presenting the resolution 2.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,107,000, for Executive Council, General Administration, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

#### **Resolution agreed to.**

\* (11:10)

This concludes the Estimates of Supply for—of Executive Council.

As previously announced, this section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

Do we wish to have a little recess?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

### AGRICULTURE

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

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

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Agriculture):** I do.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** The honourable Minister for Agriculture.

**Mr. Eichler:** It's a pleasure to provide opening remarks on my department Estimates to the Committee of Supply for 2016-2017.

'Agriculture' is a complex sector. It encompasses various industries, interweaves with supports, other sectors such as manufacturing, trade and transportation. It is vital to our economy. Manitoba is home to 19.1 acres of farmland with a diverse production base that generates \$6 billion in cash receipts.

As an economic driver, the 'agriculture' and agri-food sector employs over 34,000 Manitobans. Knowing the power and potential of this sector, we are committed to collaborate with industry leaders to promote business and job creation with the sector.

Earlier this month, when I presented to the standing committee on agriculture and forestry, I shared our perspective on international market access priorities for the Canadian agriculture and agricultural food sector. I expressed Manitoba's concern about the international market access to provide our recommendations on export and trade policy investments and regulations.

I've also spoken twice to the federal Ag Minister, Lawrence MacAulay, and have raised a number of our issues with him, again, with our sights set on increasing and capitalizing on our competitive advantages. I also expect him to take me up on my invitation to visit Manitoba in the near future. Well, I know he will then witness for himself the fact that Manitoba agriculture capacity is key to the profitability of the Canadian industry.

There are two well-received first steps to 'reiterate' our stance on economic growth to our federal, provincial, territorial partners.

We are confident that the Estimates provide the tools required for economic growth to our constantly evolving industry. Our sector is unique and diverse, a feature that serves us well. We'll ensure that our resources are allocated to the right places for maximum outcomes. We'll make certain that any gaps in resources are eliminated, as well as the same rigour applied to duplication and overlaps. For example, we will ensure that the best suite of business park management programs are equipped with resources and staff required to provide the tools necessary for farmers. We'll ensure that we meet our matching commitments to our federal-provincial agreement in Growing Forward 2.

Twenty-five, sixteen GF preliminary provincial expenditures of \$15.5 million meet our required matching contribution and allow us access to 2015-16 expenditures—federal expenditures of \$23.4 million in federal expenditures. For every dollar GF2 has expended, industry has matched two and a half dollars.

I've been mandated with a growth strategy for Agriculture with the goal of fulfilling our government's platform commitments. We have a large land mass with diverse production base. Our agricultural food sector is comprised of a full range of small and medium enterprises to large-scale processors. We will continue to 'engrow' in a manner that recognizes diversity and the potential of the sector. Growth in value-added processing and exports, commodities and food is necessary for economic growth and job creation.

While our diversity in Manitoba serves us well, trade—trade also plays a significant role in our sector. We export just under 5.2 billion in goods and 67 per cent of manufactured food products leave the province. We support the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, for expanded exports to protect jobs. As my colleagues of Growth, Enterprise and Trade have pointed out previously, inclusion in the TPP would mean an increase of approximately \$250 million per year in sales for Manitoba exporters.

In joining the New West Partnership, we also allow us to enhance our trades of goods and services within our Canadian market and better compete for labour investment and trade with the other large economic regions.

My ministerial statement on June 16th recognized the International Year of the Pulses, 'redidid' the diversity of our sector and our sector's capacity to provide 'nutrious' foods to meet our goal man–global demands. Our government's commitment to reduce unnecessary red tape will provide the necessary future support to trade and business growth. We are committed to be transparent. Industry consultations will play a predominant role in forming new trade agreements and federal-provincial territory framework such as Growing Forward 3. We will consult with producers, agriculture, agri-food and agriproducts industries to ensure Manitoba voices are heard as well as rebuild on previous frameworks of APF, Growing Forward and Growing Forward 2.

In my short time as minister, I have met and received valuable feedback with a number of groups critical to the industry including Manitoba Chicken Producers, Manitoba 'cranola' growers association, Keystone Agricultural Producers, Manitoba pulse soybean growers association, Manitoba Pork, Farmers of North America, Manitoba Egg Farmers, the Business Council of Manitoba, the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba. I take their input and suggestions seriously and look forward to meeting with more groups.

Animal disease outbreaks have given significant impacts on animal health, welfare and trade. Early detection and rapid response in collaboration with key stakeholders is critical in limiting these impacts. Biosecurity is a crucial component, especially during this time when new cases of PEDv have been identified in Manitoba.

I have personally been to our incident command centre to see the work in progress of the Manitoba ag team. The Province and Manitoba pork sector continue to work together to prevent PEDv from severely impacting Manitoba swine herds. Prior to this, it had been 16 months since our last positive case in Manitoba, which only five cases were found. All five eliminated the disease from the pigs on their farms. It is important to note that the virus does not pose a risk to humans or other animals, nor does it affect the safety of pork to eat.

Manitoba will continue to make improvements in efficiencies and laboratory diagnostics, disease investigations and surveillance in order to mitigate biosecurity threats while protecting trade and economic opportunities—also continue to ensure this

is a priority issue with my federal-provincial colleagues.

As no jurisdiction can tackle this issue alone, Growing Forward 2, food safety and farm program, offers funding to mitigate risk factors to food safety, biosecurity, traceability, plant and animal health. To date, the program has provided over 637 applications and projects for the adoption assurance of beneficial management practice that mitigates risk, \$5 million in approved grant funding which leveraged \$13.5 million of total project, a ration of 2.7. The program was supportive of emerging issues. For example, the caps for swine biosecurity projects doubled, and the surveillance of high-risk traffic areas was funded when PEDv emerged as a new disease threat.

Strategic investments drives innovation and helps producers and processors become more competitive in world markets. Agriculture was one of those sectors of leading way in innovation, and we continue to partner with business and community leaders, create new, innovative economic opportunities. Growing Forward 2 innovation program has approved \$46.9 million in grants to ensure Manitoba has capacity to develop innovations that advance the competitiveness and sustainability of agriculture, agriproduct and agri-food industries. One example, Manitoba Beef and Forage Initiative, a collaborative applied research and agricultural innovations centre that uses science-based research to benefit valuable ecosystem, improve producer 'profitability' and build awareness around the beef and forage industry. Up to 20 research projects will be conducted this year.

\*(11:20)

And the consumer demand for local food continues to increase purchases for foods made or processed to Manitoba. This demand for local foods provide Manitoba's small-kale–scale food production and processing sector with a viable market which will grow demand for their products and their businesses.

Manitoba has supported growth in the local food industry by funding small food processors enterprising, going through—going forward to growing viable commercialization and providing technical support services to food processing entrepreneurs. We are unique that we produce more than we consume. Food processing produces about one quarter of all goods manufactured in Manitoba each year, with \$4 billion in sales.

The department has made growth in agribusiness a priority. Our targets are 5.5 million, 22.2—in 2022, 2 billion of bio products production by 2018. We are prepared to support the growth, job creation. Increased economic activities relies on success expanding into the business.

I just want to conclude that, after being sworn in, I did attend Manitoba's convocation of graduates at the university diploma program. It was inspiring to meet young individuals going forward in filling the agricultural sector. I just want to conclude my comments at that and look forward to our debate.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Yes, Madam Chair.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Okay, the honourable member for The Maples.

**Mr. Saran:** First of all, I want to thank all those hard-working men and woman that are in the Agriculture Department throughout the province. And we look forward to the potential there is in Manitoba in terms of not only in crop and livestock production, but further processing and whether that includes local goods or defined food.

I am new to this department—I am the critic to this department and, also, before that, I have no exposure to agriculture in a Canadian environment. But I born—I was born in India, in a farming family, and we have joined family about 20 people living in the same—under the same roof. And my uncles and their families—and we were doing crop like wheat. And there are three crops in the year: what will be wheat, then there will be some kind of vegetable, then there will be corn. And, similarly, either it will be cotton and then wheat and then—but, you know, agriculture had changed over there over the years, and a rice crop was not there to see at that time, but now that's the main crop over there. So I think, as we go along, and agriculture is changing throughout the world, and we have to change accordingly.

And, also, I want to mention, like, I have also some experience with the animals. We used to have about eight or 10 water buffaloes, and milked these—their milk was used and still is used. And we have a camel, and we had a goat, and they have different habits. And at one time, one—I was to take the camel

from my—his barn to the farm, and I try untie the rope, and he grabbed me from here, and—but I was fortunate; I have turban, and he took turban out, and I was saved; otherwise, he could have thrown me down. Camel has a habit to sit on you and kill you. So that camel did not like me, but I did have no choice. I had to take him to the farm every day during the summertime when I'm off from the school.

But I was the only person who went to school because, at that time, like, sending children to—a farmer wouldn't send his children to school because it will be a wastage of time. By that time, they can raise some buffaloes and they can make money. Why waste time?

And, so, but I was fortunate. My family sent me to school, and I was able to go through that. Now I'm interested in learning more about the farming. And, perhaps, having the knowledge about back over there and over here, over there some maximum farm, we have about 35 acres. But, normally, a farm will—there's a limit on the farm; you can have only 17 acres. You cannot have more than 17 acres. That was the law. And that's the main—maybe that's the way to keep a rural area diversified and keep rural area populated, and perhaps something we can think over here, too, instead of having bigger, bigger, bigger, farms.

So I think of—those kinds of discussions will help both ways to combine two cultures and—but I—as I was talking to, but sometime I'm thinking, too, if we have to immigrate animals from that country over here, will they speak the language or they have to write some kind of *[inaudible]* something that like that. But I don't think we will—I will find that. Maybe in the veterinary of people they might have some kind of research.

And after this—so that's my background and, hopefully, we will enjoy this exploring through the questions and answers and throughout our next four years. And after that I know I may come back and be a minister, and you know, in agriculture there is saying when you *[inaudible]* in agriculture there's some saying after 12 years even a heap of manure has his say. So I would not say it's because of the policies of the PC, but I think they have their turn, so they got their turn.

And I will leave there and I'm ready to ask questions.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** We thank the critic from the official opposition for those remarks.

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

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

**Mr. Eichler:** I'd like to introduce Dori Gingera-Beauchemin as my deputy minister. Loni Scott is my assistant deputy minister and she's in charge of agri-industry advancement and development; Maurice Bouvier, assistant deputy minister, Agri-Food and Technology Transfer; David Hunt, assistant deputy minister, Strategic Policy and Innovation; and Ann Leibfried, executive finance officer.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

**Mr. Saran:** Global, please. Global.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Is that agreed? Is global agreed? *[Agreed]*

It is 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. Saran:** Could the minister please provide a list of our technical staff appointed by order-in-council. Could the list please include their names, roles and wages in the minister's office?

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Eichler:** The special assistant to the minister is Dennis Schindler. He was a order-in-council on May the 3rd of 2016. And executive assistant to the minister, Thomas Gilbraith, which was appointed May the 16th.

**Mr. Saran:** I thank the minister.

I would ask him—I request him to give the roles and especially wages in the minister's office, say how much each is making, how much other officials are making.

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

The special assistant, there's a range of \$67,993 to \$81,270. And the starting salary is \$82,896 for my special assistant.

My executive assistant, the salary range is \$56,002 to \$66,877. And the starting salary for my executive assistant is \$56,002.

**Mr. Saran:** I thank the minister.

And I did not ask the minister's salary, how much he's making. I think I know approximately, but I would ask the minister the question: Does the minister plan not to accept a 37 or 38 per cent increase to his wage? And it will be unethical to receive this increase while people on minimum wage are not getting an increase.

**Mr. Eichler:** Well, you know, I didn't know if this question was going to come up, and I'm a bit disappointed that it did, and we know that this came up earlier this morning and in other discussions as well.

The member's very much aware that our salaries are set by an independent commissioner. I'm not sure if he and his party wants to go down that path. I can assure the member that I certainly don't want to set my salary at all. I believe that's open for the commissioner to do. And, if they wanted to go down that path, I guess they can bring legislation forward to do that. I would say it would be a very dangerous precedent in which I would not want to be going down.

We know there's legislation in place to appoint a independent commissioner that we were supposed to do within six months of being sworn in as government. That individual, then, would be responsible to consult with the general public, look at other jurisdictions in regards to where our salaries are at. I don't know if the member was aware of that when he was in Cabinet. I don't know if the other members of his caucus have had an opportunity to talk about that.

I take my position very, very seriously, and I can tell you when I was recruiting candidates and—for our party, I can tell you very clearly there was not one person that asked me about how much we got paid. They wanted to know whether or not they were going to be able to meet the demands of the general public.

Now, I don't know how hard the member works. I know I come in at 6 in the morning, and I'm very



proud of that fact. I don't care what time he comes in, and I don't care what time any other member comes in. Everybody has a responsibility; every elected official has a responsibility to be held to account. If we're not responsible, the citizens of Manitoba have a right, as they should, to determine whether or not they want to re-elect us.

Now, I don't know what you feel about what you get paid. Maybe you feel you get paid more than enough or maybe you feel you get not paid enough. But that's the decision you have to make when you decide to put your name on the line.

