

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

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

| <b>Member</b>             | <b>Constituency</b>  | <b>Political Affiliation</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| ALLUM, James              | Fort Garry-Riverview | NDP                          |
| ALTEMEYER, Rob            | Wolseley             | NDP                          |
| BINDLE, Kelly             | Thompson             | PC                           |
| 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, Hon. | Rossmere             | PC                           |
| MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice    | Seine River          | PC                           |
| NESBITT, Greg             | Riding Mountain      | PC                           |
| PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.    | Fort Whyte           | PC                           |
| PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.    | Midland              | PC                           |
| PIWNIUK, Doyle            | Arthur-Virden        | PC                           |
| REYES, Jon                | St. Norbert          | PC                           |
| SARAN, Mohinder           | The Maples           | Ind.                         |
| SCHULER, Ron, Hon.        | St. Paul             | PC                           |
| 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                           |
| <i>Vacant</i>             | Point Douglas        |                              |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

### Speaker's Statement

**Madam Speaker:** I have a statement for the House.

Before we begin our business today, I would like to take a moment to remind and remember Binx Remnant, the former Clerk of this House, who passed away on January 5th, 2017.

Born and raised in British Columbia, Binx had a varied work history across Canada before he began his parliamentary career in 1963 in Yellowknife, when he started work as a clerk's assistant. From 1966 to 1982 he served as the first Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Binx arrived at the Manitoba Assembly in 1982 as our 13th Clerk. He served with distinction in that role for 17 years until 1999. His time here included several notable events, including the French language debate of 1983 and '84 and the Meech Lake constitutional debate in 1990.

Throughout his career Binx served with professionalism, integrity and unsurpassed knowledge. His dedication and expertise was well known and respected not just in this House, but in every Legislature across Canada and beyond.

Binx played a key role in the development of the Canadian Association of Clerks-at-the-Table, serving on the executive, but also by presenting more papers at conferences than any other Clerk in the history of this organization.

His unique stature and significance in the history of this place was officially recognized by resolution of this House on December 14th, 1999, when he was granted the unique honour of access to our loges during session, a privilege usually only extended to former members. As well, Binx was the first non-MLA to be made an honorary member of the association of former Manitoba MLAs.

Binx is survived by sons Richard and James, his daughter Margot, two grandsons, and his very special friend Isobel Lee. He was predeceased by his wife Marion.

A beloved figure in this Assembly, Binx cast a long shadow, and not just from his formidable height

and flowing robes. He set an example of integrity and professionalism which is followed to this day.

He will be remembered and honoured.

Is there will of the House to have a moment of silence to honour the memory of Binx Remnant?  
[Agreed]

Please rise.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill 15—The Department of Justice Amendment Act

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 15, The Department of Justice Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Justice, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House today to introduce for first reading Bill 15, The Department of Justice Amendment Act. This bill amends The Department of Justice Act to specify that individual Crown attorneys and other identified individuals cannot be personally named in lawsuits brought by people who have been the subject of a prosecution. The bill requires the action to be brought against the Attorney General as opposed to the individual Crown attorney or identified person.

I'm pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

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

##### Bill 16—The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 16, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes médico-légales, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to introduce for first reading Bill 16, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act. This bill amends The Fatality Inquiries Act to make clarifications about the circumstances in which an inquest into a death is mandatory. The bill also makes it clear when an inquest is presumed to be required and when an inquest is not required. Bill 16 improves the readability of The Fatality Inquiries Act by rewriting and reorganizing certain provisions and repealing outdated provisions.

I am pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

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

#### **Bill 17—The Court Security Amendment Act**

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité dans les tribunaux, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce for first reading Bill 17, The Court Security Amendment Act. This bill amends The Court Security Act to enhance court security in Manitoba. These amendments will allow for a more effective response to potential security threats by empowering security officers with the authority to be proactive in dealing with security threats, reducing the likelihood of significant incidents in the courthouses across this province.

I am pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

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

\* (13:40)

#### **Bill 18—The Legislative Security Act**

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 18, The Legislative Security Act; Loi sur la sécurité de la Cité législative, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I'm pleased to introduce Bill 18, The Legislative Security Act. This bill will provide a legislative framework to enhance security for

the Manitoba Legislative Building, surrounding grounds and Government House, which are collectively referenced as the Legislative Precinct.

This bill requires that the Minister of Justice enter into an arrangement with the Speaker to define responsibilities of the Legislative security service and the Speaker's security group. It outlines the role of security officers while giving them peace officer status.

I am pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

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

#### **Bill 211—The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act**

**Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce, seconded by the MLA for Gimli, that Bill 211, The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act; Loi sur le règlement des différends internationaux relatifs aux investissements, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Helwer:** Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce Bill 211 for first reading, the settlement of international disputes act will bring the convention on the settlement of investment disputes between states and nationals of other states into force in Manitoba; that is, as it has been brought into force in Canada under The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act Canada. Thank you.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Madam Speaker:** The required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2). Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

#### **International Women's Day**

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge International Women's Day. I encourage all Manitobans to join others from around the world to mark this momentous occasion that highlights the rights of women across the globe.

International Women's Day was proclaimed by the United Nations on March 8th, 1977, and has a long history that goes back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At that time, women in North America and Europe were protesting for better working conditions, demanding the right to vote and calling for peace.

Each year on International Women's Day, thousands of events are held around the world where women connect to celebrate and honour the economic, political and social accomplishments of women. It is an opportunity to acknowledge the collective progress towards gender equality, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by women around the globe.

Earlier today, we marked the occasion with an event here at the Manitoba Legislative Building. We celebrated the many triumphs and challenges of women in the field of science and engineering. There are many women in our province who have worked tirelessly to promote the advancement of women in these fields. We recognize their roles as catalysts for change and acknowledge the challenges that they have faced. We showed our appreciation for the work they have done to open doors so that others may follow in their footsteps.

Our goal today was to promote the participation of Manitoba girls to explore this exciting field of study. Over the years, we have witnessed an unprecedented expansion of women's rights here in Manitoba and across the globe. More girls are reaping the benefits of higher education, more women have entered the labour market, and more women are in a position of leadership than ever before.

Today reminded us that we all benefit when women and girls have the opportunities and the resources they need to succeed and reach their full potential.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I wish everyone a happy International Women's Day.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Happy International Women's Day to you and to all my sister colleagues in the House.

Like generations of grandmothers and mothers before us, I've sought to advance the rights of women and girls for close to 20 years. Our struggle has been expressed loudly, boldly, calmly, sometimes in anger and rage, and even within the depths of despair, we've made gains and lived triumphs. However,

lately, one cannot help but feel we've lost ground as we've witnessed the outright denial and mockery of sexual assault against women among some of the most privileged of political and social spaces, or we see images of mothers making unimaginable decisions to leave their homelands with their children travelling on makeshift boats or trekking across frozen farm fields.

We read or personally experience the proliferation of misogynistic social media messaging or, worse still, the outright murder of our sister female politicians. And still, in 2017, all across the globe, women and girls face unimaginable levels of violence in the continued practice of child marriage, female genital mutilation, rape, the theft and torture of women and girls as sex slaves, children-child sex tourism including the selling of babies as young as four who are sold to the highest bidder, raped and then, Madam Speaker, savagely thrown-sewn back together to be resold again to the next pedophile.

