

First Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SELINGER, Greg	St. Boniface	NDP
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 28, 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.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. The issue is the lack of physical accessibility in this Chamber.

In many cases of privilege, it must be raised immediately upon the realization of the breach. In this case, I am bringing forward the issue of privilege in a timely manner.

The election was just a few months ago and the House has been sitting for a few weeks. Your election as Speaker has been very recent. In this time, it was my hope and expectation that we would have had significant process—or progress in designing an appropriate solution. However, I understand that little to no progress has been made, and I am very concerned that no progress will be made over the summer, and the issue of privilege will be an issue for months, if not years.

The purpose of my statement and the motion is to explain why this is an issue of privilege. My motion and statement will discuss reasons why the plans for the current project are not appropriate and provide a better solution that can be done in a timely manner.

First, I like to take—I'd like to make the case that privilege as a member of the Legislative Assembly is being violated. In fact, I don't believe that there are any other clearer examples in the entire history of the Westminster model of a breach of privilege due to obstruction.

I'll take a moment to discuss the definition of privilege and why this is an issue of privilege. In

circumstances where members claim to be directly obstructed, impeded, interfered with or intimidated in the performance of their parliamentary duties, the Speaker is apt to find a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred. This may be a physical obstruction, assault, molestation.

On a matter—on this matter, former Speaker of the House of Commons, Speaker Parent, ruled immediately that there was a prima facie case of privilege. In this case, he noted—the Speaker noted the guardian of the rights of members, in his ruling—said the interventions made by several members who raised a matter of—members not enabled to get through the Parliamentary Precinct due to security concerns constituted a prima facie case of contempt of the House and a motion was adopted.

In fact, I'm not sure of the date, but the member from Elmwood may have been there.

The time-honoured privilege of a member to have free and unimpeded access to Parliament Buildings or the legislative buildings should be recognized even if there is some question to the extent of the term Parliamentary Precinct, and in particular whether the jurisdiction of the Speaker exercised on behalf of the members.

I would refer the Speaker to parliamentary privilege beyond the limits of the Parliament Buildings themselves and debates, May 25th, 1970: parliamentary privilege is the sum of the particular rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constitute—a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their function and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals.

The privileges of Parliament are rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers. They are enjoyed by individual members, because the House cannot form its function with unimpeded use of the services of its members.

For example: the House of Commons has three entryways to the floor that are all accessible and flush with the rest of the building. This allows access to the front bench, clerks and Speakers. There is also plenty of room to maneuver a wheelchair between the government and opposition sides, and moreover,

there are antechambers behind the—each set of benches behind the curtains that are also accessible with two entrances.

* (10:10)

The benches are tiered so, therefore, benches 2, 3 and 4 are not wheelchair accessible. These benches do not need to be accessible for a wheelchair person to fulfill their duties as a parliamentarian. Given that the Speaker, clerks, support staff and the very important front bench are all easily accessible in the House of Commons or other legislatures across the country, the member is able to fulfill his or her duties. To discuss a matter with a colleague in benches 2, 3 or 4, all that would need to be done to gain their attention is to ask them to come down or meet with them in the antechamber or outside.

This is not possible in the Manitoba Legislature. The—this physical—the physical barrier—and I'm talking about the pit here—the physical barrier also prevents the possible seat placement if there was a desire for opposition or government to place a wheelchair user in the front bench.

The rights, privilege and immunities of a member of the House are finite, that is to say that they can be enumerated but not extended except by statute and, in some cases, by constitutional amendment. Privilege does not exist, quote, unquote, at large, but applies in the context, which usually means in the confines of the Parliamentary Precinct and a proceeding in Parliament. Well, this Chamber is certainly part of the legislative precinct.

The rights and privileges, immunities, do have several categories. My motion is focused on the time-honoured privilege of freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation. However, I will say that my motion is as fundamental to parliamentary democracy as freedom of speech. This is self-evident, and therefore I will not elaborate unless the Speaker would like me to.

Members of the Legislature or Parliament, by the nature of their office and the variety of the work that they are called upon to do, come into contact with a wide range of individuals and groups. Members can, therefore, be subject to all matters of interference, obstruction and influences.

Maingot states, members are entitled to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed. Things like assaults, menacing situations, insults, of any member on the floor of the House of Commons or while going or coming to the House or on account of his

behaviour during the proceedings of Parliament, is a violation of the rights of Parliament. I would extend this to include obstruction.

Speakers have consistently upheld the right of the House to service its members, free from obstruction and interference.

Speaker Lamoureux stated in 1973 ruling that he had no, quote, no hesitation in reaffirming the principle that parliamentary privilege includes the right of a member to discharge his or her responsibilities as a member of the House.

As Speaker Bosley noted in 1996, if an honourable member is impeded or obstructed in the performance of his or her parliamentary duties, such a case would fall within the limits of parliamentary privilege. Should an honourable member be able to say that something had happened which prevented him or her from performing functions—it goes on to give some examples—there would be a case for the Chair to consider.

In rulings on other questions of privilege, Speaker Bosley stated further that issues of threats or attempts at intimidation cannot be hypothetical, but must be real and have occurred. I'll extend that to suggest that a physical obstruction is simply the same as intimidation. It is not hypothetical but completely obvious.

If Mr.—if Speaker Bosley's statement about threats and intimidation is correct, it must also be so that physical obstructions constitute a prima facie breach.

In order to find a prima facie breach of privilege, the Speaker must be satisfied that the evidence to support the member's claim, that he or she has been impeded in performing his or her parliamentary function in a matter that is directly related to the proceedings in Parliament.

In circumstances where members claim to be physically obstructed, impeded, interfered with or intimidated in the performance of their parliamentary functions, the Speaker is apt to find that a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred.

Madam Speaker, as this Legislature seems to be the only one in Canada with a bowl-type shape of Chamber, there is no direct precedent that I'm aware of. However, there are many examples of obstruction that have been found to be prima facie cases of privilege, and in each one, these cases of blockage were temporary, but it was still brought forward.

My motion of privilege is dealing with a blockage that is permanent.

I'll give you some quick, very quick examples of physical obstruction, you know, such as traffic barriers, security corridors, union picket lines, either impeding members' access to the Parliamentary Precinct or blocking their free movement within the precinct, have all been found prima facie cases of privilege.

In 1989, Speaker Fraser ruled such a case existed when the RCMP road-blocked—had a road block on Parliament Hill meant to contain demonstrators, but prevented members from accessing the House of Commons.

In 1999, a number of questions of privilege were raised resulting from a picket line set up by members of the 'plubbic' service alliance at strategic locations on Parliament Hill, at the entrances of specific buildings used by parliamentarians. One member—this was clearly a matter of a prima facie case of privilege, and the matter was dealt with.

There are other examples: members having difficulty in gaining access to their offices, thus preventing them from performing their function and meeting their obligations in a timely fashion. And, again, Speaker Parent found that the institute—constituted a prima facie case of contempt of the House.

In two thousand and—this is kind of an interesting one—in 2004, a question of privilege was raised regarding the free movement of members within the Parliamentary Precinct during a visit by the President of the United States. A number of members complained that in an attempt to prevent protesters from entering the building, police also denied members access to the Parliamentary Precinct and thus prevented them from carrying out their functions. Speaker Milliken, again, found a prima facie case of privilege.

*(10:20)

I believe the case is as clear as it can be when it comes to privilege, when it comes to privilege, when we talk about the physical obstruction that exists in this room.

It has been suggested that the historic nature of the building—and this is a glorious building, and probably one of the most stunning buildings in the country—that there would be a conflict between the physical accessibility or making the building

physically accessible and its historic nature. In other words, the aesthetics of the Chamber would be ruined if the Chamber is made accessible. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Just because it has been doesn't mean it has to be. There was a time in this building not so long ago, there were no female washrooms in this building. One may have assumed the building would have been made wheelchair accessible after the war—the First World War. Alas, it's taken us over a hundred years to get to this point.

Former Premier Doer insisted that a ramp, a wheelchair ramp, be constructed at the front of the building. He was ridiculed by some, saying that the ramp would ruin the aesthetics of the building. Others said it was too expensive. Yet others said the wheelchair accessible ramp at the back of the building leading into the basement of the building was good enough.

The ramp went ahead and is now a well-used portion of the building. It blends in splendidly with the exterior, and adds glory to this great edifice.

Please imagine for a moment that it's the 1980s, and you are a female that has been invited to the Manitoba Club with your colleagues and friends, only to be turned away because it is or was a male-only club. This kind of exclusion happens to people with physical disabilities all the time. Now imagine a workplace, and not just any workplace, the very room in which the people's representatives make the laws of the land—the heart of our freedom—and that is not accessible.

There are many things in this building that need to be brought into the 21st century. Today I am focusing on a clear and egregious example where a member's privilege is being violated to such an extent that it prevents this member from fulfilling all the responsibilities as an MLA.