Now, I would not want to revert back to us setting our salary, but I will leave it up to you to make that judgment call, but I have no regrets for what I receive. If you look at the executive sector in regards to salaries, I can assure you that our salaries are way below what the general population makes in regards to Executive Council. And running a corporation, whether it be the Department of Agriculture, whether it would be Department of Justice—I know the member from Minto probably took quite a pay cut to come and become an MLA, and that's the decision he made.

When I had my business, I'm not 'braggocious,' but I was very successful. Again, I worked really hard for my money. I don't make any apologies for that. And I don't think we should make any apologies for what we make as government or whether or not we're ministers or as MLAs. I think that that's up to each individual.

And I regret that that's a path the member wanted to go down, but that's my views on it, and he's entitled to his. And I'll leave it at that. I hope that answers the question for him clearly enough in regards to—on my salary.

**Mr. Saran:** Well, I don't want to go too far into this matter, but it was bothering me, and even when I go to bed at nighttime, how come people, newcomers, they come, they have to work on minimum wage and they have to establish their families and they are not being—their salary is not being increased?

One way or other, I think it will be far better for the government, because they have to pay less Rent Assist, if their salaries increased.

And, as far as that goes, I remember that when the president got elected in India at one time, and his salary was set up to some amount, but he refuses to take that amount because people were poor. He said, I don't want to, because of—those people are poor and

therefore I don't want to take that amount of money. I will take less amount of money. But I think it's—that's a different story.

I'm not asking going too far in that situation, but I'm worried about the new immigrants. I'm worried about low-income people. Also, I'm thinking other way around too. Our government can—may save some money on Rent Assist if their salary goes higher, and that amount we won't have to pay and we will save some amount over there. But I don't want to go too far into it. I just—that was something bothering me and I have to bring about and have to have my say. But I will go through harder questions.

With an international trade deal like TPP and CETA, there are provisions for the elimination of supply-management systems. Supply management is an excellent system which provides stability to farmers and retailers of the dairy, egg, chicken and turkey agriculture sectors.

Could the minister commit support to the supply-managed agriculture sectors?

**Mr. Eichler:** While we're getting some more information on that, I just want to come back and assure the member in regards to salaries.

Part of my mandate, and I would encourage the member to look at all the ministers' mandate letters, and I—again, as I said earlier on, I take my job very seriously, and part of that mandate letter is to create jobs. And agriculture's a good place to do that.

I cannot tell you how excited I am about—as the new Minister of Agriculture, to create those jobs. And I agree a hundred per cent with the member in regards to immigrants that come in. I'm very supportive of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. I can tell you there's a huge success rate.

And I would ask the member and his opposition government to join us in to ensure that we have those opportunities for those immigrants to come and work in a number of those jobs.

I know that HyLife, in regards to their plant in Neepawa, has brought in a large number—a large number—from the Filipinos. I cannot tell you—they are just elated. A friend of mine has a manufacturing business in the city. Again, he employs mostly Filipinos. He cannot find a better working class of people. They're reliable, they're dependable and they don't ask questions. They move forward. They get the work done.

\* (11:40)

And I can tell the member seriously that immigrants—I'm an immigrant, like the member opposite. And I welcome the opportunities and the opportunity. Canada has a vast array of opportunities and immigrants come here with that dream. They come here with that opportunity in mind to ensure that they want to make their life better. I grew up poor, too, and I don't make any apologies for that. That was the way—the card I was dealt when I was a young man and we all know that we come to Canada to make a better living, and those people you talk about that come as immigrants, they're looking for that opportunity.

So I just want to encourage the member to get on side with us because we will be creating those jobs, not only in the agriculture sector but also through processing and new innovation ways of finishing our product right here at home before we export it out.

But, now, back to your question in regards to supply management—thank you, Madam Chair. Really excited, as you remember my critic for that, in my opening comments, I talked about the TPP in regards to supply management.

Now, I have met with the dairy producers as I stated, also, with the poultry producers as well. And they are so pumped. We're going to see significant growth in those sectors within the next year. They are anticipating at least a 10 per cent growth in the dairy, in the chicken and, also, in the egg marketing plans as well. We will be seeing new opportunities come, new jobs created as a result of that, and Manitoba will ensure that supply manage producers receive compensation through the implementation.

I know the federal government made this very clear when it was brought forward and, although this has not passed, as the minister's—the member's very much aware, but once it is implemented, if it is fully implemented—which I encourage the member to support us in that endeavour—that we do get it right.

So I think that's really important, but that's a very good question and we look forward to hoping that answers all his concerns on that issue.

**Mr. Saran:** Yes. Thanks, Minister, for that answer.

And also I go a little bit go back to the immigrant situation. When I came I worked in BC and picked strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and apples on high trees. It was dangerous and there were no safety rules there. Somebody had to handle the ladder and the bag and hanging there and then you

are picking from the high trees—higher trees, those apples, so it was kind of scary.

So we can see, under this situation, when an immigrant comes over here they are—they don't want to lose jobs, they don't want to go away, and adverse conditions they will be working.

So it's up to the government to do—take care of them and make more better for them and make better—easier, but I think our problem is that we don't have that much time to go on that. I would love to discuss that hours and hours, but we don't have that much time.

So a further question I would ask: Could the minister please indicate how the government intends to support the supply-managed agriculture sectors which would be impacted by the ratification of these trade deals?

**Mr. Eichler:** The member raises a very good question, and a very important one.

And, as the member knows, I have invited him and also the Liberal member to our first outreach in regards to working with the various sectors. The first one will be June the 28th, which will be down in the Golden Boy Room. And I know the member has agreed that he will attend, and I think he'll learn a lot by meeting with those sectors as well.

And also, then, we'll have a follow-up consultation meeting on July the 12th in Portage. And I've extended that invitation as well. And he can hear first-hand, exactly, because the producers will be there and the various commodity groups will be there and also the restaurants, the financial institutions. We got a large base of which we're going to draw from, and we take our responsibilities very seriously on that.

And I can assure the member that our Manitoba supply management groups are very well organized. They want to be ensured that regulation don't 'brog' them down in regards to red tape. And—excuse me, the egg producers are very proactive. They've moved to—from caged birds to open area, and they're supplying all the McDonald's with their eggs right here in Manitoba, which is a huge bust. We're way ahead of the other provinces in that respect. In regards to the dairy producers, we're going to see a 10 per cent growth there as well as we move forward with them. And they're very excited.

Both the supply management groups are also opening up new opportunities for new producers as

well in order to ensure that new producers have the opportunity to get into that business, and I'm very pleased with that sector. And I know with the young producers that dairy producers in particular have opened that door to a number of new individuals, so they're able to take advantage of that opportunity.

So we're seeing the industry grow and we'll continue to work with them hand in hand to ensure that biosecurity is important and those other things that get in their way to make sure that they're viable.

**Mr. Saran:** I—still, I'm not clear how that ratification will affect the producers over here and what kind of a program will be—to help these producers so that, whatever the effects that the TPP have, that could be neutralized.

**Mr. Eichler:** Yes. The—for—I'll give the member some examples.

Now, this is operated by the federal government, so the member's clear. It's not a provincial responsibility to ensure that they have increases or protections in place for their income. But they will be reimbursed anything that's less than their quota. For example, the rules within the region ensure regulations adhere to the international science-based standards to ensure enforceable and consistent custom procedures. TPP also creates strong and enforceable rules that will help Canadians perform business in TPP with provisions that reduce regulatory barriers, increase transparency and reinforce intellectual property rights.

So this has been laid out. I have not had anyone in the supply management come to me with any concerns and, as I said earlier on the record, that I have met with all the supply management groups with the 'exception' of the turkey producers. But there's been no concerns brought to my attention at all as a result of the TPP agreement.

\* (11:50)

**Mr. Saran:** I think, considering we have only 100 hours of our Estimates, and time is divided and we are under that pressure, but still, I will like to ask a question—possibly one more question before we proceed further.

And, like, average age of farmers is getting higher and higher. And fewer young people enter the industry. The number of people with these important connections of agriculture is shifting away.

How this trend can be reversed, does the minister have any plan?

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the member for the question.

And it gives me an opportunity to brag just a little bit about our young farmer program. And I can assure the member that the future is in our youth. And farming's changed dramatically, even since I was a farm boy. And, of course, up until '99, before I got out of that business. But I can assure the member we worked with the Keystone Ag Producers, which is a key organization. And they have a program of which they bring forward each year and bring new farmers in, potential farmers. And I also attended the graduation for our young agricultural degree program at the University of Manitoba. I can't remember how many graduates that were in that program, but it was a number of them, and I can assure the member that they are so excited about getting into that business.

And there's more than just farming that is involved in agriculture. There's science-based jobs. There's soils. There's nutrient management. There's a whole host of programs where you can work in the agricultural sector. Now MASC does have a lending arm, as well, where we help those young generations to start. It provides interest rebates to producers under the age of 40, total \$1.7 million. Other incentives include 90 per cent financing or up to five years interest-only payments on loans as well as Young Farmer Crop Plan Credit. MASC also has offered some form of 'incentive' for young farmers borrowing since 1959—the former Manitoba Agriculture Credit Corporation, when it was first established.

The most popular incentive is in the young farmers program, which provides interest rebate for the first five years of that loan, and it's a graduated scale. It started in 1959, which was people from ages 18 to 35, and it's went up now; it's actually increased to 39, of which they're allowed to invest—or get interest rate rebates up to \$150,000, so a significant amount of money for a young farmer to get started.

**Mr. Saran:** Although I asked a very hard question about the wages, and—but, personally, I like the minister, so, at this point, we don't have enough time, but I would like to keep discussing as we go along, and more opportunities and how we can increase more viability in the rural area.

But now I'm ready to go for the resolutions because we don't have that much time left.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Seeing no further questions, we will now deal with the resolutions.

Resolution 3.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,403,000 for Agriculture, Policy and Agri-Innovation, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 3.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$134,729,000 for Agriculture, Risk Management, Credit and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,673,000 for Agriculture, Agri-Industry Development and Advancement, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 3.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,836,000 for Agriculture, Agri-Food, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 3.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$328,000 for Agriculture, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 3.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$250,000 for Agriculture, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

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

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

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Saran:** Although I don't agree with the government because low-income people, especially on minimum wage, they should get a raise and it

should have—should be increased. A minimum wage, it should be increased every year.

But I leave up to the minister whether he wanted to freeze his wages or not, it's up to him.

Thank you.

**The Acting Chairperson (Sarah Guillemard):** Okay.

Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,402,000.00 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This concludes the Estimates for Agriculture.

The time being 12 noon, I am—almost 12 noon—I am interrupting the proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting this afternoon following the conclusion of routine proceedings.

#### CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

\* (10:10)

**Madam Chairperson (Colleen Mayer):** 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 Civil Service Commission.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for the Civil Service):** I am pleased to be here to present the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission and to address questions that may arise.

The Civil Service Commission is responsible for leading the development, management and delivery of human resource strategies and programs, respecting the provisions of The Civil Service Act.

The department responds to general government policy and priorities and supports organizational goals. The department is fairly small with staffing levels and budget that is comparable to previous years. The increase of \$390,000 or 1.8 per cent from the 2015-16 adjusted vote is comprised entirely of cost resulting for the general pay increases for staff. These increases mirror those negotiated by the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union.

It is through the efforts of the Civil Service Commission that the Manitoba civil service has been recognized in 2016 as one of Manitoba's top employers, one of Canada's best diversity employers and one of Canada's top employers for young people.

The civil service is a key partner in delivering front-line services to the public. Given our fiscal environment, we have to provide continued support to critical government programs while using innovative, cost-effective and leaner approaches to optimize the resources and expertise that we have. We need to ensure that we are engaging employees across the organization and that we are well positioned to transfer the knowledge and expertise of our senior civil servants to those newer in government service.

The Manitoba government is committed to having a workforce that is inclusive and reflective of the population it serves. In support of this commitment and vision, the Civil Service Commission has continued to implement the Manitoba Government Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which strives to recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to build a representative workforce at all levels of the organization, to identify and remove employment barriers to enable the full participation of all employees, cultivate a culture that motivates individuals to contribute to their full potential and build a career with a high-performing Manitoba government.

The government is committed to fostering a culture of openness, honesty and accountability as the work of the civil service affects the daily lives of all Manitobans. It plays a critical role in building and maintaining Manitoba's trust in the integrity of this government.

The Civil Service Commission continues to promote principles of a trusted and ethical civil service to ensure that government employees undertake their work by acting in the public interest with integrity, with respect for others and with skill and dedication.

The department also continues to make progress in enhancing the transparency of the Manitoba government's recruitment and selection processes as well as the training and development of government employees.

On a closing note, I'm sure that you will all join me in commending the dedicated civil servants who

are working across the Manitoba government. I appreciate their commitment to high standards of service and know that this will continue to serve Manitobans well going forward.

These are my opening comments, Madam Chair, and I am looking forward to questions regarding the Civil Service Commission's Estimates.

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

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** I think we want to get right down to business and move forward, but, of course, I want to, again, congratulate the minister on his appointment with—in this respect to responsibility for the Civil Service Commission. I had the great opportunity to work with many of the folks that he's working with now and get to work with them, and I have the highest regard for them and I know that we do as a government. And so I know he's surrounded by excellent staff, and I hope we're able to have a productive conversation today.