I feel even more urgency to unapologetically and courageously continue the struggle for women and girls' human rights in the midst of such madness.

What do we teach and model to young girls when we apologize for commanding our space as women? We intrinsically teach girls their space and place warrants continued regulation, confinement, and even more so that they are less than.

So, Madam Speaker—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** I ask for leave to speak to the ministerial statement.

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

**Ms. Klassen:** Happy International Women's Day.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to be a carpenter when I grew up, but in that era, nice women did not get the opportunity to fill their truest dreams.

Today, women in Canada earn 87 cents for every dollar earned by men. We are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed. In 2015, men out-earned women in every occupational group. Madam Speaker, this is why we still fight.

Today, in this Legislature, there are only 13 female MLAs. I stand with my sister, the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux), who is the youngest female ever elected to this House. Only 51 women have served in the provincial Legislature.

There have been 806 men in the last 100 years since some women got the right to vote. Madam Speaker, this is why we still fight.

I stand here with my sisters, the members for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) and St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) as the first three female indigenous women ever elected to this House. More than a third of this province's First Nations communities have no women serving on their councils at all. Madam Speaker, this is why we still fight.

I stand with all my sisters here today, and I would like to thank all of the incredibly strong women who have come before us and have fought for us to be here. I commend and appreciate your voice, Madam Speaker. I am quite honoured to be working under a female Speaker.

I commend all women across Manitoba who work today to ensure that our daughters and their daughters have more opportunity and more respect than those that come before. I want to commend all the various groups across Manitoba, BPW, Equal Voice and Daughters of the Vote, who work tirelessly to close the gaps.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### International Women's Day

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** Madam Speaker, Madame la Présidente, I am honoured to speak today as a woman who has been elected to office on International Women's Day.

C'est un plaisir de partager quelques mots aujourd'hui comme femme dans les politiques.

#### *Translation*

*It is a pleasure to say a few words today as a woman in politics.*

#### *English*

International Women's Day is a time to celebrate our community, a time to be reflective on the struggles women have faced, yet be proud of the progress we have achieved.

In my own riding of Fort Richmond, the University of Manitoba is having its student union elections. There are many women involved in this election, not only as candidates for various positions, but also as campaign managers and volunteers keeping students engaged.

These women have invested weeks of hard work into something that they believe in.

\* (13:50)

This is inspiring for me and it is a testament to the growth in strong female leadership.

I have two daughters, Annlise and Kalyna, and as a mother, my dream for them is to be able to achieve their dreams.

Young women in student leadership and leadership in the community at large is growing, and this is a great trend. As much as we are moving forward in leadership roles, women still face misogyny, sexism and discrimination. Nevertheless, every hurdle makes the victory sweeter. Together we can all combat this.

I encourage all young women in my riding and across Manitoba to follow your passions and to continue to get involved, whether you are in high school, university, community sports, mentoring programs or whatever it may be.

Today, in the Rotunda, we were fortunate to have guest speaker Nusraat Masood, from WISE Kid-Netic Energy, a not-for-profit which is run out of University of Manitoba.

This morning, I, along with my other female MLAs, received a heartwarming email from Ms. Masood. It read: Newton has said, we all stand on the shoulder of giants, and the next generation of women will stand on your shoulders. Thank you for getting into politics. Thank you for extending yourselves past what others expected of you.

This encouragement is exactly what we need for success—building each other up.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Further members' statements?

### Community Places Program

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Happy International Women's Day, everyone.

Manitobans are not at all impressed with this government giving a 20 per cent raise to all Cabinet ministers and to the Premier (Mr. Pallister). Each minister will get an extra \$14,000 this year, and the Premier feels he is entitled to an extra \$22,000. These raises were awarded right after the election before any merit had been established, and the government has now locked in these higher salaries

to stay in place for four years in a row. How many other Manitobans are getting a 20 per cent pay raise?

While the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his ministers are lining their own pockets, they are also cutting funding to important programs like Community Places. This excellent program has existed for decades, it has survived multiple provincial governments of different political stripes and it provided capital grants to—for projects in communities across the province.

In West Broadway neighbourhood alone, many successful and worthwhile projects were completed in recent years, thanks to this program. For example, All Saints' church, where Agape Table is located right across the street, got a grant for roof repairs, better windows and a proper fire escape. At Crossways in Common—it's home to over a dozen different community organizations—they got support for crucial building repairs. Historic Ralph Connor House was able to do masonry repairs. At Taking Charge! a Community Places grant helped convert their daycare's concrete outdoor area into a natural green play space for children. The playground at Day Nursery Centre was similarly improved and the kitchen was upgraded. Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation used a small grant to build gardens on site for their tenants. Elim Chapel repaired the step to their front entrance. And at Tamarack rehabilitation centre, they completed important electrical safety upgrades and built a new washroom for their staff and their residents.

The Community Places Program is clearly more important than salary increases for the Premier and for Cabinet ministers. I call on this government to recognize their mistake, rescind their decision and reinstate full funding for the Community Places Program in this budget coming up next month.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### **International Women's Day**

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to address the Chamber on International Women's Day.

In 1911, the first International Women's Day was honoured in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, and it was proclaimed an official day by the United Nations General Assembly in 1977.

March 8th is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women past, present and future. This day also marks

a call to action for accelerating gender parity. The United Nation's general secretary, António Guterres, recently stated that, gender equality has a transformative effect that is essential to fully functioning communities, societies and economies. Women's access to education and health services has benefitted for their families and communities that extend to future generations. An extra year in school can add up to 25 per cent to a girl's future income. When women participate fully in the labour force, it creates opportunities and generates growth. Closing the gender gap in employment could add \$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025. Increasing the proportion of women in public institutions makes them more representative, increases innovation, improves decision making and benefits whole societies.

Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with these words. The 2017 International Women's Day campaign is Be Bold for Change, which focuses on forging a better working world and minimizing the gender gap to move closer to gender parity. I invite my colleagues to engage in these endeavors both here, at home in Manitoba, and on an international scale.

Thank you.

#### **Charlotte Oleson**

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Municipal Relations):** It's my privilege and a tremendous pleasure to join my colleagues in this House in celebrating International Women's Day.

Last month I attended the funeral service of Charlotte Oleson, a former member of this Legislature and a woman who left her mark on the community, as well as our province.

Charlotte served as a village councillor, a deputy mayor and as a dedicated community steward in her hometown of Glenboro. She was also my MLA in Gladstone, a minister and a former director of the federal PC Women's Caucus.

She had a lifelong desire to help people from all walks of life for the betterment of her community as well as our province, and as her husband Stan would point out, she could get it all done in one day. Her dedication never waned. It was said that she was active right up until she couldn't be active anymore, and we were so pleased to have her join us in November in Brandon celebrating women in government.

Madam Speaker, this year's International Women's Day is about being bold for change, and we as Manitobans are the inheritors of a lifeline of strong, dedicated women who, throughout our history, have been exactly that. But what women like Charlotte Oleson have taught us is that being bold for change means more than just talking about it; it also means rolling up our sleeves and making change happen.