As mentioned earlier, the issue is the sunken floor in the middle of the Chamber. Unlike other legislative buildings in the Commonwealth that I am aware of, the Manitoba Legislature has a flush entrance at the main and side doors but then has an incline towards—of about a metre—towards the middle of the room. It's in the middle of the room that the clerks and the support staff for the Speaker sit. This is where other members can access the front bench. Essentially, it is this area that is the most important portion of the room in a room where everything is important.

I had an opportunity to meet with the previous Speaker and a committee of public servants and stakeholders. I was told that the committee was in existence for at least five years and has been working on making this building accessible. There—I also understand there is an individual who has been working on this project for this Chamber for over a year. I would like to thank everyone who has worked for the cause of creating an accessible legislative building.

The apparent solution brought forward is quite elaborate. It includes two mechanical lifts that would be placed on either side of the Speaker. In fact, I understand consultants from Toronto have been utilized to create drawings. When I inquire on what type of lift would be used, there have—none have been identified.

Madam Speaker, I understand a lot of people put a lot of time and effort into solving this problem, but I am reminded of the old story: when you select a committee to create a race horse, the committee will come up with a double hump camel.

Mechanical lifts as proposed will be noisy, expensive, disruptive, unsafe, unreliable, there's weight restrictions, many lifts do not meet the realities of the 21st century technology and are almost impossible for a quadriplegic to operate independently.

I am reminded of efforts that were made at the House of Commons when they made it—or tried to make it more wheelchair accessible. At the parliamentary restaurant in the House of Commons, and perhaps the leader of the Liberal Party and the member from Elmwood will remember this, they had a tiny lift for wheelchairs to enter the restaurant. Now, the House of Commons was very proactive once I was elected and installed the larger lift. I was assured that it was—it would work, it would be perfect. Alas, the lift went—turned out to be too small and unable to accommodate, you know, the modern wheelchair both in size and weight. So they put all this effort in and it didn't work out. My solution to get into the restaurant turned into going through the kitchen and using the ramp.

Now, this is a situation, I think, that is much more important because it's the Chamber. This is unfortunate. I have no other recourse that I'm aware of other than to raise this issue. As a rule of thumb, a non-mechanical solution is always better than a mechanical one.

Madam Speaker, I'm concerned that the current plans will not solve the issue at hand, but will be hugely expensive and destroy the aesthetics of the Chamber on your right and left, and my privilege will still be violated when all the work is done.

Of course, accessibility and human rights come before aesthetics. However, there is an obvious solution. A ramp down the middle or—down the middle of the Chamber—or in a crescent shape around the Chamber at either side would achieve the goal of accessibility while keeping the integrity of the Chamber intact. This has been looked at, but was dismissed because the slope would be too steep, and a ramp would have to go right across the entire floor. But this is a false argument as the designers who made that statement did not take into consideration the raising of the floor of the Chamber to a height that would allow for an acceptable ramp, or, if they must, raising the floor so it's flush with the rest of the building, as is the case in legislative buildings throughout Canada.

* (10:30)

In a few days the House rises for the summer and does not return for three months. This would be an excellent opportunity to carry out necessary renovations. There are also large blocks of time when the House is not sitting in the fall and winter.

Madam Speaker, this is ancient building, and you're very new; you just started as Speaker, so I have great empathy for the situation that you find yourself in. We want to do the right thing. The building, particularly this room, needs to be accessible. With the issue of privilege, usually it needs to be brought up, as I said, immediately upon realization but given the circumstances, I hope—this is really the fastest, I think, that I could have raised this issue of privilege.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member from Rossmere, that my privilege as a parliamentarian has been breached and that an acceptable remedy be found before the fall session and its full implementation be done so by the end of this calendar year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Assiniboia for raising this issue this morning.

Canadians know that the honourable member is a trailblazer, blazed a trail in Canada and in Parliament, is doing so here in the Legislature. He has great respect in this Assembly; he has great respect in this province; and I know he has great respect in Canada for the things that he's achieved and for the many things that he's yet to achieve.

The member raises, I think, not only a valid point but is probably correct on the issue of privilege, and I recognize that that speaks to, in many ways, the collective failure of the Assembly as a whole and all of us as individual members of the Assembly, past and present, to ensure that this Chamber is accessible to the standards that we expect in modern-day society.

But I also say that without any sense of blame because I do believe that there have been efforts made by those within the civil service, those within the office of the Speaker, those within the Legislative Assembly Management Commission to make changes to make the Assembly more accessible. But it is not to the standard that it needs to be, Madam Speaker. We recognize that, and it's never been made more clear than by the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher).

So I think that all members of this Assembly, past and present, have acted in a way in good faith to try to ensure that changes were made to the Assembly. I would include the past Speaker, Mr. Reid, in that. I would include, of course, yourself, Madam Speaker, and all of the staff here in the Assembly where they have, I think, done their best to try to make accommodations as they best could with the time frames that they had. But the member is right; it's not enough, and there needs to be more done to make this Assembly fully accessible in the way that all of us would expect in the world that we live in.

So he has challenged us rightfully and appropriately this morning, and, certainly, I know you will take the specifics of the matter of privilege under advisement, Madam Speaker, but I don't think it requires your admonition or your ruling, whenever that will come, to challenge all of us as an Assembly

to do better, to do it quicker and to do it in a way that all of us would feel proud about for all Manitobans.

This is certainly something, I know, that will be raised at the Legislative Assembly Management Commission and also, of course, with your fine office, Madam Speaker, because regardless of your future ruling, we as legislators need to do better and we need to challenge each other to do better.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I want to rise to agree with the Government House Leader that the member has made an important matter of privilege today, and matters of privilege are not to be taken very lightly. They're not to—they're to be very serious and they're to be raised at the earliest opportunity. And the member—it could be argued the member could have raised it a little earlier, but I think that his timing on this is fine.

As far as the prima facie case is concerned, I think that's up for you to decide, but he has quoted Speaker Bosley, Speaker Fraser, Speaker Lamoureux on May 25th, 1970, and he did make the proper motion that is required of a matter of privilege, so I would also agree that—with him—that justice delayed is justice denied. So whatever it is that we're going to do, we should get on with it so that we have results in his time frame this year and not delay this for any multiple years. That could very well happen; that's certainly been the case in the past. We have to resolve the issue now.

Thank you.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Madam Speaker: The honourable interim—the honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Well, it is interim, too.

On House business, I'd like to know if there's consent to extend the sitting today to 12:30 because of the matter of privilege.

Madam Speaker: Is there consent of the House to sit this morning until 12:30? *[Agreed]*

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Would you please resolve into Committee of Supply, Madam Speaker?

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

* (10:40)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

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

The committee will now resume consideration for the motion concurring in the all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2017.

On June 27th, 2016, the Official Opposition Leader–House Leader–tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for sequential questioning for debate on this motion today: Infrastructure, Crown Services, Indigenous and Municipal Relations, and Sustainable Development.

The floor is now open for questions. Open for questions?

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas): Again, it's an honour to be within the Chambers here and have the opportunity to ask questions of our Minister for Indigenous and Municipal Relations.

My first question is, I was wondering if you can share with us yesterday's talks with our leadership with the Shoal Lake First Nation, share with us the opportunity to engage us and to ensure that this road will be built.

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations): I appreciate your question because I was really hoping to have the opportunity to bring that forward today.

We had a very enthusiastic group of 13 people that went to Shoal Lake 40 yesterday. They included Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and other people from universities, et cetera, that are very interested in finding out and who'd never—they really weren't aware of what was going on at Shoal Lake 40. I guess they were aware of the road, of course, that needs to be built and the ongoing promises that have been made to do this road.

So we spent the whole day. We left early in the morning and we didn't get back 'til last evening. And I think for many people—for many people, first off, it was their first time at a First Nations community and, you know, realizing that the lifestyle there is quite different and having to travel on a barge from one community to the next certainly was an experience. I haven't experienced that either. I've been on barges before, but not on First Nations.

I think there was some disbelief from many of those that were there at the quality of life that the people of this community of less than 500 people live. The museum that they have put together outlining in detail for many, many years the commitments from government, federal or provincial, that have been made to this community and to an accessible road for them in regards to the water supply that's been provided for the City of Winnipeg. There's been a lot of challenges and a lot of disappointment, but I think the word that kept coming forward was the resilience of the people of this community. And considering what they've been through—and it's a grueling story of so many years—but the resilience of these people and the hope that they still have and that they instill in their children, that's remarkable.

They're still very hopeful and, you know, it was encouraging for myself as a minister to be there and with my other ministers in this government within Infrastructure, et cetera, that we've been having these conversations and that there is ongoing commitment to building Shoal Lake road—Shoal Lake 40 road that there is positive hope for these people. And it was unfortunate, due to the weather and the excessive amount of rain, we weren't able to go to where the bridge is actually just completed and get to see that as well as the inlet and the channel, et cetera. They're very excited.