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

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

**Mr. Friesen:** I have with me at the table today Lynn Romeo, Civil Service Commissioner. I have Nancy Carroll, assistant deputy minister, Human Resource Operations. Also at the table is Mr. Rick Stevenson, assistant deputy minister for Labour Relations, and Chester Wojciechowski, the executive financial officer in Finance and Administration, Shared Services.

**Madam Chairperson:** Thank you. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Allum:** I think one of the first activities undertaken by the Finance Minister—it may have been at the point in which the government was elected, but I think it's at the point at which the Finance Minister was appointed—he imposed a hiring freeze on the civil service. Is that correct, and could he give us some indication of what the terms of that hiring freeze are?

\* (10:20)

**Mr. Friesen:** I'm happy to respond to the first question for the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum) and just speak a little bit about the expenditure management memo that we sent. I believe the date on that memo is the 11th of May.

The member is not correct when he characterizes that memo as a staffing freeze. That's not the language that's in the document. It's also not the intent of the instruction that we gave them.

The member understands that ours is a very new government. I believe we're probably nine weeks old as of this week. So I direct him to that memo, and he'll note that it's divided into two sections: one identifying a desire for spending controls, and a second section identifying a desire for staffing controls.

Particular to his question, what the item does, what the management memo does is it rescinds a delegated authority for some staffing actions. So what it does, in essence, is locate a lot of the control that would have been delegated back into the Treasury Board and into—essentially into ministers' offices.

I would suggest to the member that this is, first, a routine kind of undertaking that would be done by a new government. I actually believe that the—our predecessors did this same kind of work when they came into power in 1999 and into 2000. I believe that they gave out a similar kind of measure. Certainly, in other jurisdictions, we've seen the same. But the effect of it is to, essentially, speed up the process by which ministers and Cabinet and new government acquaint themselves with how these areas work, how money is spent, how new staff is brought on. So, then by locating that responsibility in the office of the minister, then the minister is asking questions, is engaging with senior staff and, I would say, as a result, coming up to speed very quickly in terms of what should be done.

The member will also know that in no way does it curtail the hiring of new people. So he will understand that in no way does this prevent departments or areas of function from bringing requests forward to fill positions that are currently vacant. But what it does, instead, is then it gets that memo, it gets that item on the desk of the minister and then that would be the process by which the item is considered.

Now, I would also anticipate a next question and say that in no way does this mean that the

government will somehow rescind all delegated authorities. That would simply cause government to grind to a halt. But I would say there is tremendous value in an exercise like this in an interim period whereby then the government proceeds to understand better what their role and function is. Basically, eventually, where some of this might become automatic, it is now standard practice to give additional consideration to.

I would also remind the member that the memo in respect of staffing 'recries'—applies to exemption requests, non-exempt staffing requests and extensions of term and acting positions.

If I have the time to add, as well, then I'll indicate that the same memo goes to spending controls. But because we're talking about Civil Service Commission—I believe we spoke already in the Finance Estimates about some of the particular requests made of departments under that area of expenditure control. However, I would just add that the same spending controls would be in place now as we previously talked about, in terms of travel expenditures being closely scrutinized, advertising expenditures being closely scrutinized, granting programs, fee-for-service contracts, all being closely scrutinized.

And the member will recognize that in no way and at no time is there a hard prohibition put on these activities. It simply talks about the necessity to closely scrutinize, to pay close attention to.

**Mr. Allum:** Madam Chair, just for your edification, the minister doesn't like to answer any questions in less than five minutes, so he's always looking for that 30-second warning, just so you know.

And it's interesting to me that he should talk about being a new government, and yet the line about we're new is getting old already. We don't really need to have that conversation in the course of this dialogue between us. We know that he's only been in government for a short period of time. We're know that the details have often been perplexing and complicated for him. And so we're aware of those circumstances.

So would the minister be able to table a letter of the hiring freeze that he's got in front of him there?

\* (10:30)

**Mr. Friesen:** My officials are just checking on that request made by the member, but maybe in the meantime, so as not to protract this item, I wonder if

I might invite the member to clarify. Is he—if he wants more detail, in particular about the staffing controls, I can read that section to him into the record. I'm just looking for clarification from him in this context. Would that satisfy him as to the item while officials are still checking to see what the status of that memo is?

It's not really the intent of government—or, I say, it's not really the practice of government to, you know, to release all internal memos, but we'll check and see what we can do for the member in this respect. I'm just inviting him to give that clarification because I would imagine he is signifying that the spending controls part has already been considered in the Estimates for Finance and now he's focusing on the staffing controls.

**Mr. Allum:** No, I'd—I certainly don't want him to read anything into the record at this stage. We have a hard enough time making valuable use of our time together without him spending time reading to me.

The request was simply that could he table the letter for the benefit of the committee in the interest of accountability and transparency upon which he says he was elected. So I just—simply asking the question. We'll look forward to an answer on whether it's—can be tabled in the committee or not for the benefit of all members here today.

Could the minister describe for us, if he could, what his vacancy management strategy, then, is going forward and how it—what impacts it will have on the civil service in general, what savings he intends to achieve? Those—you know, the—basically, what are the implications? So what's his vacancy management strategy and what the implications of those—of that strategy from his point of view?

**Mr. Friesen:** I can hear the member commenting in the background, but I assure him that we're endeavouring to answer his question. I know he appreciates the work that's being done at the table to give him a comprehensive answer on his issue.

So he's asking about the size of the civil service and initiatives that might be undertaken by this government, looking forward in respect of the number of—total number of civil service employees. I'm reflecting on the number right now in the civil service, which, by the last count, number of employees was 14,876. If I look back even about five years ago, that number was approximately the same, 14,878.

I know that his government undertook an initiative, going back a few years, a three-year initiative to reduce the size of the civil service. And at that time, in about 2012, the previous administration had identified a target of 600, and they wanted to reduce the size of the civil service by a total overall complement of 600 employees.

\* (10:40)

And so they worked towards that goal. There was some reduction year over year here indicated in the numbers and were approximately flat now compared to, let's say, 2011 when the member for Fort Garry and I and others were first elected to this Chamber.

In respect of our own government's plans on a total size of the civil service, this is exactly an area of study that we're embarking on. The member knows that we have requests for proposals that will be concluding soon on a value-for-money review whereby government is inviting non-government partners to additionally have input. Certainly, the member would recognize that we have expertise within government. We also have expertise outside of government, and the purpose of us inviting this contract would be to undertake a third-party objective study of the delivery of services in government.

So, obviously, we both recognize that that will be larger than just a civil service total number of employees' study. But I would suspect that that calculation will also be done by whatever group is awarded that contract. The member understands, as well, of course, that, you know, it is the standard manner of things that normal turnover and retirement eligibility considerations, they provide opportunities to government to constantly assess and reassess how we're operating, what programs we are delivering, how big an enterprise is in order to deliver that program, and it allows opportunities for government to continually re-examine and redeploy resources to areas of identified priority. That's the work within any organization and it is not different inside the civil service.

We know that the government is committed to increasing efficiencies. We've said so in our Throne Speech. We've said so in our budget. We're looking for areas of savings. We're looking for areas in which we can innovate.

I had the privilege of attending last week's Civil Service Commission awards luncheon and I heard—

I got to witness the granting of an award specifically for innovation within government. So this is an area. We have leaders within the civil service who are assisting us, and we will have others outside of the civil service who will assist us on this journey that we are on. But, of course, we've made clear from the outset that we're looking for efficiencies, savings and identifying areas of duplication but, at the same time, ensuring that services and program delivery are not adversely affected.

The context of all these discussions is that our government inherited a billion dollar deficit. So I could not underscore urgently enough the importance for us to get down this road, a road where other provinces have already journeyed and we will go as well.

**Mr. Allum:** What the government inherited was one of the best, if not the best, performing economies in the country with one of the lowest unemployment rates, best job creation record in the country and best projected growth rates in the country as well. So he's actually landed in a circumstance in very good condition, and so we are very concerned that his so-called efficiencies are really code for what will likely be dramatic cuts to come to the public service in the years to follow.

I asked him about his vacancy management strategy, really didn't share the details of it beyond very generalized answer, and—but he used the terms innovation, cost-effective and leaner in his opening remarks to describe the journey, so-called journey that he's on. But we know, in fact, that that journey will ultimately result in very fine public servants losing their job and having significant implications for their families who have mortgage payments and the well-being of public servants in general.

So can the Finance Minister tell us, though, what his plan is for reducing the size of the civil service over the next couple of years in order to meet his intended goals that he's just described for us, which is one of significant cuts? He also indicated that he's going to balance the budget over eight years, so will he be doing that by the death of a thousand cuts or does he intend to cut the public service considerably in short order? How does he plan to reach his objective to really reduce the size of the public service and does he have a number in mind when he gets—in terms of reducing the public service?

**Mr. Friesen:** I want to take this opportunity to respond to the member's question, but, first of all, you know, he talked about the context that we—the

context of the Manitoba situation and tried to paint a rosy picture, but the member leaves out some very specific data sets in the attempt to assist his argument. He understands full well that within the last 10 years the net debt of government has more than doubled. He understands that even by his own admission, even by our—the previous administration's own numbers when they presented a budget a year ago and said that the deficit would not exceed \$421 million, they brought an update some months later and said, whoops, we missed it; it's now suspected to be \$646 million.

We were able to quantify that deficit accurately as \$1 billion. That's the starting point for Manitoba. Now, he may suggest that that's nothing significant, but Manitobans don't agree. So it is a challenging starting point. Not only that, but we have challenges in respect of the delivery of our social services, and the member understands, too, that we don't lead the nation, but we trail the nation when it comes to measuring many aspects of our—of measurement, including education, reading, science and mathematics levels by our students, including the waits for ERs here in the province of Manitoba, which are some of the highest in the nation.

\* (10:50)

So I would remind him that it's easy to cherry-pick some items and say, well, everything's rosy. But, certainly, I think Manitobans recognize, even if he does not, that this is a challenging situation for our province. And I think that's a good transition, then, into saying why it is so important to be constantly in the process of measuring what we're doing. This is a very large enterprise; government in Manitoba is a 14 and a half billion dollar enterprise. It affects all of our lives, it is—it's wide and it's deep.

And I don't accept the member's assertion that, somehow, we shouldn't be constantly in the work of examining what it is we're doing, what we've done in the past, how it compares to what's being done in other jurisdictions, whether there are opportunities to participate more broadly with other jurisdictions. This goes to the quality of our relationships with our other provinces and with our federal partners, relationships that we would say that our predecessors took too few efforts to maintain and develop. We care about those relationships, we care about our relationships with Manitoba workers, with Manitoba businesses, with households.

So we're going to go about that business, I assure him, of looking at our civil service and asking



questions about what we're doing, and asking questions about what we've done in the past. But we'll also be measuring for results, and this is a major item that I want to highlight for the member; that it's, of course—it raises the bar when you say you're going to measure progress, but we have to. We must evaluate for effectiveness the things we are doing.

And, if I just point to one small example, I'll point back to the member to the Auditor General report in—of January of this year, who said even when it came to Aboriginal education on reserve, the former government was spending money but measuring almost nothing, putting money out to school divisions and saying, effectively, here, go spend it. And the Auditor General was highly critical of their approach that didn't seem to measure programs for efficiency and effectiveness and innovation, highly critical of the approach that seemed to say just make this go away and spend more. That's not an approach that we will take.

So the member references the fiscal performance review. I remind him that that RFP is posted on MERX, that that contest is closing on June the 24th, that the award of that contract is anticipated during the week of July the 4th, so he can have the assurance that this work will be undertaken. And we are excited by what it might present to government and all Manitobans.

**Mr. Allum:** You know, I—there are many elements of what the Finance Minister just said there that require a longer dialogue between us, and maybe should be taken up in Education, but as a former teacher should be ashamed of himself that he continues to perpetrate this shameful narrative about Manitoba's public education system.

Graduation rates are at 87 per cent, up 17 per cent from what his government had when we first came into power. More kids are attending post-secondary institutions than ever before in the history of Manitoba because we've made it in—we made it into a, as much as possible, a seamless no-wrong-door education system. And I find that their—his reliance on one test taken three years ago that, in fact, finds Manitoba's above the OACD level—I find the narrative of his government on our education system to be shameful, an insult to teachers, to parents, students. And I think, for the good of public confidence in our public education system, he stop perpetrating that terrible, shameful narrative once and for all.

The minister's made it clear that he's—and the government's made it clear that they're going to protect front-line workers. Would he define for me what he considers to be a front-line worker?

It's outrageous.

**Mr. Friesen:** First of all, on the minister's comments on—broadly, on education, while outside of our discussions here for most intents and purposes, no, I don't agree with the member's comments—*[interjection]*

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please.

Formal vote has been requested in special section of the Committee of Supply—*[interjection]*—in another section of Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for the formal vote.

*The committee recessed at 11:00 a.m.*

*The committee resumed at 11:10 a.m.*

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

This section of Committee of Supply will now resume considerations of the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, the minister was mid-answer, so maybe we could just get back to what—if he could tell us—what he defines as a front-line worker?