For women across this province who are serving as leaders in their communities, in municipal and First Nation council chambers and right here in this House, strong role models like Charlotte Oleson are an inspiration. They remind us that it isn't always the biggest idea or the loudest declarations that have the biggest impact, but rather our unshakeable commitments to issues that matter the most in our communities and the actions we choose to take every day that can add up and make the greatest difference.

Today I'm very proud to honour Charlotte Oleson.

### **International Women's Day—Everyday Heroes**

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased and humbled to rise today to speak about everyday heroes of International Women's Day.

Madam Speaker, International Women's Day is noted as a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Around the world, we are honouring those who have advanced the cause of women's equality and acknowledge the work that is still left to do.

And certainly, there are many women who are rightly noted in history as heroes for women's equality. But, Madam Speaker, I also want to take a moment to speak about the women who are everyday heroes in my community.

In the constituency of River East and across Manitoba, we are so fortunate to be surrounded by these women. They are the mothers, like my neighbour Karen, who strives to give her children in our local school the best possible start in life.

They are the young women like Nichole, a second-year law student at Robson Hall, who knows, more than any generation before her, that she can do anything she sets her mind to.

They are the small-business owners, like those of SpaLifestyle and Fashion Boutique in our North

Kildonan community, who provide jobs and opportunities to other women.

They are the volunteers, like Tammy, the first female president of Gateway Recreation Centre, and they are the seniors like Ness, who grew and promoted the Good Neighbours Active Living Centre in North Kildonan.

They are strong, compassionate and inspirational women who are my everyday heroes.

Madam Speaker, these women—these everyday heroes—are pillars of our community and so important in our lives. They inspire me and I know they inspire all of us here today in the Chamber. So today, as we celebrate International Women's Day, let us take a moment to celebrate all the women who are the everyday heroes for Manitoba. For them, and with all of them, we can all be bold in the change.

Thank you.

### **Introduction of Guests**

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions we have some guests in the public gallery.

\* (14:00)

Seated in the public gallery from the Manitoba Institute of Trade and Technology, Pembina campus, we have 20 Adult English Language students under the direction of Marie Rogge, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview (Mr. Allum).

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

### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **Minimum Wage Increase Request**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I want to thank all women in this Chamber for their work today and every day.

Madam Speaker, we have come some way in advancing the fight for equality, but there's so much more to do. It gives me great pride to lead a team of MLAs who are committed to advancing real gains for initiatives that impact women, committed to advancing regular increases to the minimum wage and investments in good-quality child care help improve the circumstances of women in this province.



It saddens me to say that, unfortunately, the Premier simply doesn't get it, as he takes a 20 per cent pay raise while making life harder for everyone else. A frozen minimum wage and failure to make investments in child care make life harder for women.

Will the Premier change course, increase the minimum wage and give back his 20 per cent raise?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** The preamble of the member opposite was appreciated in its initial stages, Madam Speaker, and I share her congratulations and strong support of feelings for all the comments that were made here today in respect of International Women's Day.

The advances that have been made and that we will endeavour on this side of the House to continue to make—and I know that we'll be supported by members opposite as well—around women's rights are not just advances for women; they are advances for all human beings. The advances and the progress that we make in moving forward on women's equality are not just advances for women; they are advances for humanity. All of us share those obligations and responsibilities. The challenges are not met best through divisive strategies or partisanship, but rather through a mutual embrace and a shared embrace of all the challenges that exist around these important issues.

The progress that we have achieved thus far depended on the initiatives, in many cases, of women, but also depended on the support of men. And so, as a man in this Chamber, I share the challenge that all of us must accept of joining in the struggle to advance women's equality in this country and in this province.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** We know the Premier is solely focused on cuts, cuts that hurt women and many Manitobans: cuts to CancerCare, to community clinics, personal-care homes and a frozen minimum wage.

Madam Speaker, we see how this government is making life harder for women in this province. The Premier has done his best to convince the public that the blue sky is falling down upon them, but there is room for this government to continue to invest for the benefit of women in this province.

Will the Premier do so, or will he continue an agenda of cuts?

**Mr. Pallister:** The advancement of women's rights and women's equality is a struggle all of us need to engage in, and it has been true throughout history that those advances are best achieved through a process of integrity and truth telling, not through the spreading of misinformation or the dull repetition of talking points, which the member opposite and her colleagues know are 'erroneous'—erroneous in nature. And so that weakens the case for advancing equality rather than strengthen it.

I would encourage members to understand that integrity is best defined as doing what you say you will do. This government will do what it promises to do. It follows on the heels of a government that failed in every respect to keep its word to Manitobans, including keeping its word to lessen the burden on females in this province of excessive taxation and regulation.

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

#### **Provincial Nominee Program Premier's Comments**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** It really is difficult to get a straight answer from the Premier, whether it's on this subject, on his time away in Costa Rica or on something as straightforward as his own statements in this House regarding provincial nominees.

Yesterday, I challenged the Premier's assertion that provincial nominees have high unemployment or that they are put on welfare, when, in fact, the opposite is true.

Will the Premier produce one shred of evidence to support his assertions? Or will he do the honourable thing and apologize for the stigma he's attaching to newcomers and simply be honest about our strong newcomer communities?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Again, an untrue preamble, Madam Speaker; again, a misrepresentation of the facts; and again, a failure to produce one shred of evidence supporting the false thesis—I repeat, false—assertion that we have done anything on this side of the House but be supportive of new Canadians coming here.

In fact, I was proud to be part of a government that developed the Provincial Nominee Program, that put it together in the first place, and, Madam

Speaker, I might add, for a decade prior to that, advanced the cause of immigration in this province and advanced the idea that we needed to reach out and make this a better home of hope for people.

The NDP stand accused of offering support for the retention of a program which caused people to have to wait up to five years to find out if they could even get into the province. They cannot defend that record, Madam Speaker. Let them try.

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

### **Child-Care Facilities Affordable Options**

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, nearly a year has gone by, and this government has failed their promise to expand child care in this province. The wait-list has never been higher, and the government has responded with vague commitments.

Families need a smart plan and they need child-care opportunities for women. Experts in the field have shown that it is inappropriate to rely solely upon family-home child care as a response to this urgent issue, and what the province truly needs is more investment in non-profit, centre-based child care.

Today, of all days, will the Premier demonstrate leadership and commit to a plan that invests in good-quality, centre-based child care that works for Manitoba families?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** This is a very important issue, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the member raising it.

She comments in her preamble in respect of wait-lists. The previous administration let the wait-lists grow: they grew, they grew more, they continued to grow, they expanded, they expanded further. And yet, the previous administration, over a 17-year regime, stood by and watched that happen and now offers up instant solutions or none at all and simply attacks their own record here in this House.

That's what they do when they raise questions about the wait-lists for child care, Madam Speaker. They attack their failures and ask us to solve them.

We're prepared to work towards the solutions on many of the failed files of the past administration. That's what we're doing as a team. The members

opposite created the problems; we're on a road to recovery and we'll solve them.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** A recent poll showed that 75 per cent of Manitobans support a system where every child who needs a space gets one.

The government claims they are listening to Manitobans, so why won't they listen to these families who want affordable child care?

Why won't the Premier listen to child experts who say family-home child care is a mistake?

**Mr. Pallister:** I believe I just heard the member opposite say that family child care is a mistake, yet family child care is what raised most of the people in this House.