I think the bridge itself, it's something significant; it's something tangible that is now there and it's a piece of this project. So, going forward, I think it gives them hope.

But they have less than 30 children in their school, and even their young children become discouraged, from what we're told, because, without a road giving them accessibility, there's no hope for economic development. And that's a huge concern because they believe with their hearts that there's going to be very strong possibilities of economic development that can take place. And they're not

giving up hope; they're continuing to look forward, and I think they're to be commended.

They served us a great lunch, a traditional lunch, and for many that were there, bannock was not something they'd had before; they actually enjoyed it. And the people there were really—they were compassionate, you know. We talked about the experience on the way back and, you know, they brought forward ideas of how they felt that they could help this community. There was discussions on possible funds that could be put together for the community, you know, not directed at anything, any particular direction, but, I mean, there was a strong desire.

The other thing that I really noticed in the discussions coming back from those who attended was—

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister's time is up.

Ms. Lathlin: I just wanted to share with you, I did receive an invite to attend. However, when I responded by saying I would have to check with my colleagues—my team—to ensure that I was able to go, but it ended up being an uninviting invite anyway because they did the math wrong. They included the driver as the 15th person, so therefore there was no room for me. And I did suggest, because I was looking forward to visit the community, as well, and also, too, I did recommend that, if I can take my own vehicle, if I can still be involved, and I didn't get a response. So that's why—explains my absence from this trip.

So, with that, I just wanted to ask you, like, speaking of resilience: Can you provide us the current status in regards to what is the Province going to do to restore the communities displaced by the 2011 flood? The communities of Lake St. Martin, Peguis First Nation, specifically.

Ms. Clarke: Thank you, another good question. Very timely.

I'd just like to go back to the trip yesterday. It's very unfortunate that there wasn't better communication, because I think someone had cancelled and there was one empty place on that group, and that's very unfortunate because, from my perspective, it would have been great to travel with you and take this trip with you.

There were other indigenous women who work within our indigenous groups, et cetera, in Winnipeg.

One actually, Sharon Redsky, it—her roots are with that community, and she was there because they're planning a three-day event right now, a kind of an uplifting event for their community to celebrate what they do have and to look forward, positively, to the future. So it's really unfortunate that you couldn't be there.

Now, in regards to the communities from the flood of 2011, it's very unfortunate that the time of this concurrence has been changed, because I will likely end up missing a meeting at 11 o'clock this morning with those people in my office, and I feel very badly about that. They've been very patient in waiting for a meeting. They've been patient for many years now. This flood occurred in 2011. And so I feel that I am dishonouring them by not being there; however, this political process is important, also, so I hope they understand that. And I would certainly be better able to discuss your question had I been at that meeting this morning.

So it's definitely a discussion that we can have in the very near future, perhaps even later today.

Ms. Lathlin: I was wondering if you can provide us the status of the Northern Association of Community Councils. There's several that exist in my constituency. I was wondering if you can share the current status of your relationship there.

* (10:50)

Ms. Clarke: I don't have information with me here on that, and I haven't had a meeting with that group in particular to date. I have had several meetings with other groups and communities from the North, and—but I have also had to postpone many of these meetings. I expect to be having them in July and August. I have committed to all of them that I will continue to meet throughout the summer until I meet my obligations.

And requests for all the meetings that have been asked, there are many. The indigenous part of this portfolio is an extensive one, and I really appreciate—I've probably had more than 20 meetings with different groups and chiefs and councils to date, but there are as many or more than still remain.

The other part of that is I don't expect to be just doing this in my office. I plan also, during the summer months or the months that we're recessed, to visit the northern communities, the ones that I can.

I've committed to a couple already and am hoping that I can work some more into that.

So I continue to meet with my staff. There's new staff being hired on the indigenous side, and we will continue to get updated on all the different groups that work within that portfolio.

Ms. Lathlin: In regards to Municipal Relations, do you see a role in your position as Minister of Municipal Relations in the hiring of a new police chief?

Ms. Clarke: We talked during the Estimates about hiring a new chief of police, and there's certainly a consensus that Chief Clunis has been very good for the city of Winnipeg. There is a trust and relationship between himself, the police force and the city residents that is extremely positive. And he has really engaged in trying to work on prevention, and I think that's extremely important going forward.

We're very confident in the board that will be working in the next weeks and time frame to hire a new chief of police. I think, given the fact that they were the people that chose Chief Clunis, or recruited him, that's a positive influence that we can expect the same performance again.

Our government is not looking to tell our boards what to do and be an influence on their jobs. We want to have people on our boards, whether it's the police board or our Crown corporation boards. We want to ensure that the people that are appointed to these boards are very capable, that they have a good knowledge of understanding of the committee and boards that they're on.

So I don't expect to be involved in this. That's not my position or the position of my department. So we will look forward to see what names come forward or who our board selects, but we're very confident that they'll do a good job. And, in many cases, as in other committees or boards, when they have a candidate that they feel has done a very good job and that they have a great respect and trust in, they often ask that—the particular person to stay on and assist in the selection. So that could happen here as well.

So we look forward to seeing what transpires in the next week, and we certainly look forward to having another chief of police that does a great job for the city of Winnipeg.

Ms. Lathlin: In your previous answer, you had stated that—new positions within Indigenous

Relations Department. Can you share with us specifically what positions those are that will—the new hires?

Ms. Clarke: There were openings—I believe there's one in the Aboriginal secretariat and I don't have the name of the position specifically.

Another one that we're considering is a special advisor. There was a special advisor in the past. This is—consideration is being given to a position. We have not titled it special advisor, anything of that nature. But we feel with the workload on the murdered, missing indigenous women and girls as well as the truth and reconciliation—path to reconciliation, that there's need for a liaison, shall we say, that can work with myself and other staff members to make sure that all information is coming forward and that we are able to get all the information as quickly as possible and work with it.

So that's a consideration. That particular position will likely be a current staff member. We haven't looked beyond that at that—this point.

Ms. Lathlin: So just to clarify, the—there's three possible positions: a special adviser, a liaison and one that you can't remember right now under the Aboriginal secretariat?

Ms. Clarke: I haven't given names to these positions; I just said there are vacancies. I did not specifically say—give names. I said the former position was special advisor. That is not saying that that is the position that will be there at this point. And I don't have the total number of vacancies. I—it's—I know of two, for sure.

Ms. Lathlin: I wanted to see—ask you, specifically in regards to Aboriginal Justice Inquiry—just let me find my place here. I wanted to see what your strategic plan and implementation of the Aboriginal Justice Implementation committee recommendations related to child welfare, justice, Metis policy and self-government.

Ms. Clarke: Again, that's an area of this portfolio that we have not had full disclosure with my staff yet. We're trying to work through them. We've had brief discussions on many things, but it's our consideration that in the coming months—or, pardon me, weeks—when we are recessed, that we can do more in-depth work. And as you can understand, with the processes that we've been going through with budget as well as the Throne Speech, it's taken a lot of time away from me being in my office,

meeting with my staff and meeting with the stakeholders for these different particular groups.

So it is my consideration that this will be ongoing and we will be up to speed.

Ms. Lathlin: In regards to Municipal Relations, I was wondering if the minister can share with us your plan to address safety concerns regarding Winnipeg Transit bus drivers.

Ms. Clarke: There has been—*[interjection]*—Yes.

As—again, there is a board here that is responsible for this through the 'wity'—City of Winnipeg and they will be taking all these things into consideration and they will—that's their responsibility. We are basically on operational funding with the transit system. So they—their role is to cover the safety aspects.

Ms. Lathlin: In regards to funding, how much money will the Province be providing for a separate transit police service and expanding the cadet program to address this issue?

* (11:00)

Ms. Clarke: The funding for the transit is a lump-sum funding and then it's broken down within the city for that. We don't have it broke down; we just provide the overall funding for the operations.

Further to that, considering that we're back on policing and cadets, et cetera, there was a question that came forward during the Estimates session. I believe it was from the member from Minto. It was in regards to the exact number of cadets that are currently working within the police service, and I would like to put it on record at this time. The 2016 Winnipeg Police Service auxiliary cadet complement, funded jointly by the Province and the City of Winnipeg, is 75 cadets. City officials advise us that as of June 24th, 2016, 59 cadet positions are filled and that the Winnipeg Police Service anticipates undertaking a new recruit class in the fall of 2016 to address the vacancies.

Ms. Lathlin: My question is: Will the minister be continuing with the rail relocation task force, especially now that Mayor Brian Bowman has come out in support of it?