**Mr. Friesen:** As I was saying, I disagree with the member's assertion that somehow I should be ashamed, as a former teacher, to point out that measurement, evaluation and assessment are essential within any enterprise. As a matter of fact, as a former teacher, I would suggest that this is exactly the discussion that teachers would invite. Teachers lead the way when it comes to developing a framework for conveying knowledge and for developing frameworks to assess the extent to which others have absorbed and understood of those concepts.

So, when I speak about a fidelity to a method that includes assessment, looking at value for money, measuring constantly the work of this enterprise which is government in order to improve it and make it better, I would tell the member that nothing could be more consistent. And I'm very proud, as a former

teacher who spent 12 years in the public school classroom, of that profession, of the many people that I've worked with who are, right now, you know, might be counting the days right now even in my own constituency, graduation ceremonies taking place. And we all know that the work doesn't stop when the grads walk off that stage, so I know how much work there is always involved in closing down a year and then starting up a new year as well.

I used to make the joke when friends would tease me in my profession. Some would say, well, you get a few weeks off in the summer, and I would say to them, yes, everyone wants to be me on June the 30th; no one wants to be on August the 30th. That was always the tension in that conversation.

But, reflecting again on what I mentioned about the Auditor General chapter, the member misunderstands if he thinks somehow I am attempting to shame a profession. No. What I'm trying to do is underscore exactly the need for us to pay attention.

When the Auditor General of Manitoba is saying that the graduation rate on reserve actually went in the wrong direction while the government was saying they were addressing it, then the reasonable question to ask is: How were we addressing it?

Now, the member pretends that somehow we can't ask these questions, and I would say nothing would be more disrespectful for the people who put us here than to not commit to ask those questions. These were the Auditor General's concerns exactly on this issue. And I would share with him that the auditor indicated that when it came to graduation rates on reserve, that 55 per cent of Aboriginal students were graduating from high school compared to 96 per cent of non-Aboriginal students, but that the gap had widened since 2010, and so just as an example of what we're discussing.

That is why I indicate that we would—we need to take measures to ensure, you know, like the Auditor General has stated, that we must do more to ensure that initiatives that are related to these efforts are done. Enhanced performance planning, measuring our progress towards desired outcomes, these were the things that were spoken of in the Auditor General's Report.

So there's no inconsistency in what I'm saying about the need for government to undertake this on a comprehensive scale and how teachers assist us in those exercises every single day.

On his point about front-line positions, I don't accept the member's suggestion that somehow people should be fearful, no more so than I would suggest that the civil service should have been then, four years ago, when his government undertook and said in their Throne Speech, we're going to reduce the size of the civil service. They indicated that they were going to do this. I assume they had some methodology about how they would approach. This is our commitment as well, looking to see, is it necessary compared to other jurisdictions in proportion to the work that we are doing.

We will do this work by discussing and dialoguing within departments and dialoguing with extra government partners as well, where there's expertise that we can avail ourselves of. We won't take an ideological approach that simply says we can't ask these questions; we'll take a reasoned and inclusive approach.

**Mr. Allum:** Well, I have no doubt that they're celebrating graduations very soon in the member's constituency; in fact, they would be doing it at a brand new high school that was built by our government for his community; one of 35 new schools that was built across Manitoba during our time in government. And during the former government's time, not one was built. And so let the record show that when it comes to supporting students, we do that.

Secondly, in describing on-reserve graduation rates, the minister knows that the federal government is responsible for education on reserve. Federal government, in fact his party, Stephen Harper, failed indigenous students dramatically during their time. The minister's well aware of that, and for him to somehow mount some kind of defence of his own slashing and hacking that's going to come in the years to follow is really quite remarkable.

He also knows that even if those graduation rates are at 55 per cent, and we can easily concede that they need to improve and get better because we're about every, every student's success and, in particular, righting wrongs and reconciling with our indigenous brothers and sisters. He knows that Manitoba's graduation rate for indigenous students is actually better than it is in Alberta or Saskatchewan, quite considerably better. And so, while we absolutely need to get better, he ought to put that in its proper context, words that he uses.

He failed to answer my question about front-line services because he's never answered the question

about front-line services. It's a term he throws around cavalierly without proper definition. So I want to ask him now; maybe he can help us.

I'm looking at the MGEU agreement and at the back of it it lists all the categories of positions in the government. And right now I'm looking at the physical sciences component, year 1 salary schedule. Can he tell me: Is the drafting tech for DM4, is that a front-line worker?

\*(11:20)

**Mr. Friesen:** The point I was making before, of course, being that there is a disconnect in the member's position whereby we're reflecting, because I'm bringing this for discussion, that his government identified an initiative to reduce the overall size of the civil service. There must have been decision making. There must have been discussions. There must have been an identified need to do so.

The member never reflects on that in these discussions. He doesn't offer any comment to qualify the work that was undertaken. He doesn't do any work to provide a rationale for the work that his own government overtook—undertook.

Over a period of three years, they identified a number of 600. I don't know how they got to that particular number. Maybe it was an expression of the overall workforce. It could have been a percentage. But it could have been on advice presented by senior members of the civil service within departments. It could have been that they proceeded to ask each department to identify a percentage of their workforce. I don't know what the methodology was. The member won't offer it to us in this context.

But what he seeks to do in this conversation is somehow assert that now Manitoba should be afraid, but he wasn't indicating that they should be afraid four years ago when they undertook a similar exercise that I would assert would have been based on some expression of intent to go towards innovation and efficiency.

As a matter of fact, I remember those same terms being used at that time. It could have been the Throne Speech or it could have been the budget speech. They were getting to this idea—they even referred to, at one time, the government referred to their—a total quality management approach. The NDP government talked about that, total quality management approach.

Now, that could have been in the Estimates process. It could have been in a speech given, Throne Speech or budget. But, certainly, underlying that initiative would have been those same principles of economy, efficiency, innovation, effectiveness. And that's what we're after, as well.

So the member asks a specific question about one specific classification, job classification within the civil service. Now, I want to remind him that there are between 500 and 600 specific classifications of workers within government. And so I would want him to appreciate that when we're talking about the civil service, this is a very broad and deep conversation. And it has to do with everything—you know, it's a soup-to-nuts kind of conversation, because it would involve everything from someone, you know, procuring vaccine for Manitobans, to someone doing veterinary services for large animals. It has to do with someone who's reading radiology reports. It has to do with someone in a correctional facility who's involved there. I'm just reflecting on some of the conversations I've heard around the Estimates table in the last number of days and weeks.

So, if the member is suggesting that somehow we could go line by line, I would suggest that the confines of 100 hours within the Committee of Supply will not be sufficient to be able to have that conversation exhaustively. One example would be the difference between, let's say, a hydro meteorologist, where it's very clear what that individual does inside of government in order to help us mitigate against water and weather events. Compare that to a classification, like, clerk, where you'd have thousands of employees, I would imagine, hundreds or thousands of employees who would fall into the category, but within that one category of clerk, inside government departments as diverse as Sustainable Development, Education, Infrastructure and all of that. So it's a very, very broad conversation he invites.

Let me say, though, that, you know, in attendance this morning at a news conference that our government held highlighting our legislation that will help protect children in care, there were many stakeholder groups there, many front-line workers there. Cora Morgan from Aboriginal Children's Advocate Office, Janelle Braun from Victim Services Manitoba. You had individuals like Signy Arnason and Monique St. Germain from Child Find. We had individuals like Tracy Moore from children disabilities agencies—all front-line workers working

with individuals—Barb Temmerman from Manitoba College of Social Workers, Jay Rodgers from Marymount.

So many different front-line workers assisting Manitobans.

**Mr. Allum:** It's important to drill down on it. As I said earlier, the minister has perpetrated a fiction that the government of Manitoba is going to protect front-line workers, but he fails miserably to actually define who and what a front-line worker is. He's never done it properly, and I would suggest for the many, many thousands of public servants that work for the government of Manitoba who now look to this minister for leadership and for accuracy, whose lives, whose jobs, whose homes all may be jeopardized by actions taken by the Minister of Finance in the future, whose kids may be dramatically affected, they want to know—they want to know—from him, who's now the minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission, what a front-line worker is.

And so he won't define it, has never defined it, refuses to do so. So we have an obligation, then, to ask him specific questions and we're going to continue to do that.

Could he tell me, as a biologist—I'm looking at—again, referring to the MGEU collective agreement, the physical sciences component, year one salary schedule. Could he tell me, is a biologist 1, a BL1—is that a front-line worker, Minister?

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Friesen:** First of all, Madam Chair, I'm going to table three copies of the—May the 11th expenditure management 'membo'—memo as per the member's earlier request.

We were just checking to see what the status was of a request for information that was submitted, and I was able to determine that that request was fulfilled. So I'm essentially tabling documentation that is now in the public domain, but I'm happy to provide copies additional to the member on that same item. I believe that item was concluded on June the 15th, so—and that's the one that includes both direction provided to government in respect of staffing control and spending control.

On the subject of what constitutes a front-line worker, this is a theme that the member has gone back to time and again, but I think it's important to recognize the context of this discussion. And the

context has been this—and I've tried to establish it to some extent in this discussion is that when our predecessors undertook the work that looks to be very similar to what we have identified will be work that we will undertake, they sanctioned it. They supported it, and they said they were successful in it, work that was designed to decrease the number of civil servants who were in the employ of the government. When we undertake to do the same work, the member is trying to incite fear in all Manitobans.

And I understand that some of this, you know, will flirt on a line here, Madam Chair, but I think it's important to establish that when it comes to the member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum)—and he often tells me what I should be ashamed of. I won't tell him what he will be—what he should be ashamed of. He can be sure that I will never use that kind of language with him.

But I would ask him to reflect on statements that he made only months ago where he went out and told people and actually put it on paper and sent it to his constituency saying that Manitobans have to understand—and this is a paraphrase of his statement—that if they are a teacher, if they are a nurse, if they are a civil servant, they will lose their jobs. And I would, you know, end the paraphrasing there.

This is the language that the member employed. I mean it's absurd of course. It's absurd, it's nonsensical, and Manitobans would accept that. And many people that I met on the street after that would roll their eyes and say, can you believe how desperate a measure that is just in terms of trying to keep your own job? That's the kind of paraphrased response to it I heard.

But it's important to understand that, however absurd the statement is, it's made, and we have to understand it's made in order to agitate. It is made in order to instill fear. It is made in order to send a shock through.

Now, if I was the son or daughter of someone who was a teacher or a nurse or a civil servant, and this is what mom or dad does for a living, it's going to have an effect. It will be a dinnertime conversation. And I know from talking with my own children around the table about a number of issues and—now, those are always interesting conversations, having political conversations with your children about all the issues that affect us. My kids always said that they weren't interested in politics, but what they're interested in is current issues. And then they

realize, oh, these are political discussions. So, around the dinner table, I would say that the member understands that he's trying to inflame, and his hyperbole and the exaggeration and all of that still has to be understood. It will have an intent to drive home this message that people should be fearful.

I simply say there is no place here where the member can stand where he could say somehow they undertook the same work three years ago to look at the operation of government and look for opportunities to innovate and look at programs that were being delivered, and somehow say Manitobans should have had confidence in that exercise, but they should be extremely fearful of this exercise. Nothing could be more absurd than that statement.

So I ask the member to reflect on his statements. I wonder if he regrets having made those statements or the manner in which he made them.

In this case, we are encouraged by the work that we're going to undertake going forward. I will not prejudice that work, but we're confident that that work will be productive.

**Madam Chairperson:** The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Allum:** The difficulty for the minister in this conversation is that his predecessors have a record when it comes to the very kind of public servants that I was referring to. We know that 1,000 nurses lost their jobs during the 1990s when Mr.—when the Finance Minister's predecessors were in government, when his Premier (Mr. Pallister) was at the Cabinet table. We know 700 teachers were fired when his Premier was at the Cabinet table with Mr. Filmon those many years ago.

So we have every right to believe and to suggest to Manitobans that they ought to be concerned about their employment as public servants for the very reason that his Premier has a significant record of job cutting regardless of the impact on the public service provided or on the families affected, especially, Madam Chair, when the minister refuses to define the very thing that he is on record as saying; he's going to protect front-line workers. And that actually stokes fear among those who aren't sure what a front-line worker is if they're not on the front lines and whether or not they're still going to be having a job in the future.

I'd also suggest to the minister that we might have more certainty around his observations today if in his budget he'd included multi-year projections.

He hasn't done that, Madam Chair. In fact, he failed to do that, which only stokes fear among Manitobans about the shoe yet to drop under his administration of the Finance Department.

I've asked him for a few examples here about whether or not these positions are front-line workers. I'm going to ask again because this is important and I think for people with these positions—this time I'm looking at the administration component year 1 salary schedule. Could he tell me, is a purchasing agent 2, a PA2, is that a front-line worker?

\* (11:40)

**Mr. Friesen:** So the member has now identified three particular classifications, and he's inviting comment on them. But, then, if there's approximately 600 classifications within the overall operation of government enterprise, we've got a long way to go if he's intending to proceed on a class-by-class basis of inquiry. Five hundred and ninety-seven classifications remaining, but not sufficient. Estimates hours to accommodate that request.