\* (14:10)

So I would hope she's wrong in that assertion, Madam Speaker, because these are the people who were raised by families, for the most part, I expect, in this House, who are charged with the onerous responsibility of addressing this.

The member also claims that a poll shows something. There was a poll held last April. That poll was conducted throughout Manitoba, and all Manitobans had the opportunity to participate, and they rejected the failed strategies of the previous administration soundly. They rejected them because they were based on false assertions, they were based on fear, and they were based on failure.

Now we're on a road to recovery. We, after a decade of debt, will fix the finances of this province. And after a decade of decay, we'll repair the services of this province. And after a decade of decline, we will work with all Manitobans to rebuild the economy of this province.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** What we were saying were non-profit, centre-based child care versus family-home child care and not the home as it is, but anyway.

Madam Speaker, it seems the only plan this government—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Marcelino:** –has for affordability–

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Marcelino:** –for families is privatized child care, just like family-home child care. We know from other provinces that private daycare simply does not provide the same quality of learning that non-profit, publicly accessible child care does.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Ms. Marcelino:** As we have been saying, with regional health–

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Marcelino:** –authorities, the impacts of this government's cuts mean less services and privatization. We are here today to tell this government that poorer care for our young children is not an option.

Will the Premier today commit to a plan that invests in non-profit, centre-based child care and turn his back on plans that result in transfers to private centres?

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, I've spoken with many Manitobans who are looking for child care, and they would like child care. They would like quality child care. *[interjection]* They are not ideologically hidebound–

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** What the member opposite is doing is putting her old ideology ahead of addressing the needs of people who need child care in our province. That's what she's doing, and that's what her colleagues are doing.

By attempting to belittle neighbourhood child care, by attempting to belittle those who would take in a child and help provide child care, they are simply demeaning the reality of the situation, and they are defining the very nature of what caused the problem in the first place: an ideological bias against the provision of child care, which gets in the way of providing child care to Manitoba families who need it. That would never solve the problem.

That preamble and the one before it defined the very nature of the problem that we must overcome now, left to us by the previous administration, and we will overcome it.

### **Premier's Salary Refund Request**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** On this international woman's day, it's important for us as a Legislature and as citizens to lead by example, to show through our actions that we are committed to realizing equality for women.

Cuts to public service, cuts to wages, to pensions, to jobs, negatively impact on women. These cuts are particularly egregious when the Premier and his ministers take a 20 per cent raise this year.

Will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) lead by example and return his 20 per cent raise?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** There's a number of false assertions in the member's statement, but let us first of all acknowledge that what is–what's difficult for low-income earners, including many women wage earners, is a billion-dollar deficit left by the previous NDP government.

Madam Speaker, our government is in the business of finding the ideas, of innovating, of working with Manitobans–*[interjection]* We've raised the basic personal exemption and taken almost–

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** –3,000 Manitobans off of the tax rolls. That is real results for real Manitobans, not the kind of jargon that member brings up.

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

### **Rent Assist Program Expansion Request**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Poverty and social exclusion disproportionately impact women and families more than other groups. Indigenous women and women of colour are more likely to live in poverty than other groups. Because women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of child-care responsibilities, poverty impacts on them in an especially deep way.

Preserving and strengthening Rent Assist is one concrete step the government can take to lift women up.

Will the Minister of Finance commit to preserving and expanding Rent Assist in order to lift Manitoba women up?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** This government called for changes to raise to 75 per cent of median market rate, basic rates for Manitobans, when that government at the time was intransigent on the subject, Madam Speaker.

But we note that yesterday, in one of the newspapers, they commented that the NDP, if they oppose any controls in spending, how do they propose government should pay for it. Because there's only three ways to finance the status quo and spend more, and that is either borrow more money, or raise taxes or do both.

What is the plan that the opposite member has? Is it to raise taxes on Manitobans or is it to just borrow more money?

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

#### **Minimum Wage Increase Inclusion in Budget 2017**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I actually didn't hear any commitment to Rent Assist.

We know that rates of poverty and social exclusion disproportionately impact on women and their families. One concrete tool that can fight poverty for women is to raise the minimum wage. In fact, evidence shows that it is the best way to provide real support for women and families that are in need. But this government refused to raise the minimum wage.

Will the Minister of Finance commit to raising the minimum wage in the budget in order to help lift women up?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** A perpetual overspending like the kind the NDP did year after year is a kind of an opposite of a pay-it-forward plan;—[interjection]—it's a pay-it-backwards.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** It's making the next generation pay for the overspending that is—that's occurring right now.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to affordability for Manitobans, this government made a decision to index tax brackets. That means Manitobans get to keep way more of their hard-earned money.

The former NDP could have made that decision, but they cared more about borrowing and debt and pushing problems forward.

We're going to solve these things. We will fix the finances. And Manitobans have given us exactly that mandate.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, on a new question.

#### **Reproductive Health Care for Women Medically Necessary Service**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** On this international woman's day, it's important to recognize that the battle for real and full access to health care for women is not complete.

Full and complete access and control over reproductive health for women is not yet realized in our society, and it will take action on the part of the government to fix this problem. But as a first step, we must acknowledge the issue.

Does the Minister of Health agree that access to women's reproductive health care is essential women's health care and thus medically necessary service?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I thank the question regarding women's health in the province of Manitoba, and I can assure the member that health for women in all corners of this province is of utmost priority to this government.

And I can also assure the member that, unlike the former administration, we understand that an oppressive tax regime, which is what they brought in; we understand that lies to women, knocking on their doors and telling them one thing and then going around and doing the exact opposite, is more harmful to women in all regards, and that this government will stand up for women's rights in the province of Manitoba.

**Madam Speaker:** Just a caution to the member that the word lies is not a word that is considered parliamentary in this House, and I would encourage no further use of that word.

The honourable member for St. Johns, on a supplementary question.

#### **Abortifacient Funding Coverage**

**Ms. Fontaine:** Access to reproductive health care is an issue of principle. It's an issue of recognizing women's rights and full control over their reproductive health.

\* (14:20)

But it is also an issue of cost. Access to reproductive health care is most expensive in isolated communities, as in northern Manitoba.

If the provincial government agreed to fully fund the cost of the abortion pill, this would ease the burden on women and would save the government money.

Does the Minister of Health acknowledge that savings could be found in the health-care system by providing coverage for the abortion pill for Manitoba women?

**Ms. Squires:** Well, I thank the member opposite for the question.

And I—she brought up the issue of costs and health care, and I would like to urge members opposite to stand with us on this side of the House as we ask Ottawa to come to the table for meaningful dialogue on health-care transfers because nothing will affect women's health in the province more than Ottawa turning their backs on women in this province.

And I ask them to join with us, stand shoulder to shoulder, as we fight with Ottawa for a fair health-care deal.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** This government has an important opportunity to take a lead in this year's budget in respect of women's reproductive health. It can make it clear that it will fully cover the cost of the abortion pill for Manitoba women because it is a necessity for real access to reproductive health.

On this international woman's day, will the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) commit that the government will cover the cost of the abortion pill in the budget order—in order for women to have full access to their reproductive health?

**Ms. Squires:** I can assure members opposite that this government will be advancing women's issues. We are standing up for women in the province of Manitoba.