Ms. Clarke: The mayor and I have not had this discussion. I have had a preliminary meeting with the mayor, and we discussed a lot of issues, especially infrastructure funding and that, that he considers

priorities at this time so that they can get going on the 2016 construction season.

We didn't have that discussion in regards to the rail relocation. There has been a what we'll call a pause put on the study of that rail relocation, and I expect to be meeting with the mayor very shortly again. We have committed to meeting on a fairly regular basis so that we can be updating each other as to, you know, what projects are going forward, what the concerns are and how we can best address them working in a strong partnership with good communication. So that could quite likely be within the next discussion but was not a part of our first discussion.

Ms. Lathlin: My question is: Does the minister agree with the task force that there are significant economic, social and trade benefits for Winnipeg if the rail lines are removed?

Ms. Clarke: I don't think there's any doubt about that. It comes down to priorities, and given the financial restraints that we find ourselves in with an extremely higher deficit than what we were told and what was anticipated, we recognize that there's a lot of work to do and we know that our government can't undertake all these promises and commitments that were made just very prior to the provincial election. Unfortunately, it gets people thinking that these are all going to continue and they're going to happen, but there is a reality that sets in, and until we can get our finances in what we consider a workable situation whereby we can actually commit to what is possible and what is not possible, they will be under review.

Ms. Lathlin: My question is: During Estimates, we had discussions regarding your role in terms of Indigenous Affairs, and there was comments that's the Health Department, that's the Justice Department, that's the Education Department, that's the Growth, Enterprise and Trade, so you had suggested that your role is like an umbrella, and so that's concerning as to policies.

So my question is: Will there be policies that come straight from your department—from the minister's department—and how would it be filtered through other departments to ensure that our indigenous issues are addressed?

Ms. Clarke: Well, I think it's fair and understandable that issues related to health care, for instance, when it comes to doctor recruitment and

retention for the North or issues regarding the education of our young indigenous children. We had a meeting with Paul Martin, for instance, only weeks ago, and his concern and his commitment is to indigenous children in grades 1 to 3, ensuring that there's a good literacy program for them so that they've got a really strong—a really strong start in education and which we deem is really important too.

In regards to Child and Family Services for child care, those belong to the Minister of Families (Mr. Fielding). However, when we're dealing with indigenous families, there's a lot of issues like the murdered, missing indigenous women and girls, the truth and reconciliation, as well as all—you've mentioned several different Aboriginal committees and such that make decisions and provide funding for the people of our indigenous communities mostly located in the North. But those are the issues that we deal directly with.

I—what I have found in my experience in the past eight weeks, when there are issues—and I'll use—we had two blockades. They were both managed what I consider very favourably. We brought in the group from Split Lake; we invited them into my office. The Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen), the Minister of Crowns were all at the table, as well as approximately 10 or 12 residents from the communities in the North that were affected by this particular road, and some of them were there just to port—other chiefs were there just to support the group from Split Lake.

We met as a group and we assured them. The reason we were able to come to such a quick end to that blockade was because we did work together. They didn't have to make phone calls. They didn't have to—and they did not have to continue their blockade; they did not have to continue their protest. We sat and we talked, and in just a few hours we came to a consensus. They got a letter what—that is exactly what they wanted. We did not leave that table. We stayed with them; we worked with them and it was a very favourable outcome.

Those are the kind of things that should be happening. It doesn't matter if it's about a road, if it's about a health-care issue, or if it's about Child and Family Services. We can be at the same table; we can work through things together and I think that's what's really important.

We have the support of each other and we know what's going on. There are indigenous leaders from

the North that are keeping in contact with me constantly. For instance, the recent fire on this weekend, and I think it's that communication that's really important and I think that's that communication that has to continue. And I hope—I am hoping within my portfolio that that's a very strong role that I'll play, and the replies that I've received from the chiefs and councils that I've dealt with, they really appreciate knowing exactly who to go to and that they are going to be heard. So I don't think calling it an umbrella is totally wrong, and I'm really appreciative of the meetings that I've had with my other ministers in regards to the First Nations. It's a really strong commitment so I hope that we can give them all the support and everything that they need and that they will feel that they're not forgotten about, which is what we're often told. They don't feel that they are recognized.

By inviting them into my office prior to the fact that they had to come on an issue, I think was a really—made a very strong statement and, as I indicated earlier, those meetings are going to continue and we are going to ensure that good decisions are made with them, not for them necessarily. They're going to be made with them.

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you for your comments. You had mentioned one of our former Prime Ministers, Paul Martin. There was significant funding set aside under the former government, up to \$375,000 under the Paul Martin education initiative.

I was just wondering if—what is your commitment to ensure that funding goes through?

*(11:10)

Ms. Clarke: These were the discussions we had. And there, again, it wasn't just myself that met with the Right Honourable Paul Martin; it was also the Minister of Education. We were both in that meeting.

In addition to what you've just stated, he, himself, is very committed financially to pilot projects in Manitoba, and they're very excited about it, so discussions are ongoing. There's also a commitment from the federal government to be part of this project.

Mr. Martin also indicated that he has personal friends that are going to commit financially, and he is very excited, as are we, about the possibilities in Manitoba. We don't have specific communities, indigenous communities, where this is going to start, but this isn't something, from my understanding, in

our discussions with him, that this is very close at hand. It's not something that's just going to be talked about; it's going to happen and I think that's really exciting.

I think I mentioned in this House a week ago that I was at Lord Selkirk community school, and had a similar discussion with their principal, vice-principal and some of their staff members that are actually implementing the same type of a program within their school right now. And I believe they told me that there's actually four schools in the Winnipeg 1 school division that are working with this same reading and literacy program for their grades 1 to 3, and they were so excited about the results that they're seeing already, and because of that I have also invited them to come and meet with the Minister of Education and myself as soon as possible. We need to find out what they're doing, how they're doing it and the successes that they're experiencing from a—from this reading program.

I think it's really exciting and it's—the best part of it is seeing the commitment of the teachers because this isn't really within their curriculum as such; they're going over and above and it's a different way. They don't consider it just teaching one particular class, one particular subject; it's the way they treat their children throughout the whole school day and that all teachers are committed to the whole program. So I think it's a really great model. I was really enthused by how excited they were about their achievements and how excited they were to share it.

So I look forward to meeting with this group and with the Minister of Education because I know he's very committed, also, to make sure that our kids get off to the right start in schools, regardless of where they're going to school. Whether it's in Winnipeg, rural community in Manitoba or our far northern remote communities, we want to know that all children have a really good opportunity to have a great future, and that starts in our schools.

Ms. Lathlin: In regards to providing the right path for our children in terms of their education, could you provide us the status of the, again, another significant funding set aside for our Aboriginal students, the transition program under the Department of Education? I believe \$500,000 was provided, if you can share with us the status of that commitment made by the former government.

Ms. Clarke: Unfortunately, I can't. That is under the Education, so that question would have to go to Education.

Ms. Lathlin: That's the point I was making. It is indigenous children, and you are the Minister of Indigenous Relations, and that's what I—my previous question was addressing. I believe that your role as minister, you should be, you know, providing leadership on issues, regardless of what department. And the key word is Indigenous Relations.

So, if you can share with us the status of the current—the transition program for our indigenous students transitioning from on-reserve to urban centres, because a lot of our reserve—schools on reserve—a lot of the schools don't—just go up to grade 8, and they have to transition into urban centres to complete their high school education.

Ms. Clarke: Yes, and I realize what you're saying. That was another topic that we discussed at Shoal Lake 40 yesterday, was their children. Their classes only go to grade 8 and then they have to transition. And then they are finding it very difficult because they, literally, often end up in Winnipeg or Kenora, Winnipeg, of course, being a very long—it's not a commute; it's not a daily commute for them, and same thing with Kenora.

And I watched a documentary on TV not that long ago about even university students that have to leave their community and go to school elsewhere. The hardships it causes for them and how segregated they feel, you know, away from their communities and the hardships that it causes them emotionally, for sure, which often makes it very, very difficult for them to even continue in that education. And very often, because coping in such different social settings, et cetera, is just impossible in some cases.

And going back to the funding that you're talking about, and—in eight short weeks it's impossible to have an absolute, solid understanding of every single issue and every single funding program that falls, and also the fact—even for members who are sitting like yourselves that have been here for previous years, we all have to get used to different funding models coming from different departments. And I am sure that by the time the next segment of weeks goes by that I will have a much better understanding, and by the end of the year I'll have a much better understanding even so.

But this—I continue to work with our other ministers and I feel that if there is a particular issue that needs to be dealt with, we do it in a very timely fashion.

Ms. Lathlin: Again, in regards to your role with Indigenous Relations, with the policies that come from the minister's department and how it'll be filtered through other departments, what are your thoughts on—an environment was provided for ministers in regards to Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet which covers all sorts of department involvement: Education, Health, child family services, what are your thoughts and what is the current status in regards to the Aboriginal issues of Cabinet? Does it exist and, if not, will it exist in the future?