So I'm going to invite a more global discussion in terms of these matters. For instance, if you would consider, like, a classification of a maintenance tradesperson. A maintenance tradesperson could be someone—within that category would be all the different trades that could be represented—that are represented. And, within those individual trades, there would be separate rankings or thresholds—I'm probably using the incorrect term—but levels of proficiency and expertise and recognized expertise.

So the member, if he's going to be fair, has to recognize the complexity of this system. You know and recognize that, within certain frameworks, there is an awful lot of detail. Reflecting back on the value—the fiscal performance review, the RFP that we have issued—that we've issued the RFP for, and that will close this week. It's not an exercise of classification; it is an exercise that's designed to focus on service delivery—what we do and how we do it.

And it has been stated as encompassing three criteria: first, being economy; so, are the activities of government implemented at a reasonable cost? Sorry, yes, economy being—are activities being done at a reasonable cost; efficiency—this goes to the whole measuring results. Are the results or outputs produced appropriate in relation to the inputs? Inputs, outputs. And then we have to have a measurement of framework to do that; and then

effectiveness—do actual outcomes match intended outcomes? So, measuring the actual against the intent.

I would say that any government that is focused on improving results is a government that is taking pains to do the heavy lifting. This is what we're going to do within this exercise. And the minister's asking me to pre-judge what various applicants will come back with—I won't pre-judge that work, but he can be assured that, within government right now—even for a government that has only been in place in nine weeks—these are precisely the discussions that are ongoing with ministers and their deputy ministers and their assistant deputy ministers, their most senior teams.

We are doing a great deal of work back and forth in terms of conveying information, developing, you know, that competency level where ministers are understanding. Oh, I get it; I get what this function is; I get what this area of operation is; I get what my responsibility and scope of responsibility is in respect of this item. And that's complex.

And it's interesting for any new government, regardless of political stripe, that goes into that position. The member's own party has had that same situation going back to 1999-2000. And I've had some discussions about how Estimates went back then. Estimates, I would suggest, by a government that is in its first year are different than a government that is in their fifth year. And so I can understand why the member doesn't want to reflect on things like the Auditor General report on education and the fact that the Auditor General said that the results were going in the wrong direction. He doesn't want to talk about that and I'll accept that. But he must also recognize that he's asking for a tremendous amount of complexity that wouldn't be easily to accommodate in these discussions.

What he's not acknowledging, though, is this, yes, we're saying we can do both. We can both address the significant challenges that face Manitoba and we can make important decisions about effectiveness and innovation and finding duplication and overlap, and at the same time protect public services and the delivery of those services for Manitobans.

**Mr. Allum:** I'm well aware of the complexities of government. Madam Chair, you may or may not know I'm a—was a 15-year public servant before I came to work for—was lucky enough to be elected and become an MLA. So, if anyone understands the

complexity of public service, I would suggest to the Finance Minister, it would be me because I held the classic back-office job that he's going to be so quickly to remove here in the government of Manitoba in the future.

I was, admittedly, a management type. I was a union exec, actually, and the position that I held I did policy and programming work behind the scenes. But I know that the work that I provided was indispensable to council, it was indispensable to those who we would characterize as front-line workers, because the fact of the matter is, and he knows this, it's all connected. And so if anyone's guilty of oversimplification, Madam Chair, it's the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), his Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the new government of Manitoba, which consistently uses the term front-line workers, and yet refuses to provide any definition for it. And that's of great concern not only to us on this side of the committee table, but, in fact, to those who work in the public service and those Manitoba families who rely on the programs and services that this government delivers.

We'll have to wait, I guess, for next year to see, in fact, what the minister thinks of front-line services, but we'll be holding him accountable for that.

I want to spend my—just my last few minutes on his secret audit because he's referred to his secret audit several times. He knows full well that in the tender that was put out—and this is a minister who's gone, by the way, gone out and said, you know, the sky is falling, Manitoba's in a difficult financial position—categorically untrue, but nevertheless has made that point out there and then goes and blows 750 grand on a private sector secret audit of public sector activities.

I've said to him before and I'll said it again, it's like letting the private sector fox into the public sector henhouse, because I don't think they think they have an appreciation and I don't know what firm he could hire that would have the skills and ability to evaluate and analyze the very, very complex matters of government. As I said to him before, as well, we're not making widgets here, and he oversimplifies when he says that he can bring in a private sector firm that can actually begin to understand the complexity of government.

It's a secret audit because, in the tender itself, it says quite clearly that the recommendations will be kept private and confidential. And so I—what we'd

like the minister to do in his last five-minute segment here—because he continues to take five minutes to answer even the simplest questions as well as having significant debate time with his excellent staff before he makes an answer—I believe he's going to—the tender, and he can correct me if I'm wrong, will be required or the private sector audit, the secret audit will be required to save \$50 million.

Can he tell us how many people are going to lose their jobs as a result of that initiative?

**Mr. Friesen:** So let's understand and clearly reflect that this member is saying that a fiscal performance review has absolutely no value. He said it himself. He said—he actually referred to the value of the contract and said that we're completely blowing that money.

So the member is suggesting that government could have nothing to learn from private sector. He's suggesting private sector could have nothing to learn from government. He's suggesting that government could have nothing to learn from other government. But he could not be more wrong and he could not be more isolated.

\* (11:50)

I'm reflecting right now on the report that was undertaken in Ontario by Don Drummond and issued back as the Drummond report. Now the member can say what he wants to about the Drummond report, but let me just reflect on one item.

I'm thinking about when I was the critic for Health, and the Drummond report threw a lot of things against the wall. It was comprehensive. It was very broad. And it brought back recommendations to government. And the executive summary was very clear in that it was presenting to government options that perhaps it not had—had not fully considered previously. It was providing advice. It was providing ideas. It was providing some comparisons to other jurisdiction. It was reflecting on work that had been undertaken in other contexts, in other jurisdictions, in private sector, in non-government enterprises, in other western nations.

But this member bundles all of that work up and casts it out the window and says, this is absolutely rubbish, we have nothing to learn from anyone and we stand alone, possessing all of the knowledge that we always need to be able to always do everything in the best interests of all Manitobans. I simply don't accept the argument. And I would suggest that the

vast majority of Manitobans would also cast out his argument. They'd say, well, that also is nonsense.

Now, he refers to the cost assigned to the fiscal performance review as complete waste. And yet he hasn't even attempted to ask questions about what he feels would accept—would constitute good value for money in respect of this particular undertaking. He hasn't asked a question to say that, you know, for every dollar spent, if \$5 could be spent—or saved. He hasn't asked about a 10-to-one ratio or a 20-to-one ratio. Within my department, every day we have people at the desks saying, you know, if we did this here, we could save this amount there. And I am sure, when this member was the minister of Education, they also talked about issues like efficiency in government in his department, effectiveness, looking at programs.

That causes me to reflect back on a question he was asking previously where he said that, you know, I'm supposed to understand that the Auditor General report that I referred to before had nothing to do with provincial government. That's categorically false, actually. The Auditor General was reflecting on the work of the provincial government and the Department of Education in respect of certain granting programs that they were undertaking through school divisions to support education on reserve. So the member doesn't want us to have that on the record. I thought it was important to add that.

But let's understand the real contradiction here. When this member as a member of the previous government developed terms of reference for their initiative to undertake to reduce the size of the civil servant—service by 600, they would have had a conversation. There would have been—I would only imagine there was a formal process in which conversation led to the statement of an initiative. Within that initiative there would have been a group of people who were tasked with developing a framework in terms of reference. There was due diligence that was undertaken to develop all that.

I assure the member that's exactly where we are right now. That is exactly the work that we are undertaking. I'm hoping it was undertaken before. If it was led by the department, I'm sure that was in place. But we also know in the cases, there was a lot of interference in some points.

If the member wants to reflect on areas of waste to government, I invite him to reflect on millions and millions of dollars of sole-source contracts for Tiger Dams, a company that was represented by a good

friend of the minister of Infrastructure, breaking the rule identified by the Auditor General. Or maybe he will reflect on the amounts offered to departing staff after a very—

**Madam Chairperson:** The minister's time has expired.

**Mr. Allum:** In the interest of time, we're going to need to wrap matters up, so we want to get to the procedural part of our time.

I thank the minister for his time. I certainly thank his staff for the time that they provided for us today.

But let the record show that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) has provided no assurance, no certainty to public servants across Manitoba that their job's not in jeopardy. And we'll be watching very closely and holding him to account for the actions that he takes in his secret audit that will be hidden from the people of Manitoba.

We'll be holding him to account for the work that he does and for the consequence that it has not only on the programs and services delivered by the fantastic public servants in the province of Manitoba, not only on that, but its impact on families.

His definition of waste, his private sector pals' definition of waste, it's somebody's job, somebody's mortgage, somebody's family. He should be very, very careful.

And with that we'll move on to the procedural part of the meeting, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairperson:** Resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,677,000 for Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

*Resolution agreed to.*

This completes the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission.

#### **ENABLING AND OTHER APPROPRIATIONS**

**Madam Chairperson (Colleen Mayer):** The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of Committee of Supply is for enabling other appropriations.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** No.

**Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview):** No, thank you.

**Madam Chairperson:** Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of the department chronologically or in a global discussion?

**An Honourable Member:** Global.

**Madam Chairperson:** Global, thank you.

The floor is now open for questions.

Hearing no questions—

Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,991,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Enabling Vote, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

*Resolution agreed to.*

Resolution 26.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$31,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

*Resolution agreed to.*

Resolution 26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,931,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Capital Assets, Internal Service Adjustments, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

*Resolution agreed to.*

Resolution 27.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty the sum not exceeding \$51,800,000 for Other Appropriations, Emergency Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

*Resolution agreed to.*

Resolution 27.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$500,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

*Resolution agreed to.*

Resolution 27.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,400,000 for Other Appropriations, Sustainable Development Innovation Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

*Resolution agreed to.*



This completes the Estimates for Enabling and Other Appropriations.

\* (12:00)

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Madam Chairperson:** The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply for the Legislative Assembly.

Are there any questions?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Chairperson:** Resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,105,000 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,119,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,550,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,606,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,014,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Child Advocate, for the fiscal year ending March–*[interjection]*–Children's Advocate, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates of the Legislative Assembly.

### EMPLOYEE PENSIONS AND OTHER COSTS

**Madam Chairperson:** The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of Committee of Supply is for Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

Are there any questions? Perfect.

Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$14,735,000 for Employee Pensions and Other Costs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

**Resolution agreed to.**

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

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**Madam Chairperson:** As previously agreed by the House, this section of the Committee of Supply will now recess and will resume sitting this afternoon, following the conclusion of routine proceedings.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

\* (10:10)

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

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

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

I now ask the Minister of Infrastructure to introduce his staff in attendance.

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure):** With me today, very capably assisting me today is Lance Vigfusson, deputy minister; Doug McMahon, assistant deputy minister; Ron Weatherburn, assistant deputy minister; and Leigh Anne Solmundson Lumbard, assistant deputy minister.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Minister.

Now, as we previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I've got 20 minutes, so if we can move along, that'd be great.

First of all, you've got, I think it's 45 million budgeted for construction of water projects this year. Do you have a list of those water projects?

**Mr. Pedersen:** There are—there is a list of approved projects for this year. It's—I have the book here, it's a rather lengthy list and I'm not going to read it out, if that's all right, but I can spend 20 minutes reading it out if you like, but I don't think you want—but it mainly is three categories: flood protection, drainage and dams, that's the three components of them. So I can make sure that you get a list of these projects as they've been approved by Treasury Board.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, if you could make sure that I can get a list that'd be great. Thank you.

Now the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has put a big emphasis on the maintenance of existing infrastructure, and yet I note that the budget for maintenance is essentially the same as last year.

Can you just briefly say how you're going to carry out the Premier's mandate to put a much bigger emphasis on maintenance when you've got the same budget?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Just for clarification, you are meaning highways and bridges not—okay, that—right. As I explained previously, the previous government reduced the maintenance budget. I believe it goes back to about 2006, or so, sorry, 2010, I stand corrected, about 2010, about six years ago they reduced the maintenance and preservation portion of the highways budget. This has now compounded the problem when—and I know the member will understand when you reduce maintenance, it's not good in that one year, but when you reduce maintenance year over year over year then it compounds the problem.

So—and I will also just try to explain to the member that the large part of this budget, highways' budget, was actually, well, it was—it was publicly advertised in November and then tendered in January-February—so the large part of this year's—current year's construction season budget was basically done, you know, in place, before we came into government.

So this is going to—this is our challenge moving forward is we need to do—spend money on capital. In my mandate letter it—you know, I'm instructed to spend at least a billion dollars a year on infrastructure, how do we split up this budget between capital, maintenance and preservation? We're way behind in the maintenance and

preservation and, yet, we know we've got to spend on capital. So, you know, to the member I don't have a ready answer for him right now. We're sort of locked in for this year. This is something we'll have to look for going forward for the next year and for the next number of years. How do we balance this total budget out between needed capital and maintenance and preservation?

So this is a challenge that we've got going forward.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Does the Minister for Infrastructure have any responsibility for areas of infrastructure like community club infrastructure, daycare infrastructure, airport infrastructure?