And in regards to the budget that's coming up, I invite them to stay tuned and look for the many initiatives that are going to help Manitoba families and women throughout this province in our upcoming budget.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Poverty Reduction Plan Inclusion in Budget 2017**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** Instead of taking effective steps to raise people out of poverty, like raising the minimum wage, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) gave himself a 20 per cent increase.

The Throne Speech contained no real concrete measures to fight poverty. Instead, it delayed and kicked the can down the road, off-loading responsibility to anyone but government.

Can the Minister for Families tell the House when this government will offer concrete solutions to address women's poverty in Manitoba?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Families):** This government is very much committed to poverty reduction in this province.

We know, under the previous administration, there was a number of things. We ended up being the child poverty capital of Canada. We also saw the amount of food banks spike dramatically under this government.

We've taken concrete steps to address poverty in this province, whether it be increasing the basic personal exemption, things like the Rent Assist that we had to push this government to the last dying days of their administration to get done, as well as substantial investments in housing, which we think will make a difference for low-income Manitobans.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** Women experience poverty uniquely and more severely than men. Any approach to resolving poverty requires a gender perspective.

That is an important reason why this government actually needs a plan to address poverty in its budget. But we have recently heard that this government has taken no steps to actually develop a plan to address poverty.

Will this minister commit today to tabling a comprehensive poverty action plan as part of the budget?

**Mr. Fielding:** This government is very much committed to repairing the services, and having supports for people of low income. That is a priority for this government, has been and always will be.

The current legislation that's in place asks us to review our poverty reduction plan within this

calendar year, and we will do such as—in terms of this year.

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

**Ms. Lathlin:** Poverty disproportionately impacts single mothers. Almost half of Manitoba's single-mother families live in poverty. And over 15 per cent of women in Manitoba live in poverty.

Children, mothers and families need this government to set real goals to address poverty and make life affordable for every Manitoban, yet this government has refused to raise the minimum wage, and their Throne Speech ignored families living in poverty.

Will this government, in their budget, bring in a comprehensive reduction plan that raises the minimum wage and outlines real steps to end poverty?

**Mr. Fielding:** Poverty reduction is extremely important. That's why we met with the ALL Aboard group just on Friday to talk about these specific issues.

In terms of answering your question, I believe I already answered it. The government is committed to enhancing and putting forth a plan. That's in the legislation; that's a part of it.

The big thing that has impacted Manitoba families the most is the PST increase that was brought forth by your government over the last two years. PST is something that impacts low-income families more than anything else, so I would suggest to the members opposite that if they've got real concerns about the reductions and why poverty has grown so much, they should look themselves—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

#### **Incarceration without Sentencing Cost Reduction Plan**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** Currently, the former government and this government have the same track record when it comes to Manitoba remaining as the province with the highest incarceration rates. You know, compared to Saskatchewan, Manitoba locks up 17 per cent more people. And according to Statistics Canada, each correctional facility is spending just over \$200 a day for each individual adult behind bars.

Madam Speaker, does the minister realize how much money this is costing Manitoba taxpayers? I would like to ask the minister what she is doing to

reduce the number of people being incarcerated without sentence.

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I want to thank my colleague for her question today.

Of course, this is not a new issue in Manitoba. For many, many years—we've inherited the mismanagement of the previous NDP government when it comes to the justice system in Manitoba. It's why I've called on the department to conduct a review of the criminal justice system in Manitoba, and that review will be forthcoming within the next few weeks.

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

#### **Elizabeth Fry and John Howard Society Continued Funding Commitment**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** You know, I'm sure the minister is familiar with the Elizabeth Fry association and the John Howard Society. Last year, the minister decided not to invest additional funds in these valuable programs. These programs house and help transition people back into society at less than \$25 a day. Compare that to the \$200 spent on individuals who are incarcerated.

Does the minister have any immediate plans to invest in these two programs?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

I want to thank the Elizabeth Fry Society and the John Howard Society for all the work that they have done over the years to help in our criminal justice system. And of course, I have mentioned already to the member opposite that we are conducting that review; we are doing a review of all programs with the intent of ensuring that in the end we are getting better results for Manitobans.

We need to ensure the safety and security first and foremost of all Manitobans.

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

#### **Youth Justice Committees Request for Pilot Project**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** You know, Madam Speaker, we're reaching a point where this review stage needs to be turned into action.

My concern is that changes need to be made, and these changes are not being made. This minister has now had ample time to, at the very least, come up with a proposal or a plan.

Madam Speaker, I have a plan, a plan in which I shared with this minister at Estimates, and here in the House a few months back. I would like the minister to reconsider reopening a youth justice committee in Burrows as a preventative investment. These committees are an incredible community-based resource that is extremely effective.

Is the minister open—if I do all of the work, Madam Speaker—to having one as a pilot project reopened in Burrows?

\* (14:30)

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I have said to the member opposite that I appreciate any ideas that she has. We look forward to working together.

I have met with members of her caucus with respect to various issues to do with the criminal justice system, how we can work together to improve the results for Manitobans, to improve the safety for Manitobans, and we look forward to continuing to work with all members of the House and all Manitobans towards more safe—safer communities for all.

### **Bills Up for Debate Legislative Agenda**

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** Madam Speaker, the opposition continues to debate a budget that hasn't even been presented yet. During all this time—[interjection]—during this time we are missing an opportunity—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** —to be debating the bills that could actually—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** —help young Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, my question today is for our Government House Leader: If the NDP were not obstructing, what bills would we be debating?

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** I do appreciate the question.

You know, we had hoped to debate and pass Interim Supply, a well-established, routine bill to ensure services until budgets are passed. We had hoped to debate and pass The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, which expands the mandate of the advocate to provide services for children and youth. We'd hoped to debate and pass Community Child Care Standards Amendment Act, which addresses child-care standards. We'd hoped to do all these things.

Our team has a robust legislative agenda to put our province on the road to recovery. Instead, we're getting grandstanding from the members opposite. We hope they'll join us and be part of the solution, Madam Speaker.

### **Charges Under The Wildlife Act Release of Information Authorization**

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** Madam Speaker, in January, the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) staff were able to obtain, in just a matter of hours, the names and home communities of Manitobans charged with a certain offence under The Wildlife Act for all of 2016 and then release this list to the media.

Did the Attorney General authorize the release of this information to the Premier's staff, and, if not, who did?

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** No.

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

**Mr. Swan:** The Attorney General knows or ought to know that without the prison database this information could be gathered from the provincial court in only two ways: by manually searching every file in every provincial court centre or by reviewing every posted docket in every court bay in the more than 60 communities where the provincial court sits.

But, in manually searching the files of each accused to find their home communities, the Premier's staff were quickly able to obtain the names and communities of Manitobans charged, not convicted, of one offence under The Wildlife Act, which was then supplied to the media for partisan political purposes.

If the Attorney General didn't authorize the release of information to the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) staff, who did?

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sustainable Development):** I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question.

A priority of this government is the safety and protection of all Manitobans, and unlike the members opposite, who failed to put more individuals on the ground enforcing unsafe hunting practices, we are doing that to make sure that people are safe in their communities, and we will continue to do that, and we are proud of our record, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Swan:** Madam Speaker, information contained in the prison database is for the sole use of Crown prosecutors and law enforcement in Manitoba. The use of that prison database is strictly controlled. The use of the prison database is tracked. The prison database is not to be used for personal reasons, and it's not to be used for political reasons.