Ms. Clarke: I feel that our government's covering all the Aboriginal issues and roles that were—previously lay in place. The funding that was there continues to be there. The staff: there's a good carry-over of all the staff that was in place and I think they're doing a really good job of working with me and educating me, and I have all the materials that I feel I need to go forward.

In regards to the particular Cabinet—Aboriginal Cabinet committee you're talking about, I don't have particulars on that either, I—but I continue to work on all of that and my staff has done what I consider an excellent job of bringing me up to speed on all the issues. They've also done a really good job of recapping how government dealt with everything in the past. And—but there is changes on how things are being dealt with as far as committees, et cetera, and it's—not everything is complete at this point. We will continue working and continue to have meetings and get to a point where all your questions should be capably handled without any hesitation. But, in the meantime, all the issues regarding the indigenous communities programs, I feel, are getting the full attention. There's—I don't feel that there's anything being missed. I don't think there's anything being overlooked. I have a commitment from my staff that anything that is of high priority, even, you know, needs consideration at this time, that I will be made aware of it and we'll have the discussions that are necessary and take any action that needs to be taken as quickly as possible.

* (11:20)

Ms. Lathlin: I've had the honour and the opportunity to sit within the Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet.

So just for the record: There is currently no committee addressing Aboriginal issues?

Ms. Clarke: I have not met with such a committee to date. As I said, there is transitioning still going on, and we will continue working, for sure.

Ms. Lathlin: Would you agree, though, this would be an excellent environment table to sit at with key players, people who would come to the table with extensive knowledge and experience to help with your role and—as Minister for Indigenous and Municipal Relations?

Ms. Clarke: Key people to work with and, absolutely, and that's exactly the reason that I have been calling and asking what I consider and have been told to me by staff and by other people in indigenous communities who I need to be speaking to. I've contacted many.

And that question's always out there: Who else should I be talking to? Who should I be meeting with? Who's responsible for what? And I've got an extensive list. I've got it right in front of me, of who some of those upcoming meetings are.

And, as I said, I'm really encouraged that they're willing to meet and they're willing to share that information. Where we take that group—there is not a formal group, but I have availability and I'm hoping, once this House is recessed on Thursday, that I'll actually have the physical time to move forward and be—take that responsibility to ensure that we have everybody in place that we need. If there's—if we feel that there's gaps, that we will deal with it.

Mrs. Colleen Mayer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

And, as I've indicated to date, I don't think that in the past eight weeks that there's anyone or any particular project or issue that has been overlooked. And, in fact, I've been told by some of the chiefs and councils that I've met with that I have responded more quickly than any response they've had in the past. And I think, again, that shows my commitment that I take my position and that I take their problems and issues very seriously and that I'm going to act on them, that they will get responses.

Some—one particular issue came on a Friday night in regards to a serious health—what they considered a serious health-care issue in the North, and I responded within five minutes. I think that's a bit of an example of how I will treat this portfolio. Not everything can be done like that, I realize that. But whether the issue is small or large, they will be

attended to, and they will not be overlooked and they will not be put aside.

Ms. Lathlin: One of my previous positions in my career, I was the additions-to-reserves policy analyst. Basically, we worked as a team to convert Crown lands, sometimes private lands, into reserve status. If things went right, if things didn't sit on the Department of Justice desk, it would take approximately two years to convert lands, if everything went smoothly.

And one of the barriers that we encountered was the attitude towards urban reserves. And with your association with the—if you can correct me, the Manitoba association of—

An Honourable Member: Municipalities.

Ms. Lathlin: Yes.

We had a meeting one time in Brandon, I believe, regarding Aboriginal culture awareness. There was concerns with some communities that they weren't comfortable of having a community adjacent to their community with the reserve status. There was even silly comments saying, oh, is there going to be a casino popped up? Is there going to be broken-down cars?

You know, so we, as Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, we worked with the municipality association to ensure that education was provided to the leadership of our municipalities to ensure that, you know, potentially that could be a great partnership to have with the First Nation and the municipality.

I just wanted to see what would be your role to ensure that this education continues so we wouldn't have a great debate again regarding the lands at the former—

An Honourable Member: Barracks.

Ms. Lathlin: Yes, barracks, you know, in regards to—

An Honourable Member: Kapyong.

Ms. Lathlin: Yes, Kapyong. Regarding that, what would be your role, especially with your previous role with the municipal associations, to ensure that this education continues? And that's my question.

Ms. Clarke: That's a really good question, and I think when I was appointed to this particular portfolio, when it's Indigenous and Municipal Relations, and I think that word relations is a really

important one and probably when it comes to the Treaty Land Entitlement, that's—I totally agree. That's where a lot of communication and education needs to take place.

It was indicated when I met with TLE that the biggest holdup on these lands transitions right now is the federal government, that many of the land transfers, et cetera, that need to happen right now—and some of them you mentioned two years; some of them are seven years. The time frame is ridiculously long. But the holdup overall, right now, is with the federal government. The Province is in place where they need to be to make these happen. So there needs to be that communication between provincial and federal, perhaps, as much as there is between provincial and the municipalities.

I feel my role could be a very strong one in working between AMM and the TLE. Of course, in this particular case, when you're referring to property within the city of Winnipeg, that is not totally AMM; that is with the City of Winnipeg. The—I don't see the AMM having that role in it the same that's directly with the city.

But I don't disagree. Having sat at the council tables of the municipalities, there is a big misunderstanding of what our First Nations communities are and what their economic development strategies are.

And, you know, if they ever—what they need to do is kind of like what I've been doing: sitting down at the table with these communities and having these discussions. I'm overwhelmed when I listen to the different communities that I've met with from northern Manitoba and some at the south end of Manitoba, First Nations groups, listening to the economic development that they have already done and all the plans they have for the future. They've got great business plans, and I think it's a matter of them talking and sitting at the same table and discussing what the projects are.

And the—there's a lot of misconception. I don't disagree with you at all. But I have established a very strong trust and a level of respect with our municipalities, and I think that would, you know, if—with my discussions with them as well, I think it could be very positive. I've got what I consider already a good working relationship with Mayor Bowman. We both are very enthusiastic about good things, not just for the city of Winnipeg but for the whole province. And it's going to take a lot of work,

but we've got that opportunity to do it, and we take it very seriously.

* (11:30)

So whatever we do now is also the future for our children and our grandchildren, and as leaders within provincial government, leaders within municipal government or leaders within the indigenous communities, we all want the same thing: we want sustainable communities; we want strong economic development; we want good health care; we want good education. We're all working towards the same goals. So I think our opportunity is going forward, and I look forward within this position of Indigenous and Municipal Relations to be a strong partner with all those groups going forward.

Ms. Lathlin: Just to continue with the Treaty Land Entitlement, before I had left the department to move back to my community, there was—that was in 2007—there was a commitment to fast-track a certain number of acres of land to convert to reserve status.

Is there future plans to work with the department—federal department to implement a similar plan to—in order to honour our land agreement—the Treaty Land Entitlement agreement with our First Nations?

Ms. Clarke: I haven't had that particular—when I met with TLE, we talked more specific about projects—our land transfers that were ongoing right now. We didn't get into any of the future ones; that's probably a discussion we'll have at a later date.

I do know, back a few years ago we did have that discussion with TLE when I was on the executive of AMM about—we had a presentation that outlined all the land and where there were voids where—you know, where land was entitled to different indigenous communities that still had to be dealt with. But that's a few years ago so I don't know the status of where that's at now. I—from my understanding, I don't think it's come forward too much. As you said, they—you know, these things seem to really take a long period of time. But I know there is a couple ongoing ones right now that were not in the queue back then. So there is obviously a few things moving forward in that department.

But we will be at those tables and I—there, again, I anticipate a really good relationship with TLE. We had a great meeting and it—with positive outcomes and positive commitments to work together in the future.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'd like to ask the minister, following up on questions I had the other day regarding the issue of safety of bridges in Winnipeg and the province. Minister knows that, I think, just shortly after the collapse of the bridge in Minneapolis, which was not that many years ago, the provincial government intervened and took control of bridge safety issues away from City of Winnipeg in particular, and I'd like to ask the minister what she has found out in the last few days when she endeavoured or promised that she would get on top of this issue and report back.

Ms. Clarke: In those few short days I have had quite a large backlog of meetings, et cetera. That is something that my staff will look into.

As you well know, the bridges, et cetera, those decisions are up to the City of Winnipeg. They—we work with them on funding in regards to—you continue to talk about the safety, et cetera, and those studies are done through the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Maloway: Well, then, is the minister telling me now that her department and the provincial government are not responsible for safety of bridges and that it's somebody else's responsibility?

Ms. Clarke: I think these answers are a replica of what we had last week.