**Mr. Pedersen:** The Department of Infrastructure is not responsible for, as the member mentioned, daycares or community clubs or hospitals or that type of thing. We are—this department is responsible, though, for the northern airports, and there are 23 northern airports that the department is responsible for.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I'm going to pass to the MLA for Kewatinook for the rest of my time.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** So, speaking of airports, that's one of the questions I had. We want to ensure that there's safety at our northern airports. You know, some of the communities that I visited, the airport is literally in the middle of the reserve and so children going to school would run across airports. So there was a big safety concern with the fences not adequately being maintained. You know, there's breaches in the fences where the kids are going through, and so that's a considerable risk for a lot of the communities. I believe there was four in total in Kewatinook. This is not considering the other remote communities and how their airports are—where their airports are situated, so I'm just wondering what can be done to address that issue.

**Mr. Pedersen:** First of all, welcome to the Legislature and congratulations on winning. I know that your constituency is even bigger—lots bigger than mine, and so I understand the distances. I often think, and I know the Chair, his constituency is large, rural, but nothing compares to your constituency, so—and the remoteness is an issue and so it presents its challenges. We understand that.

\* (10:20)

I believe you're probably talking about Poplar River. The airport there is where there's—the department has been—has had ongoing discussions

with the community, the community leadership about this. The fences are constantly being repaired, but it's an ongoing issue. You know, you repair one spot and another breach shows up. So they are working at repairing, but it's also working with the community to try and make sure that the—if it's the kids going to school, that they're aware of the dangers of doing that too. It's community awareness and it's ongoing.

There has—there is ongoing discussion with the federal government over a new location, but there's—the land issue hasn't been settled on yet. The—you know, you got to find a location for it. You need to have community buy-in as to the location of it and wherever that—and the location hasn't been settled upon yet. And, of course, you know, it's the dollar factor. It's expensive to build a new airport, realizing it's needed and the importance for, you know, a remote community. But it's going to take some time, and we're just trying to cope with it as best we can, but we do recognize the issue.

February 1st of this year, the Infrastructure Department signed an agreement in principle with Poplar River First Nation to move forward on settling the land transfer exchange issues and move the project forward. So there is an MOU on it. It is coming. I know it's never fast enough and that, but the department is trying to move on this and with—in step with the community.

**Ms. Klassen:** There—you said that there has already been dollars set aside for certain projects that were already promised prior to your coming into government. So of those, has—is there any—there's several reserves that want lengthened runways so that the larger planes can land so that the cost of food will go down if we're able to accommodate the larger planes. As it is right now, only short planes—like weight restrictions and all that. And so I'm wondering what—is there anything for those communities that I can give some words of hope to?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Just—when we say that the budget's out there, all projects are under review. And needs assessment on them, we recognize that the needs are there, but, you know, lengthening a runway becomes capital project and then there's—you have to balance this off between maintenance. Like, we need to maintain in good condition the airports that we have right now. So, if you take a capital project, a large capital project on an airport, is that at the expense of maintenance on the others? So it's a matter of finding this balance. I know the department's in regular contact with all the affected communities.

There's also ongoing discussions with the federal government in terms of their regulations about how these airports are operated. Fair to say, and keeping in mind safety is paramount, but the federal regulations are fairly restrictive, sort of to say the least. And so the department continues to work with the federal government and, you know, can some of these very restrictive regulations be somewhat loosened not—making sure that safety's not affected, but, at the same time, that would allow some of these issues that you've addressed to, you know, to be able to use the airports more.

I would highly recommend the member to talk to her federal cousins about this. You know, the federal government is ultimately responsible on this. And, if you have connections in there, that would certainly, you know, make sure you speak to them and make sure they understand what the issues are that your communities are facing too. And, ultimately, that would help. It's not about gains within this building; it's about gains for the community. So, if that's—can be done, that would help the communities too.

**Ms. Klassen:** We have—I have come across a lot of initiatives that people want to do for-profit housing and that, on First Nations communities, and that term is kind of like an oxymoron, because, you know, the only—there's only rules and guidelines to set up for non-profit housing under CMHC, and that's the only way to go.

My point is there is no—there—we can't even do CMHC housing today, because one of the stipulations is that it requires sewer and water. Our—all our sewer and water, a majority of them, are at capacity. So we can't even build houses because these things are all at capacity.

So I'm wondering: Is there any kind of dollars earmarked for addressing that issue?

**Mr. Pedersen:** I am actually very much aware of non-profit housing in that, even in my communities, in southern Manitoba, we face—we don't have necessarily the water—sewer and water issues that you are describing, but, certainly, dealing with CMHC is a challenge at the best of times.

But housing and water and sewer are all federal responsibilities. This department does not deal with that at all. So, again, you need to deal with the federal departments on that—and.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I—somewhat concerned by the minister's comment about restrictive regulations on northern airports.

I'm just wondering if he could expand on that a little bit, what regulations they think are restrictive and how they believe they should be lessened.

\* (10:30)

**Mr. Pedersen:** Currently, the way the federal government, as I understand, the way the federal government looks, they have all-encompassing rules and regulations for all major airports, and they're including these northern communities in those same regulations as—so the northern airports are under the same rules and regulations as Richardson International Airport.

And, instead of—what the suggestion has been from this department to the federal government is instead of doing all-encompassing regulations that affect every federally regulated airport, which these northern community airports are, go to a risk-based assessment instead, and that would—they may perhaps be able to address some of the issues that the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen) brought up.

Not necessarily saying there is an instant solution for any of this. The department's been in ongoing discussions with the federal government about this and, again, I just want to stress safety is always paramount concern, but that is where we're coming from on this. Rather than having all-encompass, go to more of a risk-based depending on the usage of the airport, because to have Richardson International Airport and the—a northern airport under the same rules—restrict—you know, the same restrictions, is a bit of a detriment to these northern airports.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank you for that answer, I think.

Winter roads, could the minister tell us how many winter roads in Manitoba didn't manage to be open for the eight-week period that the winter roads are normally expected to be open, and that's for 2015-2016.

**Mr. Pedersen:** The winter roads program—we're talking last winter, 2015-2016—there's over 2,000 kilometres of winter roads. I know the member said eight-week season. It varies—as to my understanding it varies. Not necessarily all the roads are open for eight weeks. I'm informed that it depended on—partially on the contractor progress in terms of getting the roads open, how many days. We don't have it right here of which roads were open for how many days. We can get that if the member wants it. I am also informed that all the roads were open at some point. There was no community that

did not have any access, but it varied between communities and, again, depending on contractor progress and about how they were able to get supplies in.

But it should be noted, too, that East Side Road Authority was in charge of about half of these roads, and, again, as I've explained yesterday, we're in a process of determining—that'll be part—if the member wants, we can find that out as to, you know, the roads that East Side Road Authority was available—or, was responsible for. We can provide that information and we can—and then also, the winter roads that the department was responsible for, we can find that if that's what he's wanting.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank the minister for that. Yes, that information would be very useful.

While you're at it, you may as well look at last winter and maybe from a historical perspective to see if it appears that the season is getting shorter, because I believe it is, certainly in the last couple of years, that the point of the winter road accessibility ties in with the member from Kewatinook's question about airports and bigger loads, because with a shorter season that the winter roads are safely open, it definitely impacts the cost of food, housing, everything else that goes into these northern communities.

And I recognize that Manitoba's not the only ones that have these concerns, because I've talked to my counterpart on the Saskatchewan side next to my riding which also runs up to the Nunavut border. And they've got the same concerns, that with global warming the winter road system is less reliable.

So, if the minister could supply the information for last year and then kind of a comparison for previous years, that would be beneficial and, I'm pretty sure, be beneficial for everybody, and I'd be surprised if your department doesn't have those kind of figures handy. So, yes, certainly appreciate that.

Just on that same kind of issue, is the minister's department responsible for or aware of any other initiatives that may impact transporting goods and services—goods to northern communities, any technological advancements, innovative ideas of how we can get things from point A to point B?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Perhaps the member could be a little more specific on what he's looking for in terms of future things coming down the pipe. Is he have some specific suggestions, or what exactly he's looking for on this and, particularly, all the winter roads or any

particular area or—what—what's—what is he looking for?

**Mr. Lindsey:** I guess, for information purposes, it was really all the winter roads and as far as—the further south you go, obviously, the season has changed more dramatically than further north. But I know there's some work taking place around airships and the viability of using them and trying to get tonnages up to a level that it would make it economically viable. So I'm just wondering if this ministry had any part in looking at those kind of innovative technologies that may be able to transport materials as opposed to building permanent roads, or is that somebody else's purview?

\* (10:40)

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thank you for that. The airships, Barry Prentice has—I know our caucus previously has had meetings with Barry Prentice and the concept of airships, and the department continues to monitor this. They have not put any funds into this to date. The—lots of technical issues which Barry will be very quick to agree that there are technical issues there. The other concern about that is that while airships are good for freight, they—it's not about—it doesn't alleviate the accessibility for people, because it's freight only and it's not passenger airships. So, you know, while you—I know that Mr. Prentice would be quick to point out that he can move freight in a lot cheaper than what's happening now. It's—we're still monitoring that.

In terms of the all-season road between Churchill and Nunavut, there's been preliminary studies, there is, you know, some studies going on as to where the road would actually do. It's—again, it's going to take some federal leadership, because it's interjurisdictional between Manitoba and Nunavut and the cost of it.

I did have a great discussion with the, with an MLA from Nunavut. He was certainly high on doing this and he also expressed interest about bringing power in there, like hydroelectric power in there, but he himself also realized that this is a long-term project that's huge dollars involved, and so, you know, we will—you got to have the economic justification for the cost of this and that, that sort of studies are still under way and it's—you know, we have to be open to these, as the member has stated, there's changes in climate and how that's affected these—the winter roads. And so, you know, the department has to be aware of this and is aware of this, and we'll keep monitoring this.

*Mr. Scott Johnston, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Lindsey:** Thank you. I'm just wondering, this government seems to like to talk partnerships with industry and stuff, and I accept the fact that, in its present form, airships probably aren't the greatest thing in the world for transporting people, but, if you can transport more supplies to the northern communities, it may change the requirement for the winter road, which then might allow some of those roads to be open longer because that heavy freight wouldn't be beating them up as bad every year.

So it's something to look at, and then industry also may be interested in finding alternate means of getting mineral from a mine to a processing plant or to a market or something. So there may be some opportunities there as well that, hopefully, either this minister's department or the Growth, Enterprise and Trade, or somebody within the government is actively looking at. And airships may not be the answer. Maybe there's something else out there that we're not aware of, but I certainly hope that the department is looking at whatever options may be available to move goods, services and people.

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

So okay, just moving on from that, I have a question in relation to the chart that you find on page 10 of the Estimates document. Down in the bottom left-hand corner, there's a box labelled Aboriginal Relations.

Could the minister expound on exactly what the purpose of that part of his department is? And—because I don't really see it mentioned anywhere else throughout the document, so I'd be interested to see what that's there for.

**Mr. Pedersen:** I thank the member for that question, and it's the person who has that job in there under Aboriginal Relations is a fellow by the name of Gilbert Manitopyes, and I'll get the correct spelling of his last name—I'll provide it to Hansard here—and what Gilbert does is liaison with First Nations on behalf of the department.

He is also—he attends job fairs, schools and, you know, it's sort of liaison with the First Nations making them aware—helping them to become aware of opportunities—job opportunities out there and it is—it's sort of that conduit back to this department, you know, just particular concerns that a community has, Gilbert will meet with them and then bring those back to the department.

And I had a really good meeting with Gilbert here a couple of weeks ago, and I look forward to talking to him again. He's become my go-to person in terms of my understanding of communicating with First Nations and that too. So Gilbert's just very good at his job and that's what that position is.

For the purposes of Hansard, I'll spell out Gilbert's last name. It's M-a-n-i-t-o-p-y-e-s.

So we're—we'll continue to use Gilbert's services ongoing here.

\* (10:50)

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank the minister for that so.

This gentleman is specific for this department, or is it an individual that's responsible for liaison between Aboriginal communities and peoples and all departments of the government?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Gilbert is under the employ of Infrastructure Department, but he's also on a committee with other departments.

There's a working group with other departments, and it's that guidance and back and forth that we need to know what's happening in every department, and Gilbert is part of that committee and working group to make sure that all departments are communicating, and all departments know what's going on. And, you know, if there's a particular issue comes up that is not necessarily—that Gilbert comes upon that's not necessarily infrastructure, he can go back to that committee, then, and make sure that it—that concern, or whatever, or issue, whatever case may be, that he can take it back to that committee and it gets to the right department, then.

And it's just about communications.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank the minister for that.

Is this a new position, or has it been in place all along?

**Mr. Pedersen:** This position has been there, and Mr. Manitopyes has been there for—it's almost 10 years. Like, somewhere around 2007 or so he's been there. And so this is ongoing, and it will continue to be ongoing.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank the minister for that. Okay.

So this department is responsible for bridge construction and maintenance. Is the—or does the minister have a list of which bridges, particularly in the North, are subject for repair or maintenance in

the coming construction season or in this construction season?

**Mr. Pedersen:** This is similar to the highway capital program.

The tendered projects are on the website. I—if the member wants to check the website, and he can find—and it's not just—I'm concerned about all Manitoba, not just one area of Manitoba. And so the entire province—it's on the website for the bridge construction that's tendered—already tendered. That's what's on the website. If he wants, we can provide him with that list too. Just let us know.