The only reason this information was gathered and released was the political management of the Premier's very unfortunate comments.

I want to know, and if the minister of conservation or the Attorney General can answer this, who released this information to the Premier's staff?

**Mrs. Cox:** Again, I am proud of our government's record. We have stepped up enforcement out in those areas where we know that there are unsafe hunting practices. We have 49 charges of unsafe hunting practices and 14 vehicle seizures.

Unlike the members opposite, who failed to care about the safety of Manitobans, we will get this done. We are on the road to recovery, Madam Speaker.

#### **Brandon School Division Small Class Size Funding Inquiry**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** The Brandon School Division is waiting on this government to tell them whether or not they'll receive \$850,000 in small class size funding. This \$850,000 is needed to make sure there are enough teachers so that each

kindergarten to grade 3 class is no more than 20 students.

The Brandon School Division is counting on this money and, just a week out from the deadline, they're still waiting on the government to do its job and tell them how much funding they're going to receive.

Will the minister tell the House today if he's going to cut the small class sizes funding for the Brandon School Division?

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question.

Brandon School Division was informed, with all of the other school divisions in the province, shortly after our announcement, on the amount of funding they would receive for the year, including that. So I really don't understand why they don't seem to be able to comprehend numbers on a piece of paper, but they were certainly well informed.

As for the small class size initiative, I would point out that the previous government put no program in place to evaluate the success of that program. We did that immediately.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Rouge, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Kinew:** The Brandon School Division, notwithstanding the aspersions just cast by the minister, are frustrated that this government is dragging their feet.

One trustee said, and I quote: I don't know if this is because it's a new government and they don't know what they're doing, but we are not the only school division in this situation.

Fair question, Madam Speaker—maybe they don't know what they're doing.

The school boards are required by law to announce their budgets by next week. The Brandon School Division needs this small class size funding.

If this government intended to cut the funding all along, they should have told the division schooler—school division sooner.

When will they share this information with the Brandon School Division?

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the member for the question, but I repeat, they have been informed as to the intention on the small class size initiative.



But I would like to return to the fact that previous government put a program in place with no method, and no plan for a method, of evaluation.

Is that good use of taxpayers' dollars, or is that careless use of money?

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Rouge, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Kinew:** It's good to hear answers in question period, but why isn't this information shared directly with the Brandon School Division?

And, again, quotes from the school division trustees that they have been put in an absolutely terrible position—another trustee: In my several years as a trustee, I've never witnessed this in our division or any other division. To say it's disappointing is the lightest statement I can make at—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —this time. The Brandon school—*[interjection]*—no, this is actually two other trustees than the one the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is thinking of.

The Brandon School Division had to pass—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —their annual budget without the guaranteed funding to back it up. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Kinew:** That's because the government has failed to let them know if they'll get the funds they need to keep the small class size program running.

Can the minister stop delaying and communicate this information directly with the Brandon School Division?

**Mr. Wishart:** We will communicate, yet again, with the Brandon School Division as to the small class size initiative.

But I am pleased to say that we have put in place a program to evaluate the success of the small class size initiative, and we hope to have results to share with this House before too long, towards the end of the school year.

\* (14:40)

I look forward to seeing whether, in fact, it was a successful program and a good use of taxpayer dollars.

## Bills Up for Debate Legislative Agenda

**Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond):** I was wondering if the Government House Leader would please share with the House—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Guillemard:** —would please share with us how many government bills have been debated at second reading? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** I certainly appreciate the question.

Unfortunately, we've only had the chance to debate two government bills.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

## PETITIONS

### Bell's Purchase of MTS

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to it—to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba telephone system is currently a fourth cellular carrier used by Manitobans along with the big national three carriers: Telus, Rogers and Bell.

In Toronto, with only the big three national companies controlling the market, the average five-gigabyte unlimited monthly cellular package is \$117 as compared to Winnipeg, where MTS charges \$66 for the same package.

Losing MTS will mean less competition and will result in higher costs for all cellphone packages in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government do all that is possible to prevent the Bell takeover of MTS and preserve a more competitive cellphone market so that cellular bills for Manitobans do not increase unnecessarily.

This petition is signed by many fine Manitobans.

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

Grievances?

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** This afternoon we'd like to continue with Interim Supply.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will continue Interim Supply this afternoon, resuming debate on second reading of Bill 8, The Interim Appropriation Act 2017, standing in the name of the member for The Pas who has 12 minutes remaining.

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

##### Bill 8—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2017

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas):** It's an honour to stand here before you today to put a few more words on record about the interim supply bill and cuts to services associated with this bill.

Yesterday, I left off, which I think deserves to be repeated within the Chamber here regarding cuts to capital projects in northern Manitoba. Again, I'm here to stand here as a representative to voice my concern on behalf of my constituents about our primary health-care clinic for The Pas and a northern consultation clinic in Thompson—two very important projects that were cut.

This comes to a huge blow to families and seniors in the north, who were depending on these projects. These projects would've provided northern families and seniors with access to quality primary care and would help to reduce chronic diseases such as diabetes and health complications for families in the North, including mine, Madam Speaker.

Community leaders and service providers say northern health care is already patchwork, with less available doctors and nurses. Again, Madam Speaker, The Pas health-care clinic true intentions were to recruit and retain these doctors and nurses that are truly needed in my community. Northern communities need more investments, not less. By cutting these clinics proves that this government thinks that we deserve less. This government says they want to build capacity in our northern communities and grow their economies.

Well, like my late father Oscar Lathlin always believed, that healthy communities will definitely contribute to health economies as well.

So, with that, they sat idle when major economic drivers in Churchill and The Pas shuttered down and they were reducing health-care services. Again, pleas for the Premier (Mr. Pallister) were called and—for him to show up in times of crisis in our northern communities. Instead, a minister was sent and, sad to say, I was not allowed as the MLA for The Pas to attend those meetings, to sit and, hopefully, sit and listen to all the concerns with the new government. But I was not allowed in that meeting, and I hope that's an action that's not going to be done again within my community. That's not how northerners do business.

Also, too, I just want to put out, again, about MKO Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson. I absolutely agree with her about her concern about her First Nations communities that were better—that she represents were not consulted, were not informed about these cuts that truly will impact her communities as well. That is why I asked a question the other day that the northern regional health authority serves 26 First Nation communities, including some of Manitoba's most 'remort'—'remost'—sorry, remote First Nations.

And yet the Premier is forcing the NRHA to cut non-insured services, which means cutting services like mental health supports, services that are truly needed in Manitoba—northern Manitoba. And also, too, these supports are needed because rates of substance abuse and mental health issues are much higher.

So that's why I was asking the question as a representative for northern Manitoba, why didn't this Premier or this minister consult with any of these affected First Nation communities before the ordered the regional health authority to make these cuts?

So in regards to cuts and concerns within my own community, Madam Speaker, yesterday the Neighbourhoods Alive! funding was bought up, and I really appreciate and want to thank my colleagues, the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) for raising their concerns regarding funding for the Neighbourhoods Alive! projects, because I believe, as representatives, it's important to raise questions about our communities' well-being.