But, as I indicated, these bridges, infrastructure, they are the responsibility of the City of Winnipeg, and we—the mayor and I have not discussed the Louise Bridge, your project, in particular. And that is something, you know, that you need to discuss with your City councillor. And I will continue to meet with the mayor and have the discussions in regards to any of their infrastructure projects that they are wanting to bring forward for funding, et cetera, and it's my understanding that this discussion in regards to this particular bridge and the safety features of it have been ongoing for, I believe, seven years, and I guess if they were going to be addressed in a timely manner that could've taken place by now but it hasn't.

So that can reflect on the previous government as well if it is considered the responsibility, but I'll continue to work with the mayor and we will look at the infrastructure projects that they bring forward that are their priorities, that's their responsibility, and these discussions will be ongoing.

Mr. Maloway: Well, is the minister, then, admitting that she doesn't know whether she's responsible for

the safety of the bridges? Does she admit that she doesn't know?

Ms. Clarke: I'm advised by the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen) that that is a city responsibility and that's—

The Acting Chair (Colleen Mayer): The Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway)

Mr. Maloway: He doesn't know either and, of course, he's next on our list.

The reality is that, you know, we have been told by City sources—through City sources and also through government sources that the Province of Manitoba has taken over responsibility for these issues in the aftermath of the collapse of the bridge in Minneapolis, so I'm simply trying to find out what the minister knows or when she's going to find out about what her responsibilities are under this—on this issue.

Ms. Clarke: I'll take your comments under advisement and we will see to it that you get a written response.

Mr. Maloway: And when does the minister plan to do all of this?

Ms. Clarke: In as timely fashion as possible.

Mr. Maloway: Well, then, how—what is considered a timely fashion? I mean the fact of the matter is that all it takes is for her to phone the mayor, and the mayor makes a couple of phone calls and you've got an answer, should be able to that by question period today.

Ms. Clarke: The member from Elmwood makes it sound so easy. However, I have people sitting in my office right now being delayed a meeting; they also consider their issues very important. So a bridge that hasn't had any attention in seven years with the previous government, whether it's the City of Winnipeg or the provincial government, finding out that particular answer will not be something that is on my very top priority list, it will be done in a timely fashion.

Mr. Maloway: Well, I mean, perhaps the minister is not aware, but the fact of the matter is that the previous government actually put the replacement to the Louise Bridge in the Throne Speech last November, that's rarely done to specifically mention one bridge. The provincial government at that time had made a commitment that they were prepared to replace the bridge along with the, you know, the past

plans of the City. It was on the priority list of the City, it still is on the priority list of the City, it just keeps getting passed over.

I don't think it's acceptable for the minister to take forever to get back to us on a issue which she simply—can simply phone, make one phone call and find out about it.

Ms. Clarke: The fact that it was on your list in your Throne Speech, and et cetera, there were also a lot of lists of priorities and commitments from your government during the election period, all of which commitments there was not money to complete those projects either. So I'm not going to take that under too serious advisement. And there again, like I said, you've had seven years, you've got all your answers looking for additional ones that don't really change the situation.

* (11:40)

The mayor has—we've looked at his list of priorities. I don't remember seeing the Louise Bridge on it. I don't know how you know that it's a priority. You must have information that isn't—we're not privy to or the mayor didn't wish to share at that time, perhaps. I'm not sure, but until the mayor brings it forward, that's up to the City of Winnipeg what their projects of priority are.

Ms. Lathlin: I had the honour to be in my community and I attended the—I believe it's The Pas Community Renewal Corporation, and they received their funding under Neighbourhoods Alive! And it's a great, great group of people, great leadership. It was, again, it was just nice to be back home within—it was an outdoor barbecue. They fund such great things such as community safety, the—Oscar's—Oscar's Place, which is our homeless shelter. They address community events to address bullying, you know, within our community.

So, with that, I just wanted to see—to get the status of the current Neighbourhoods Alive! projects within northern Manitoba and our—the department's commitment to further to continue great initiatives that I was able to attend and sit with our leadership and talk about very important issues.

And it's all about community involvement. That's the best thing about this funding, so I just wanted to get the status of the department's commitment to—in regards to this funding for our communities.

Ms. Clarke: You're right. It's a great program and we're very excited to provide that funding. There was, I believe, at the same time that the funding went out to The Pas, I believe there was at least five other initiatives that were funded under that. The good part of that story is there's more to come. There's—we're expecting more, another intake. There is funds there, and there are applications that are coming forward that we're aware of. So there's no consideration of cutting that funding at all because we know the good work that it does, very beneficial to communities that wouldn't necessarily have access to other funding, so totally agree. It's—anything that we can provide that's going to be a benefit to communities, especially in the North, we're very happy to be a part of that.

Ms. Lathlin: I used to work as the constituency assistant for our former MLA, Frank Whitehead, and we would engage in conversations and talk about grants such as Community Places, and then—now I'm in that role as well, and that was a wonderful initiative that we shared with our community's leadership.

I was just wondering if you could provide the status, you know, the Community Places grant, where they're at in regards to have them be granted to our communities and in particular to northern Manitoba as well.

Ms. Clarke: That funding for the Community Places for 2016 went out at the same time as Neighbourhoods Alive!, so they have just been—they've been awarded for 2016. Unfortunately, I know in the years when I was on the other side, on the municipal side, and our community applied for many of these grants through Community Places annually, and it's like the Neighbourhoods Alive!, although the funding amounts aren't always great, but they can do great things in small communities. And there isn't always funding available for our small communities and, like you said, especially the communities in the North. And it's something that the criteria is easy; it's easy for them to access. And the small things that it does in communities makes such a big difference, whether it's in community centres—in this case, there's churches, parks, recreation facilities—all are really beneficial whether you're in the North or throughout Manitoba. So those funding mechanisms are really important.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

The unfortunate part is what's happened in the years gone past. Community Places, for instance, it's—the funds that are available now are

approximately half of what they were. Like, they've been cut back, cut back, cut back. So, consequently, the bundle of applications was this thick. Like, there was literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of applications, and we can only fund a small portion. Like—and I think the selection committee does a really good job, because any particular community can apply from different sources within the community and all the projects are good projects. They're great projects and there's so much needed, but what—the funding for that now is so much less so consequently there was—there were applications who got absolutely nothing and there's many that got just a portion of what they needed.

So, you know, hopefully, this will help them to get these projects going. They'll—and knowing small communities, I know that they'll be fundraising like crazy to try and make up the funds so that these projects are worthwhile and that they can go forward. So, yes, both great programs, for sure. And, hopefully, that—you know, that we can—these will—I'm certain they'll be continued because there's no other funding model in place like them.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I just have a quick question for the minister this morning. What are your thoughts on the work camp located in the community of Snow Lake? Do you see it as being a permanent facility, or do you see it having a limited life and infrastructure and Snow Lake being able to accommodate workers going forward?

Ms. Clarke: I've actually been up to Snow Lake twice in the past and had that specific discussion with their council there. I worked extensively for almost three years on a housing round table for the Province of Manitoba, and Snow Lake was, actually, one of the models that I used most frequently as a serious lack of housing, different types of housing throughout our province. And, I guess, in the past the different mining corps, whatever, were—took a responsibility for housing, and it didn't appear that at this time they were interested in doing that.

I missed a trip up to Snow Lake just recently. I was to be up there to meet with their council with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. So I haven't had that housing discussion with Snow Lake recently. So I'm not sure what their status—they have not brought anything forward to me in regards to that and I don't know where their mining is at right now either. Perhaps the Minister with Growth, Enterprise and Trade would have a better understanding of that. But it was certainly in a crisis situation when I was

there, the lack of housing and, you know, how they were to go about this as a council.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): This will end our questioning for the moment to this minister, and we'll be calling her back tomorrow. So we move, now, to the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Pedersen).

Mr. Lindsey: I'd like to thank the previous minister for setting up my first question for the next minister when it comes to infrastructure, particularly in a town like Snow Lake that—it's been identified there's a shortage of housing. I understand there's infrastructure, sewer and water limitations that preclude building more neighbourhoods, more houses. Is there anything in any budgets or been any requests that the minister's aware of to address those issues?

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Infrastructure): Thanks for the question. I believe you should have kept the previous minister there, because that request would have come through IMR, and right now I am not aware of any funding request.

* (11:50)

Mr. Lindsey: Thank the minister for that. The good news is she's coming back again tomorrow, so I'll get the chance to ask her that very question again.

So let's go back to one of my favourite topics is the project labour agreements that have worked well for a number of years for a number of projects. Could the minister give me his take on what forced unionization is on these agreements?