Also, there are—which won't show up on the website—there are planned bridge construction, but it's not tendered yet, and it—depending on funding and the construction season, et cetera, et cetera, there's many more that are planned. It just depends on available funds how the construction season rolls out and that too.

So we'll—so those are in the planned stage right now. And I should mention that bridge construction is a huge issue, again, for us. Between the—many of the bridges were built; there was a flush of bridges built in the '50s and, again, in the '70s, and they're at end of life.

We're trying to do maintenance on them to preserve that life, but between the age of the bridges and also the 2011, 2014 flood years were very hard on bridges and so there's extra demand on there. And so the department is—has stepped up the bridge inspection to make sure that we're aware of the condition of all of—all the bridges—bridge condition across the province.

So if—again, if the member just lets me know if he either is going to check the website or also if he wants the list, we'll get him a list for the bridges.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Technologically challenged member would appreciate the list, thank you.

So I would assume, then, recognizing that—the same as the minister's comments about maintenance on highways—that there should be seen some kind of increase in the budget for maintenance on bridges if there's so many that are in need of repair or replacement. Is that correct, or is the budget the same as it has been?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, this is similar to the highways, and we've had long discussions already about maintenance and on the highways maintenance and preservation. You know, we've got an aggressive

budget moving forward where we will do predictable and long-range plans on both maintenance, preservation and capital projects whether it's highways or whether it's bridges. So we will look at this in the long term.

We recognize there are issues with bridges just like there are issues with highways, but, you know, I'm—I just want to make sure that the member is aware that when we say we're going to spend \$1 billion a year in the budget, we're going to spend \$1 billion. This is not the raid, raid, raid and parade that we'll do on here, because we realize the importance of infrastructure and in terms of the—how it affects the economy.

So we're going to do this. At the same time, the member can appreciate that we're facing some major challenges in terms of budgets. You know, we've got a \$1-billion annual deficit right now so it's going to be difficult to increase that infrastructure budget from \$1 billion. But I will do my best to lobby the Finance Minister to make sure that we can—

**An Honourable Member:** Get in line.

**Mr. Pedersen:** We can get even more money, and my colleague reminds me, just get in line. Well, we're all in line to—but it's, you know, I have a—I have the upper hand on lobbying the Finance Minister because this is all strategic. Like, there's nothing more strategic than infrastructure, as I remind my colleagues next door to me here, but—*[interjection]*

Yes, but it—you know, there's budgetary pressures all over. But we realize the importance of this and we'll continue to plan strategically. We want to make sure that the public is involved in this, too, that they have input into where this maintenance should—capital program should be. So we'll just keep working on this year over year and we're going to build a better Manitoba.

### Report

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Acting Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254):** Mr. Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in room 254, considering the Estimates of Executive Council, the honourable member for Minto (Mr. Swan) moved the following—oh, sorry—the honourable interim leader moved the following motion: that line item 2.1.(a), the Premier and president of the council's salary be reduced to \$56,000.

Mr. Chairperson, this motion was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Chairperson:** A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

*All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.*

### Recorded Vote

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order. In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 254 considering the Estimates of Executive Council, the honourable member for Logan (Ms. Marcelino) moved the following motion, that line item 2.1.(a), the Premier and president of council's salary be reduced to \$56,000.

The motion was defeated in a voice vote and subsequently two members requested a formal vote on this matter. This question before the committee, then, is the motion of honourable member for Logan.

*A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 12, Nays 32.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

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**Mr. Chairperson:** This section of Committee of Supply will now continue with consideration of the department Estimates—departmental Estimates.

Before we continue, I just want to—order, order. Before we continue I just want to acknowledge, in the loge, my predecessor, the former member for Arthur-Virden, Jim Downey.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We're calling the staff back in, and we'll continue with the—resume the Estimates for the Department of Infrastructure.

**Mr. Lindsey:** After all that excitement now, I'll get back on track where I was. I might have to start all over again.

Does this department—or would this department have anything to do with any kind of extension of communication systems throughout the North?

\* (11:10)

**Mr. Pedersen:** Thanks for the question.

There is—this department, with a number of other departments, are in review of the FleetNet system.

There is a committee that's been struck within the—between departments. And that review is ongoing and will continue. That's the only one that we're aware of right now.

**Mr. Lindsey:** The reason I bring it up is it's one of the things that we've heard numerous times throughout the North in particular is vast stretches of long, lonely roads with no way to contact someone if there's an accident or if you get stuck or any number of other things. So I'm just curious—I'm pretty sure FleetNet doesn't apply to average citizens. It's more specifically for RCMP or conservation or highways department. Is there any consideration or possibility of anything along some of these roads, like 391, that really you can go all day and not see another human?

**Mr. Pedersen:** No, not at this time. There is nothing other than the review of this FleetNet.

I am very familiar with spotty cell service. In my own communities, you go up and down the hills around Notre Dame, and you've got cell service and then it drops or you drop the call in behind—once you get behind the hill. In most of our small communities throughout my own constituency, we have some of the poorest cell service right within the communities. So I'm aware of that, but there is no plans on the part of the department or no expenditures on the part of the department to bring in anything. Like, a satellite phone would be—obviously, would work anywhere, but that's an individual choice. That's not the department doing that.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I guess I'd just remind the minister that we don't, in a lot of the North, have spotty cellphone service; we don't have any service. So anything that we could do to provide some kind of communications ability, particularly for people that are travelling with families or small children, medical, recognizing that road conditions aren't necessarily optimal as well. If there's something we can do—and I don't know whether there's a possibility of doing anything with this FleetNet system that you could at least have some stations spread somewhere along the road. I see that sometimes when I travel to other countries where they've got, like, call boxes every however many miles along the road that—I don't know whether this is the right department to bring that up, but is it something that could be looked at or considered?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Mr. Chairman, I think the member should be bringing this up with GET, Growth, Enterprise and Trade, because this is their department that would be doing that. That's not a part

of Infrastructure. Or else, perhaps, Finance. It's just not in Infrastructure's mandate to be doing this. So we could maybe check with either GET or with Finance.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I thank the minister for that. I kind of didn't suspect this was the right department, but doesn't hurt to ask.

Let's talk about project labour agreements for a minute. Will it be this minister's department that's bringing in legislation dealing with project labour agreements?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Mr. Chairman, there is no legislation required to either do a project labour agreement or not to do a project labour agreement. This is part of the contract that—part of the tendering process that takes place, and so there is no legislation required on this.

In terms of project labour agreements, our new government—we're acting in the best interests of Manitoba taxpayers and when it comes to Infrastructure spending. When you institute return on investment, you are looking at criteria within that—what brings the best value back for the taxpayer. And this government certainly believes that proper preparation and planning of strategic Infrastructure projects, this allows the companies to plan adequately. And we're, you know, we're looking for savings by conducting value-for-money audits. It's all about smart shopping and fair and open tendering. And so you want to allow companies to compete fairly for government contracts.

And, at the same time, I would add it's about having respect for the rights of workers to unionize. This has nothing to do with whether you're unionized or not; it's about allowing all companies to be able to bid on contracts, government contracts, Infrastructure contracts, and what has in the past has been rather large Infrastructure projects.

And just to remind the member that the Highway 59 overpass project, which we've had discussions about in this committee, and the member from Elmwood was taking great delight in claiming victory of the project being done on time and on budget, there is no PLA in that particular project.

So, you know, we will, moving forward, we will look at getting the best value when we put tenders out for Infrastructure projects.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I suggest that the minister shouldn't let his ideological beliefs get in the way of understanding facts. There's nothing in the PLAs, as



they've presently been used for major projects, that forces anybody to join a union. So he's wrong when he makes that statement.

There's nothing in them that forces a non-union contractor to not be able to bid on contracts. So that assertion is wrong.

So getting value for money should apply to workers in the province. When the minister talks about value for all Manitobans, that should apply to workers as well.

\* (11:20)

And, certainly, there's a long, proud history in the province of using project labour agreements and unionized labour on a lot of these projects that brings them in on time, on budget, safe, productive employment for Manitobans.

Just on this, does the minister believe that the New West Partnership will be the reason that they don't want to participate in project labour agreements any longer? Because under the New West Partnership, or TPP for that matter, it'll be cheaper—and I use that term somewhat facetiously—to bring in workers from elsewhere to do project construction work in this province, undercutting Manitoba's workers' ability to feed their families.

And, certainly, when we look at how some of these projects impact northern communities, First Nations communities and their abilities to be able to grow their economies and grow their peoples to work on these kind of projects, is that a fair assessment?

**Mr. Pedersen:** No, it's not a fair assessment.

And the member has union experience, which I very much appreciate. But he needs to make sure that when he's talking about putting facts on the record, that he does that himself too. I didn't not say that you had to join a union in order to be—enter into a PLA or to get work on a project that has PLA. But all companies, the workers have to pay union dues under a PLA whether they belong to a union or not. And that is what makes for uncompetitive bids because if—and—workers within a construction company have every right to belong to a union. Nobody would ever dispute that, and good for them if they do. But, when you bid on a project that has a PLA in it, you have to pay union dues; you don't have to belong to the union.

And as I—if I remember correctly, and I'm sure the member will remind me, that on a couple of these projects the union dues that companies were forced

to pay—or the workers were forced to pay through the companies—were, actually, not to their own union. So it was—it doesn't make for competitive bidding if you have to add in a union due on top of your work that you're doing.

And, look, PLAs are outlawed in Europe. They're basically non-existent across most jurisdictions of North America. It's time Manitoba got caught up with the rest of the competitive world. We can't be isolated. We have to be competitive across the country. And, again, look at your Highway 59 overpass project. That's an out-of-province company that won the bid on that, and they're not paying—there's no PLA in there.

So the, you know, we're looking forward to, hopefully, joining the New West Partnership should those negotiations go well for us. But that does not restrict the competitiveness of getting bids. In fact, what it does is it opens it up. Taxpayers—Manitoba taxpayers are rightfully demanding value in the work that they're having to pay for. So we need to make sure that we're getting competitive bids across the entire construction spectrum, and PLAs have been a hindrance to that and that's why we're not interested in doing—including those in any bids because it is not good from a competitive point of view for the value for money for the Manitoba tax payer.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I've certainly heard the minister's statement on PLAs as I've listened to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) espouse the virtue of competitiveness, and my statement on that is, really, competitiveness, getting your projects done as cheaply as possible, isn't necessarily what's best for all Manitobans. It may not be what's best for working people in this province to continually have their ability to earn wages, which, then they pay taxes on and then spend money on and buy products and services. So I just suggest that there's more than one way of looking at things, but let's move on from that.

Specific sewer and water projects throughout the province, and, of course, being a member from the North, I have some questions about sewer and water projects in northern communities that I'd like the minister to comment on. Is there anything in the budget for infrastructure, water, sewer projects in northern communities, and, if so, could the minister give us a list of what those projects are, specifically?

**Mr. Pedersen:** I would like to just go back. I think competitiveness is a virtue, and it's something that brings value to the taxpayer, so I don't have any

apologies about trying to be competitive on behalf of the Manitoba taxpayer.

The member talks about cheaper. It's not necessarily about being cheaper; it's about finding the best value. And that's why in many of the tenders—most of the tenders that are put out by Infrastructure—there's a price-per-point value system in there where you bid on a dollar figure on a particular project, whether it's consulting, whether it's engineering or whether it's actually the capital construction. But you weigh the points. Some companies will be better on a particular—have strong points and they have weak points. So you use a value system on there so that perhaps the cheapest bid, dollar-wise, doesn't necessarily get the tender if that's not good value for the dollar figure or dollar amount that's bid on a contract. So you need to keep that in mind that it's not about being cheaper; it's about finding value for the Manitoba taxpayer.

In terms of water and sewer, the member needs to talk to Indigenous and Municipal Relations Department. Under their purview is the Water Services Board, which deals with municipal water systems. That is not under this department, and that will be where that one is. So that—water and sewer is, so he can check with IMR on their—what their program is for this year.

\* (11:30)

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I'd like to continue—continue asking the minister questions following up on the questions that we asked yesterday.

You know, the governments in this province have been building a lot of underpasses over the last few years, and we had the experience with the Plessis Road underpass in Transcona; the member knows where that is. And we got—we had approval for it, approved it and actually built it already, and the reality is that we quickly came to the conclusion that we've got to stop building underpasses and relocate the railway lines. I mean, in Transcona alone we could have probably built about six underpasses there at, you know, nearly \$100 million apiece.

So I want to ask the minister, what is the status of this attempted study, the study Jean Charest is involved in to move the tracks, and does the minister see this—any action or any of this happening in the—during his first mandate?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, going back to the last election, there wasn't a promise not made by this previous

government that—they basically promised the world to everyone, and we know what the results of the election were.

You know, if the answer is not underpasses and the answer is moving the rail lines out of Winnipeg, then previous government had 17 years to do this. So why all of a sudden did it become a priority in about January or February of 2016?