So I just wanted to emphasize and talk about The Pas Community Renewal Corporation and express the importance why this funding should not be reviewed and—I mean, should go ahead and let our communities access this funding, because it's important. Its—it 'duresses' community-based social and economic development, which recognizes building healthy neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods Alive! is a program that supports and encourages community-driven revitalization efforts in neighbourhoods in Manitoba such as in my own community, The Pas. It addresses areas of employment and training, education and recreation, safety and crime prevention, housing and physical improvements. Also, too, Neighbourhoods Alive! provides community partners to come together and provide the support to revitalize their neighbourhoods, like my hometown of The Pas. This funding recognizes that the best ideas for neighbourhood 'revitalation' comes from the community itself.

So I just wanted to address other resources that are really important under this Neighbourhoods Alive! funding—includes Lighthouses funding. I was—I had the honour to sit as the chair for The Pas Action Centre in The Pas, which is located in the Kelsey Estates housing within The Pas. This basically addresses—provides a youth centre for low-income families, but also provides after-school snacks—healthy snacks for our low-income families. It also addresses activities—healthy activities, such as going out to the lake. There's also boxing classes that children can go to for exercise, and there's also opportunities to attend movies and opportunities to come together as a community, especially with their families.

So, with that, Lighthouse funding is very important in my community. The Pas Action Centre still exists and is still going strong. As former chair for that organization, it's still an honour to be invited to their Christmas dinners and with Santa Claus giving out our gifts for our children.

\*(14:50)

And I also want to share, and put on record, that this program was launched in 2000—year 2000—as a tool to address and develop social and economic strategies to support community-driven revitalization in our neighbourhoods. And 2010, 13 were—designated neighbourhoods, communities, were established, including Thompson, Flin Flon and The Pas.

So, with that, our community has its own vision and history. We have common goals that we want to address, such as addressing the high rates of poverty, unemployment, crime and a lack of family support, recreation and affordable housing and economic opportunities.

So last summer I attended the AGM for The Pas Community Renewal Corporation last year. It was a great event. Community members came together. We had a barbecue, sat and talked about our goals for our community. And, with that, I sat and watched a new board of directors being elected which consisted of local residents, businesses and organizations who can contribute their ideas in achieving our common community goals.

And just last winter, as well—in December—I was invited to attend a community meeting when TPCRC revealed their five-year plan. It was an honour to sit there and watch our community members come together with goals to address community safety, improving housing conditions, employment and training. It was an honour to be a part of that conversation and come—see all our stakeholders come together within the same room with our common goal to come together for the love for our community.

My roots are from The Pas and OCN. I'm always very proud of my community, and I'm always out there to promote our people in our community.

So, with that, I just wanted to talk about the impact and success. It's very important for me that the TPCRC funding keeps—funding will come through for our people. In fact, their Facebook page, the TPCRC states that they strive through advocacy, capacity building, provision of knowledge and sustainable funding from various sources to challenge and empower our residents. And, in fact, there was a public notice which was very disturbing. The TPCRC Small Grants and Housing Fix up Grants programs remain closed at this time. There'll be no intakes for either program until we receive further notice from the Province. And TPCRC would like to thank everyone who has expressed interest in these programs.

And, with that, these programs include—the TPCRC programs that they provide for our town include free skate night, library time with mom and children at our local library, street festivals and such—and so on. Oh, and the Pink Shirt Day, as well, is promoted within our community.

So this is why it's very important to me to stand up for this very important organization who brings our community members together to—for a common goal, to address—oh, and also, I just wanted to put down, more Canada Day celebrations program that they do offer, Writer-in-Residence, The Pas library, green garden and painting projects, downtown sculpture park and Miles of Smiles. And they also fund a juried art show.

So, with that, I just want to stand here as a representative for The Pas. That is very important to me that the Neighbourhoods Alive! funding will go through for all our communities in Manitoba.

Thank you.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge):** I'm happy to be back in session and to rise in the House today to put a few words on the record.

Of course, we're debating this Interim Supply bill. And I assured some of my colleagues in the back row here that I wouldn't raise Costa Rica, so I'll do my best to stay away from mentioning those two words, costa and rica, while I'm up here to speak—*[interjection]* Just Costa Rica, the two words I'm going to try and avoid saying.

As soon as I point this fact out: If you subtracted the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) time in Costa Rica earlier this year out of the equation, then they would've been able to bring their budget in on time at the beginning of the session. Right?

So just going to put those couple words on Costa Rica and then very likely stay away from the subject for the rest of the remarks that I'll put on the record here today.

I wanted to just remind my colleagues in the House today about the Premier and the Cabinet ministers' 20 per cent pay increase. Now, we—I'll make a bit of an admission here. Yes, we've brought it up several times in question period in the session here so far. I will concede that fact. It has come up every day, I believe, this 20 per cent raise, 20 per cent pay increase.

The reason why I bring it up in this context is because we don't really have a chance to dive into it very fulsomely within question period, but we do hear some remarks, some heckling, if you will, when the issue is raised by some of my colleagues about this 20 per cent pay increase that the Premier has rewarded himself—you know, comments that this is, you know, fake or, you know, alternative or, you

know, whatever buzzwords are floating around in social media political sphere these days, are attempted to be thrown at my colleagues when they rightfully point out that the Premier gave himself a 20 per cent pay increase.

But it is actually—it is a fact that there was a 20 per cent increase in pay for the Premier and for the Cabinet ministers from the previous fiscal year, the last fiscal year under the NDP government to the first fiscal year of the Progressive Conservative government under this current Premier. And so there is, in fact, a 20 per cent pay increase.

And we know that in the Estimates process—

**An Honourable Member:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

#### Point of Order

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House leader, on a point of order.

**Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader):** Yes, you know, the member has every right to his own opinion but not his own facts.

Pay for all members is set by a third party, an independent commissioner. Belabouring this business of, you know, other members taking the reins into their own hands is simply not true, and I would like to remind the member of that fact.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader):** I really don't think the member has a point of order here. I distinct—thought I distinctly heard the member say that he was referring to Bill 8, which is what we're discussing here, and all of his comments so far, I think, are relevant to the topic at hand, Bill 8. So there is no point of order.

**Madam Speaker:** It is my view that this is a dispute over the facts and is not a point of order.

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**Mr. Kinew:** Thank you for your wisdom, Madam Speaker.

I know that we're all learning here in the House including, you know, the House leader on the government side. So it's a learning curve, and I'm sure he appreciates as much as I do the insight into

what in fact goes into a point of order or not and, you know, what is factual.

And, when we do talk about what is factual, it is a fact that when you look at the pay for Cabinet ministers and for the Premier (Mr. Pallister), under the last year of the previous government to the new government, there's a 20 per cent increase for the Cabinet ministers, and the percentage increase is even higher for the Premier.

And this is actually not in dispute. I don't think there is a dispute of facts, because we've all handled the, you know, budget documents that illustrate this relatively in a straightforward fashion in black and white. So we do put that on the record.

\*(15:00)

We also point out that inasmuch as, you know, all parties have agreed to take a wage freeze on the base MLA salary this year that that was a voluntary choice, we would point out that the Premier and his Cabinet did have a similar opportunity to voluntarily forgo that increase and they chose not to exercise that option. And, therefore, it is factually correct to say that they are taking a 20 per cent increase.