Mr. Pedersen: There is no forced unionization in a project labour agreement. In a project labour agreement, there is not a compulsion to join the union. There is only the necessity to pay union dues by non-union people or union people into a different union. So there is no—the member's wrong when he suggests that there's forced unionization with this. So—and I believe he knows better than that, too, with his union—many years of union experience. So accuracy is important in here, and I—let's be sure that we know what we're talking about on this, and there is no forced unionization.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, I'm certainly glad to hear this minister say that. Certainly, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), I believe, if you check Hansard, would probably have said something a little different about project labour agreements.

So, with that being said, there's no forced unionization. What the project labour agreements, specifically ones that were negotiated under Wally Fox-Decent did, was made sure there was a stable work environment that allowed union and non-union workers, allowed unionized companies and non-unionized companies the same ability to bid on jobs and be awarded jobs and allowed people to work side by side in a somewhat harmonious manner.

So, then, I'm wondering what exactly does this minister see as the problem with project labour agreements as they presently stand.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, the member just made my point with his statement because he just finished talking—he just finished saying about how non-union workers and union workers worked side by side. So why was he asking if it's forced unionization when he just finished saying now that there is no forced unionization, because he finished—he just said that non-union and union members could work together. So, you know, I guess he just made my point that it's not about forced unionization.

But what this government is interested in is getting the best value for taxpayers when it comes to infrastructure spending. It's about getting a return on investment when you're choosing projects for infrastructure. It's about preparing these projects so that we—Manitoba taxpayers get the best value for the jobs being done and that, again, it's a—you get better value for the taxpayer of Manitoba when you allow all companies to bid on a job. And through the tender process, not all companies are accepted. That's the purpose of the tender is to find best value. But if you're going to put obstacles in the way of companies to bid on projects, then you are not getting best—you could potentially not be getting the best value for a company.

So the—this is with the taxpayer in mind. It is their money. It is not the NDP's money that we're spending. Mind you, the NDP don't have any money, I guess, but the NDP spending the taxpayers' money and showing a somewhat callous regard for getting open—best value for that. It's about smarter shopping. Manitobans know about smart shopping, and open tendering and allowing companies to compete fairly for government contracts is the best way of getting value for the taxpayers on any projects. So, if you are going to put impediments in the way of companies bidding, whether they be union or non-union, then you are—run the risk of not finding the best value for

the project that you are putting tenders out on. And, again, it's about putting out tenders to make sure that as many companies or individuals or whatever the case may be, can bid on a project in order to find a value for the money being spent on this project. And why the member would have a problem with allowing more tenders is beyond me because this is about getting value for Manitoba taxpayers.

Mr. Lindsey: Well, I certainly have no objection at all to getting more tenders and take exception to the minister suggesting that I do. What I do want to talk about is the heart of the project labour agreement is a concept that's really embodied in the Rand formula—which has been a cornerstone of labour relations in this country since 1946—provides that non-union workers should provide financial support for services and benefits that they receive through the efforts of a labour organization, and to quote Wally Fox-Decent: For the services rendered by the Building Trades council or one or more of the unions who are part of the council, there clearly needs to be entitlement to a fee.

So recognizing that fundamental labour management relations in a project agreement is the concept that there are no free riders, every worker who benefits from the services which have been rendered on their behalf should participate in a fee payment for that service whether they are non-union worker or union worker.

So why has this government put themselves in opposition to the fundamental principle of the Rand formula?

Mr. Pedersen: Guess the difference, perhaps, is that the member is dealing in 1946 and we're dealing in 2016, and it's about getting best value for the taxpayer. And project labour agreements, from my understanding, are illegal in much of Europe. Manitoba is one of the last bastions, under the NDP, to support project labour agreements.

The ultimate goal is to get the best value for any project for the taxpayer of Manitoba, and if that does not preclude a union company—a company that's union—workers that are unionized bidding on a job, it should not 'proclude' a non-union worker company—a company that employs non-union workers form—from being able to bid on projects. But, if you're going to penalize that company and force them to pay union dues without belonging to a union, that's not getting best value for Manitoba taxpayers.

So, you know, we can talk about this all morning if you like; I'm quite fine with that. But, when Manitoba taxpayers are looking for value, they really do look for value. And, of course, with Manitobans we have a reputation for smart shopping, so, you know, if the member doesn't like smart shopping, well, that's good; he can—he's free to buy whatever he likes at whatever price he likes. So this—but this government has a mandate from the people of Manitoba to bring our finances under control and to find best value.

* (12:00)

And this previous government did not do that. And the mandate of this government is to find value for Manitoba taxpayers, and we will do that, first of all, by tendering, open tendering, and making sure that we're getting best value for the projects that are being put out for tender. And we will just continue to work on that as the projects come up for tendering and up for putting work forward.

Mr. Lindsey: —to tender a Report on Certain Aspects of the Winnipeg Floodway Project to the Minister of Water Stewardship, the Honourable Steve Ashton, and this was a report submitted by the facilitator, W.N. Fox-Decent, and just for the minister's perusal and, hopefully, edification, so he understands all the concepts that we're talking about here with the project labour agreements.

If I'm allowed to table that or tender that?

Mr. Chairperson: You're tabling a report?

Mr. Lindsey: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. You can table a report.

Mr. Lindsey: [*interjection*] Well, that'll be the way it is once they're done here.

Okay, so we'll move off the project labour agreements for now.

And let me see some of the things that we talked about. The minister had said that there was six community benefit agreements in place, specific to the East Side Road Authority.

And could he give me a list of what those six communities are?

Mr. Pedersen: Perhaps the member can refresh me. When did I say there was six community benefit agreements?

Mr. Lindsey: I believe during the Estimates process. We talked about community benefit agreements,

and I believe the minister had said that existing agreements would be honoured. And I believe he alluded to there being six existing agreements.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, I believe he believes wrong. There are a number of community benefit agreements we're—that are under review right now as part of the East Side Road Authority, moving that back under the Infrastructure Department.

They—all the community benefit agreements are under review. They are—there are various components of them all, from what I understand. The department is continuing to review them and to find out where they're at, what actual commitments have been made; again, which actual promises were made but not fulfilled.

This is a very extensive in-depth review that's going to take some time. The department has not had adequate time yet to review them, and until the department has been able to review them in full, I really cannot talk about them because they just haven't been brought to my attention yet because they're not—the member has to realize that the East Side Road Authority was operating under a different set of rules in that they were not—it seemed that they were not accountable to the public on this. It was—I almost like to use the term clandestine in terms of the business that was happening there. And until these are fully understood, and in due course these will become public, because once it comes under the department, then it is public. But, you know, until that time, there—these are under review and won't be—they're just not fully understood yet.

Mr. Lindsey: So at what point in time does the minister think he might be able to understand the agreements that are presently in place?

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member from Flin Flon, can you repeat the question?

Mr. Lindsey: I just asked the minister at what point in time he thinks he may be able to understand the agreements that are in place right now and be able to proceed with those.

Mr. Pedersen: As soon as they're available, and it's taking some time. We have just—the department has staff in there working with the East Side Road Authority staff to fully understand these, and they are very complex. Each one of the community benefit agreements is different. Each one of the community benefit agreements is in various stages of engagement, so there is—it's taking some time. I would like

it as soon as possible, but it's taking some time for the staff to get through this. So I—you know, I can't give him a timeline as to when it is because the staff is really working hard to understand them. Because the sooner this gets done, the sooner we can move on with moving the entire operations back under the scope of the Minister of Infrastructure.

Mr. Lindsey: What's the timeline for construction for the east-side road? Is there projects that are supposed to be undergoing now, sometime this year, next year?

Mr. Pedersen: There are a number of projects that are under way in terms of roads, bridges, things like crushing gravel in preparation. They are—the active contracts that are under way right now are continuing. They will continue through this construction season. They are—again, many of these contracts are, as I understand, are tied in with community benefit agreements. So this is what we are trying to get a hold of, but—to understand fully, but the ones that are active right now are continuing and the ones that are tendered, and to go this year will continue.

Mr. Lindsey: Does the minister know which projects presently under way involve community benefit agreements and what communities those are with?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, it's how many way—different ways to ask the same question. I've tried to explain to the member that under community benefit agreements under the East Side Road Authority, which is that tangled web created by the NDP, it's taking some time to figure this out. So the active contracts, if there is an active contract on a road or a bridge is continuing right now. And an assessment is done on all these projects whether to fully understand where we're at, and this is part of when he asks me when we're going to know about the community benefit agreements. Well, this is the job, the due diligence, that the department is doing right now with the help of the staff remaining in East Side Road Authority, and this is the—there—look it. The East Side Road Authority is a—I keep calling it the tangled web.

* (12:10)

And this is the challenge that the department has is to understand what is out there, what is legally binding, what is—what was promised, what was contemplated, what is actually in place now, what has actually been done. This—all this due diligence by

the department is continuing. And, when we've got a handle on this, it will become public because it will come under the purview of the Ministry of Infrastructure.