So the member needs to clarify their position, too, that if they're—who would actually pay for the rail relocation? You know, it's one thing to make an announcement, and the previous government was really, really good at making announcements and not really, really so good at following through on all those announcements. So, you know, if they were so intent on moving the railyards, why didn't they before and did they have any idea of the cost of doing this before they announced their intention to study? And I believe this was an intention to study, it was not an intention to move. And, you know, hiring an out-of-province consultant to do this is interesting too

So, you know, and if—it was their study so I, you know, was going to ask a question. Did it also include other communities of Portage la Prairie, of Brandon? Every other community within Manitoba, probably within Canada, has rail lines moving through them. So was this just a vote chaser for Winnipeg or was it really a serious attempt to address an issue where, you know—realize you—I'm sure the member is aware of the importance of the rail lines in Winnipeg. We're fortunate in that we have three major carriers all converging here in Winnipeg, and is it, again, I ask, was the study in consultation with them or was this just another political announcement trying to buy votes within Winnipeg?

We need to be aware of the importance of the rail industry here in Winnipeg. CN has major training centres here. They both, CN and CP, have a large employment within the city that's—that is a major driver in the members own constituency. I would gather that there's a lot of there. There's also other related industries that—besides CN and CP and BNSF—that employee people in Winnipeg here.

So, you know, we need to be clear about what the real intention was. Was it to buy votes or was it to—and try to placate a certain group within themselves? I don't know whether—which caucus faction they were trying to appease with this, but, you know, that's not Manitoba's issue there; that's for

the NDP to solve within themselves, of which faction they're trying to appease. So we need to make sure that we have good relations with our rail companies and realize the importance of the—they're economic drivers within the city of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, clearly, the minister is not even aware who Jean Charest is. I mean, Jean Charest is a Conservative, who's a Conservative Member of Parliament, one of two survivors when Jean Chretien won the federal government. And Jean Charest was premier of Quebec. Jean Charest has terrific credentials, and he was taken on by the former premier to do a study on rail relocation. My information is that he's been told to, you know, take the summer off. We're—we don't really have any plan in mind at this point.

I mean, surely, the minister would recognize—would see that the initiative that was done at The Forks to remove the rail lines there, and the result at—the result of The Forks, as we know them today, turned out to be a very positive—be a very positive—and Lloyd Axworthy was involved at that point in time, and the provincial government of the day was involved in it. And what they did was they relocated the rail lines, and they turned The Forks into a major tourist centre. So there are lots of arguments to be made both here and across the country for moving rail lines.

And I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that, you know, I had occasion to speak to people from CP Rail, you know, who reminded me that, you know, while they didn't want to incur any costs in moving those rail lines south of Winnipeg or wherever we're going to move them, that they wanted us to know, in no uncertain terms, that they were really just—their business was just incidental rail line, that they were really into property development. So what he was really saying was that, you know, he'd—they'd be willing—CP would be willing to talk about relocating rail lines if their real estate division would have a role in developing the land on which the railways exist right now.

So the minister—I, you know, accept that he's only been there for a couple of months, and—but I think he should, you know, avail himself of the expertise of the railway and have some discussions with them and maybe he could come up with some creative solutions here, because, certainly, they were not adverse to doing something along these lines.

And it's just that, as the member should appreciate that when we did the Plessis Road

underpass, I had people along Plessis, for the longest time, think that the underpass was going to be up near Gunn Road. And, when you look at the rail lines through there, you see that, you know, just building the Plessis Road underpass only solved the problem at that particular location, but the problem just move itself further down.

And so we counted perhaps six underpasses in there, and that would be, like, at a hundred million a piece, that would be about \$600 million. Well, now you're start to hit a tipping point here, and the economics may in fact show that it would be better just to move some rail lines. I'm not particularly talking about that rail line there in Transcona; I'm just talking about the principle behind the idea, that maybe there will be some opportunities and the government should be looking at that for the benefit all the way—all around in the province.

I'd like to ask the minister if he'd like to comment on that, please.

\* (11:40)

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, that was an interesting discussion. First of all, if—I realize the member was talking about the staging yards that were removed from The Forks. But, if the member has been to The Forks any time recently, I think there's a train that's got to be every couple of minutes. There's a train rolling right through, right beside, over top of The Forks. And so there still is trains going through The Forks, unlike what he tried to say.

You know, this is typical NDP planning. So they—under the 17 years, they helped finance the Plessis underpass, which I think the member had something to do with kind of messing up the plans there. I think, if I remember correctly, I think the premier was kind of slapping his hands for getting involved, but maybe I'm wrong on that one. Then they helped finance the Kenaston underpass. They've also committed to helping fund the Waverley underpass. And those three just come to mind.

So after spending millions and millions of dollars on underpasses, all of a sudden the bright light comes on and the NDP government says, well, no, let's do a study and let's move the rail yards. If you had any foresight at all, perhaps before you put all that money into underpasses, you would have looked at relocating the rails, if that is such a great idea. But now, you want to—and this was, I realize, it's just a study, a study-and-stall, pre-election thing that the NDP did. And so you know, the—to say that—

and also to say that CP Rail is more interested in property than in moving product down the rail lines. We have—Winnipeg, again, is fortunate to have three major rail lines and two of the—one connects to the south, the other two are east-west. But to say that CP Rail is not involved in moving freight is—the member's really out of touch because that's—that still is a major portion of their business.

And if you're saying that they're going to—maybe the member has inside information, that CP's just going to walk away from all their property in Winnipeg. Well, I haven't seen that information, and I wish he would share that with us if he really does because I'm thinking that's not quite true. There is a lot of jobs at stake within CP Rail and CN Rail and BNSF in Winnipeg, never mind the short lines that we have operating that connect to those major lines.

So maybe the—you know, if the NDP had any foresight, which is a bit of an anomaly, they would have thought about this before they spent all the money on overpasses and—or, sorry, underpasses and some overpasses, too, that go over top of some rail lines. And, you know, the member's experience with the Plessis underpass would certainly remind him about that. He'd be front and centre with that one. So, you know, the—Mr. Charest is a very credible person, but I still think it was a political game that the NDP were trying desperately to buy votes in Winnipeg, and that's—until he can convince me otherwise, I think that's where it—where that whole idea came from. The timing is very suspect on this, and I think it relates definitely straight into an election—last-minute, desperate election ploy.

**Mr. Maloway:** I know the member has been looking forward to and probably dying for the opportunity to discuss the Louise Bridge replacement. As he probably knows, Louise Bridge is, like, 100 years old. It's, I think, the second oldest bridge in the city. And it's a bridge that has only two lanes, so basically when there is a problem, which there frequently is—there have been people jumping off that bridge for many years; there have been accidents on the bridge in the middle of rush hour—and so emergency vehicles can't get through.

And I know that when we do protests out there, we—the first people that come to our aid are the police, the bus drivers, ambulance people, they're the first people tooting their horns and coming over and expressing concern, basically safety concerns, all around that a 100-year-old two-lane, one-lane-in-each-direction bridge is not the solution.

Now the previous city councillor, Mr. Steen, and the previous mayor, Sam Katz, had actually worked out a plan to build a new Louise Bridge just to the east of the LaSalle Hotel and shore up the riverbank in the process, which is also a problem, it's like rated very poor there that part of the riverbank, the land behind the senior's home is falling into the river and needs some work.

So this was all going to be solved by this one project, and we were told that it was going to be probably being constructed as we speak. That was the timeline for it, started in 2008, the City had put it on its priority list. So this project is pretty high up in the priority list at the present time, but it seems to get passed—bypassed for, you know, projects that are currently, I guess, on the go.

So I'd like to ask the minister if he could tell me if there's any engineering studies that indicate that there is some difficulties or some defects with the caissons on that bridge.

**Mr. Pedersen:** The member should know, but I will just remind him that this is entirely under the purview of the City of Winnipeg. Any engineering, any studies on it, any capital program on it is under the entire control of the City of Winnipeg, and there is no further discussion on this issue. It is a City of Winnipeg issue and he needs to take it up with his city councillor and with the City of Winnipeg because the Department of Infrastructure does not have any say in city—what projects the City decides to do. It is within their capital planning and engineering, et cetera, and bridge assessment is all under the City of Winnipeg's purview and not under the Department of Infrastructure.

**Mr. Maloway:** And, if the minister would do some checking, he'd find that what he just said is not true that the reality is that there is a component to his department that deals closely with the City, and if it doesn't have copies of the engineering studies in its own files at the moment, it certainly—they're only one phone call away to the City of Winnipeg. And as a matter of fact, I think if the minister will check he'll find out that the Province authority was transferred over some time back from the City to the Province when there became structural questions about, I think it was Disraeli Bridge at the time, but the Province took over that authority. It had been—it had rested with the City of Winnipeg for a number of years, but the Province took over the authority when it came to safety, and that's my issue with the Minister right now.

I want to know whether he's aware of any safety concerns regarding that bridge and whether he can confirm that there are engineering reports on that bridge which would indicate that it is in worse shape than he may think at the moment.

\* (11:50)

**Mr. Pedersen:** The member needs to get his story straight. First of all, he made the statement that we had it in our files on the Louise Bridge, and then the next moment, he says, all you need to do is make a phone call. So figure it out, one way or the other. But we have it figured out. The Louise Bridge is entirely the City of Winnipeg's issue. If there was a—if there was a request coming from the City of Winnipeg to cost-share on a project such as the Louise Bridge, it would actually go to IMR, indigenous municipal relations, and under the Building Canada Fund, but it goes through IMR. We do not do any engineering. We do not do any of the work for the City of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, you know, I would think that the minister would check his—get his information straighter. I know that the provincial government does have a very big effect, and has in the past and will in the future, as to what projects the City of Winnipeg does fund. If he does not understand that or know that, then I—would be a big surprise to me. Actually, I look forward to the day when my good friend, the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher), gets promoted to the Cabinet because I know that he has a much greater understanding of how infrastructure works, both in Manitoba and in this country. And I, you know, I have experience with him in the past to know that when you ask the man a question, you get an answer. You get at least an attempt at a proper answer. Even though we might be on different, you know, sides of the political spectrum, the fact of the matter is that we're working for the—on these projects together; we should be co-operating together on them. I mean, I'm just simply asking the minister information that he, in fact, should already know and that if he doesn't know it, he should find out.

Now, yesterday, Mr. Chairperson, I asked him about the water levels. Now, I asked this minister about water levels and the whole idea of, you know, we're trying to promote tourism at The Forks—and the water levels are high; right now they are covering The Forks—and whether he would do some work on seeing how—whether we could raise the Riverwalk or find ways of solving this problem. I asked this

question, and here we are the next day and he hasn't provided an answer. He doesn't even acknowledge that he was asked a question. I think he went—he raged on about northern roads, but I'm asking him about the city—about water levels in the city. So I'd ask the minister to kind of focus his attention on the questions that are being asked of him and try to provide answers to those questions.

**Mr. Pedersen:** The—that was quite a walk that the member went on. He started out on the Riverwalk, and he ended up on northern roads and wandered all over the place. So, you know, not quite sure.

Again, the member needs to realize the Riverwalk is under the purview of the City of Winnipeg. If they had any notion, if the City had any notions of raising the Riverwalk, that would be their decision. If they were to come to the city of—or to the Province, they—again, it would go to IMR because that's Municipal Relations. And so we're not involved in the Riverwalk. I'm still not sure how northern roads got—wandered into that conversation about the Riverwalk, but so be it. The member can figure that out, and maybe he can explain how northern roads and Riverwalk go together. So I'll leave it at that.

**Mr. Maloway:** Oh, Mr. Chairman, you know, this is a pointless exercise here, trying to get any answers from this minister. On that basis, I would simply suggest that we pass the resolutions.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, we'll continue with the resolutions to be passed.

Resolution 15.2: RESOLVED that there will be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$46,405,000 for Infrastructure, Highways, Transportation and Water Control Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$182,575,000 for Infrastructure, Infrastructure Works, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,740-\$14,000—sorry, I'll read it again—\$2,714,000 for Infrastructure, Emergency Management and Public Safety, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$384,218,000 for Infrastructure, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

***Resolution agreed to.***

Resolution 15.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$606,200,000 for Infrastructure, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

***Resolution agreed to.***

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 15.1.(a), the Minister's Salary, contained in resolution 15.1.

At this point, we request that all ministerial—oh, okay, they all have left. Yes, the staff has left the Chamber.

The floor is open for questions.

Resolution 15.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,981,000—okay, \$9,181,000 for Infrastructure, Corporate Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017. *[interjection]*

Sure. I'm going to repeat this one again.

Resolution 15.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,181,000 for Infrastructure, Corporate Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

***Resolution agreed to.***

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Infrastructure.

The next step of the Estimates to be considered is the section of Committee of Supply in the Department of Education and Training.

However, the time being 12 p.m., I am interrupting these proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting later today following routine proceedings.

Committee recess.

**CORRIGENDUM**

On June 22, 2016, page 1301, first column, fourth paragraph, should have read:

So sometimes there are cars parked over there after there is an emergency, and there's not an easy way to go through it. So I think that has been left that way for a long time. I am pushing for it. And, a few times, I did myself—talk to the councillor, and then there was other roads in that area to be done, so some you get, some you don't get. Because Keewatin was to be twinned, so they are doing that. Pipeline Road is to be—make better than what it was—used to be.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, June 23, 2016**

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