And I—if the member is—I know the member supplied me with some reading material, which I will certainly peruse, but I'm looking forward to some reading material this summer. As I understand, there is an Auditor General's report coming forward on the East Side Road Authority. My information tells me it's supposed to be released this summer. We—the Auditor General has not released it yet. I think it's going to make for some very interesting reading by the member. And I—perhaps he will even get some of his questions answered as he reads through there. The Auditor General—when the Auditor General takes on a project, it's always very thorough, and, you know, this will—when that report comes forward—first of all, when it's released, when it goes to the Public Accounts Committee, it's going to—I would hope it would certainly 'enlight' everyone on the activities of the East Side Road Authority because the Auditor General generally does not take on a project unless there are real concerns with it.

And, having been on Public Accounts Committee for the last number of years, you know, we've dealt with some pretty serious stuff on there, and always the Auditor General does very thorough reviews. And so we'll just look forward to that report, and I would encourage the member to, when the Auditor General releases that report, to make sure that he reads it. And perhaps some of the questions that he's asking right now may be answered.

Mr. Lindsey: Perhaps they will. Perhaps they won't.

Are there other projects other than the East Side Road Authority, such as winter road construction and maintenance, other northern highway maintenance contracts, that are tied in specifically with community benefit agreements?

Mr. Pedersen: Outside of the East Side Road Authority, I do not believe there are winter roads or road projects under community benefit agreements. If the member knows of some, I will certainly stand corrected, but, to my knowledge, the department is responsible for winter roads and all road projects. And, now, under the tendering process, there can be indigenous work—a worker component as part of the tender process. But that's different than a community benefit agreement. So to my knowledge, there are no community benefit agreements in regards to winter

roads or road maintenance outside of the East Side Road Authority.

Mr. Lindsey: One last question for the minister on community benefit agreements before we move on to something else: Do you support the concept of community benefit agreements?

Mr. Pedersen: I support the concept of getting—of having local participation in terms of labour and equipment in road projects and road and bridge projects, infrastructure projects I'll call them. I certainly believe in the concept of open and fair tendering, getting best value for Manitobans and, you know, I—we should—I would like to point out to the member that when a project goes to tender, there is—and this is particularly true in the—more so in the engineering and contract administration, there's a price-per-point component in this. Tenders go out on the—such as a road project—road construction project, as I said, there's an indigenous labour component in there. This is—it is built into the tender so that all companies are bidding on the same basis so that there is open and transparency about the tender system. There is—it is left up to the bidding companies as to where, you know, where their indigenous labour component will come from and how that works. And—but we're, you know, this government is certainly all about being competitive, finding competitive bids and also making sure that, you know, that local work component, it brings the most benefit to the local communities if at all possible.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): It's been an unenlightening morning with the minister so far and, frankly, quite disappointing answers to very legitimate questions being put by the member from Flin Flon.

I'd remind the minister not to be so cavalier in the way in which he treats these processes, whether it's Estimates or concurrence, we expect respect to be given across the floor, and we have a job to do to ask questions and we expect better answers than we've been getting here this morning.

Yesterday, the heavy construction industry suggested—sent an email to their membership suggesting very strongly, in fact, accusing the Pallister government of having cut the provincial highways—

Mr. Chairperson: Order. The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum), you used the

name of the Premier (Mr. Pallister) first name, but it should be the First Minister.

Mr. Allum: It's just simply a matter of clarification for my benefit. It seemed to me in the last session that utilization of the premier's name plus government was utilized all the time.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, go ahead. Oh, sorry, the—you used—it should be Pallister government, not—which you did, which is correct. Yes, Pallister PC government you can't say that.

Mr. Allum: Can I ask the minister why he's putting infrastructure projects and the jobs of Manitobans at stake right now?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, I'm going to give the member a small lesson and I'm not going to be cavalier about it or anything.

* (12:20)

Infrastructure projects from the Department of Infrastructure, and this goes—this has been happening the last number of years, the projects for the following year, so let's use 2016. The projects happening in 2016, major projects, highway projects, capital projects are advertised in November and December. So, in this case, they were advertised in November and December of 2015, and that would have been—by my math at least, it would have been by the previous government. The tenders for such projects that are going to happen in 2016 are—the tenders are released in January and February. In this case, the projects, highway projects for the summer of 2016 are issued—the tenders are issued in January and February of 2016. And, by my math, that would have been under the previous government.

Now, the tenders are then awarded shortly after being issued. In this case, the tenders were awarded, and I'm going to say probably March because it was January and February that they were tendered. So, if the member wants to talk about supposed cutbacks, it was the previous NDP government that cut back projects, because these—when we came into government, which was after April 19th, after May 3rd when I was sworn in as Cabinet minister, those tenders were already awarded.

So, when the member is talking about supposed cutbacks, he should reflect back on his own government. And I'm—listen, I'm just using the calendar here, so if the member's got some other way of figuring this out, good for him. But that's the

process. And going back, this was at the request of the heavy construction industry, that the—that these contracts be advertised earlier and be tendered earlier, because in the previous government going back about 10 years, these projects were not even advertised until very late into the construction season, which meant the tenders were not put out until well into the construction season and we were missing out. So, at the advice of the construction industry, the previous government actually listened to the construction industry in order to get those out. So, following through on that, the rationale of that, the previous government is the one who put these tenders out, so I'm not quite sure how this member has it figured out that we have somehow cut back on projects that were awarded by the previous government.

Mr. Allum: Well, I think the minister needs to actually explain why the president of the Manitoba heavy construction industry is levelling accusations not at the former government, but at this new minister. And he says—Chris Lorenc said the new government has cut the provincial highways budget by \$50 million and stalled further tendering processes. In addition, Mr. Chair, Mr. Lorenc is quoted as saying, and I quote: "Our industry is facing a perfect storm—which, if left unresolved, will result in a devastating result for the Manitoba economy as companies are: laying off workers; not hiring at all; have no work beyond 6 weeks, and (workers and firms) leaving Manitoba and searching for work in other provinces."

And he laid that, Mr. Chair, at the foot of the new minister and the new government, so he has an obligation to explain to this House today how he's put Manitoba's infrastructure into such a perilous situation only eight weeks after getting into government. What's he doing over there?

Mr. Pedersen: Well, reading is such a novel thing to do, and I would suggest that the member go back and read the entire article, because I believe Mr. Lorenc was also talking about the City of Winnipeg's not awarding tenders. We know that the federal government, who this previous government had new allegiances to, that there has been some disorganization within the federal government in giving tenders—or, to getting approvals done. So, you know, I would just—it doesn't surprise me at all when the member wants to take a swipe at me about this. That's fine. We have a good working relationship with the heavy construction; we will continue to work with them. We will be meeting with them—I

will be meeting with them shortly, and we'll be moving ahead. The tenders have been awarded on provincial projects, and there is work happening.

You know, I realize that the member is not that familiar with the construction industry, and I am not going to use it as an excuse. I'll just put it out there that, contrary to last year, this—so far, this construction season has been less than optimal for getting work done just because of the wet conditions. And—now, that's, you know, the contracts are still out there, still to do. We certainly hope that Mother Nature co-operates, and they can get caught up on this.

But—[interjection]—well, it's—you know, the member from Elmwood wants to take swipes at Chris Lorenc, that's his prerogative, but I will not do that. I have a good working relationship with Mr. Lorenc, and with the heavy construction industry, and I will continue to do that.

Mr. Allum: You know, when Mr. Lorenc says that jobs are imperiled here in Manitoba, we expect the Minister of Infrastructure to take it seriously. And, instead, he's treating it as if it's a non-serious non-issue. The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association has said, quite directly, to its membership that projects are being stalled by the provincial government and jobs are being lost.

What's he going to do to accelerate the infrastructure program here in Manitoba, even though he's cutting \$50 million from the budget, and

what's he going to do—even more importantly—to protect the jobs of Manitobans working in that industry?

Mr. Pedersen: We will continue to work with the heavy construction industry, and we will—I will be meeting with the heavy construction industry shortly. And it does not help for the member to run around and throw accusations out and fear-monger. I—you know, I realize it's easy for him to do that, but it's not really constructive for Manitoba.

You know, I—when he criticizes—he's actually criticizing the construction advertisements and tendering that his own government did previously when he talks about this, because there was—the construction season was set out prior to our government taking over, and we will, you know, we're working with that and continue to work with that.

The heavy construction industry, they can have their opinions, and that's quite fine. We're not going to negotiate or do conversations with them in the public. It's far better to sit down face to face, which we will be doing, which, you know, the previous government was not very good at doing. They—famous, famous government for doing press releases and press announcements, but that—and that reminds me—

Mr. Chairperson: The time being 12:30, I am interrupting the proceedings. The Committee of Supply will resume sitting after routine proceedings.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

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