And the reason why we continue to mention it is, well, you know, we are political creatures, and we know that this is something that strikes many Manitobans as unfair. It strikes many Manitobans as, you know, not making a whole lot of sense when there hasn't been any sort of performance on the part of the government ministers to illustrate that they deserved a 20 per cent increase in pay. But we also raise it because it is a stark contrast to the inaction that this government has taken to alleviate people who are either working poor, to alleviate the financial constraints on many seniors and, of course, the financial burden which is being put on many property owners in Manitoba under this government. So we know that, in his time as opposition leader, the current Premier would often, you know, rail against taxation, and would often talk about, you know, why won't you lower our taxes, and, you know, raise the issue of taxation over and over again. And we know that during the recent election campaign there was a, you know, a lot made of the issue of taxation in our province.

But I would point out, and put on the record today, that the overall tax burden on Manitobans has actually increased under this government. The overall tax burden in Manitoba is higher now under this current government than it ever was under the

NDP. And the reason for that is relatively straightforward in terms of explaining it: they haven't repealed any of the taxes, particularly the provincial sales tax, which they like to mention so often. So they haven't repealed any of the existing taxes. And they've rolled back some of the tax credits, most notably the senior school rebate—school tax rebate. And, of course, we know that property taxes are going up as a result of the de facto cut made to the education budgets in this province.

So, because they haven't rolled back any taxes that are charged across the board in Manitoba, and they have sawed—saw fit to roll back tax credits on seniors while also making funding decisions which have led school divisions to now propose higher rates of property taxation on Manitoba property owners, we can say that the overall tax burden in Manitoba is now higher under this current government. And so that is pretty remarkable because it does bring up the question, you know, what are—what exactly is this government doing?

You know, they've brought this interim appropriation act forward because the budget was not ready to be brought before the House and brought up for debate, and so that raises a lot of questions. We know that they're making cuts. They've cancelled a number of projects which were announced for the health-care system. We know that they made a de facto cut to education funding for the K-to-12 school system in the province. And we also know that, you know, that there are departments across government which have been told to find 15 per cent cuts, just across the board, not targeted, not strategic, not with any sort of plan in mind to help meet the needs of Manitobans now and in the future, but just a rather arbitrary target set by this government and rolled out across the department.

And so we know that they're making cuts, but we not—we're not sure to what end. It doesn't appear that they're interested in living up to all the campaign bluster that they've made about the provincial sales tax. It appears that they're not going to be making much in the way of new announcements or offering new services to Manitobans. So what exactly is going on? And Bill 8, the bill that we're currently debating here, I think, certainly illustrates the inability of this government to get on with governing.

I'd note that, you know, after the election, as is usually the case, this government had a honeymoon period, and you saw that with many local columnists

sort of, you know, inclined to give this government the benefit of the doubt.

But those who watch the media as closely as I'm sure all of my colleagues in the House do will have noticed that the tide has turned. You know, the sentiment has turned amongst many of the columnists in the city, and they're wondering, you know, when will the government get on with the business of governing and when will they actually get on with the business of providing services that Manitobans need, and when will they actually take some positive steps to advance the values of Manitobans.

Because every question period we hear them, you know, complain about the taxation and, you know, tax rates and this and that, but they've allowed the tax burden to increase on Manitobans under their watch.

You know, in question period, we often hear them talk about, you know, the 17 years of this and 17 years of that, and then, you know, some of the very same people will turn around and talk about how they loved, you know, the NDP premier who was in power throughout the early 2000s and mid-2000s.

So it's obvious that there's some confusion there, and there's, you know, a little bit of, you know, flying by the seat of their pants. We know that this government enjoys engaging in partisan political attacks, but apparently it's not equipped to, you know, govern in any meaningful fashion, and we saw that in question period today where much of the heckling, you know, revolved around, you know, the potential political affiliations of certain school division trustees.

*Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

But it was erroneous heckling. In fact, the material that was being shared in the question was attributed to trustees other than the ones that the hecklers were trying to draw attention to.

And so we know that that sort of partisan political attack is, you know, ground well-tread by this government, but what we have yet to see is a plan for Manitobans. What we have yet to see is a positive step that will make a tangible difference in the lives of people in this province. What we have yet to see is, you know, something that Manitobans would be proud of, would look at their government and say, hey, remember that one thing that they did

for that—did for us? We have yet to see anything of that sort from this government.

So, as a result, you know, I believe it's appropriate for us to put scrutiny onto the interim approach—appropriation act, both in terms of the question-answer period, which my colleague from Fort Garry-Riverview and my colleague from Minto so eloquently, you know, articulated many queries about, raising a verisimilitude of different points and, you know, cutting through the conjecture of the ministers who answered their questions.

But, you know, that continues with the debate here. But it's a little surprising, you know, that, you know, the government does not appear interested in debating this bill that they brought forward. You know, there is—you know—should be two sides in this debate, should be a government willing to argue vociferously and strenuously and with great vigour as to the merits of this Bill 8.

I know that the Minister of Health is always eager to speak up for his, you know, government colleagues, but, you know, it would be cool if they did the same for this bill, you know, if they argued and made the point that not only is this Interim Appropriation Act important to continue the services of the government, but also that there's some sort of plan coming someday at some point.

I realize that some of my colleagues on the government side are suggesting that April 11th, budget day, upcoming, will reveal some of these plans, but I don't think so. I'm very doubtful that we'll see much in the way of vision or much in the way of a plan for our province when the budget is tabled.

\* (15:10)

Rather, what I expect to see is austerity, a program of cuts—but, again, cuts made across the board, not strategically, not with any sort of plan for the future.

So, of course, you know, we know that these cuts to Manitobans, these cuts to CancerCare, cuts to community clinics, cuts to personal-care homes, cuts in constituencies like Lac du Bonnet. We know that these cuts will harm people, but we would like to see vision. We would like to see a plan, and we would like to see investment more so than any sort of cuts. So these unnecessarily—these unnecessary delays have real consequences for Manitobans, and for people in the, you know, communities like the one I represent, like in Fort Rouge.

There were, of course, many community organizations who were asking about Neighbourhoods Alive! and about Community Places this year, and—you know, those are just to name a few, but there's been other requests from our community infrastructure grants that, you know, community organizations like, say, the Osborne Village Biz have been asking about because, you know, they know that the proper role of a provincial government is to, you know, make investments in communities, to create jobs, to create growth, to make our communities good places to live, rather than to just engage in an arbitrary program of cuts for the purposes of appealing to your financial backers, as this current government likes to do.

So there was many questions in the community about these programs, and, unfortunately, it looks like the government is content to sit on its hands and not make the investments in communities that would, you know, make our communities a nicer place to live, a good place to live. And we're starting to see real-world impacts of the—this inaction on the part of the government. You know, speaking to people in the construction industry over the past few months, I've been told by many people that they're concerned about their jobs. I've spoken to other people who've been laid off for an extended period of time, and, generally, when you start to hear that sort of chatter from, you know, people who are, you know, working—not just in the industry but, you know, working as the folks who, you know, do the actual, you know, dry walling and do the actual flagging, and the other roles in the industry, it's a—that's certainly a warning sign that our province may be headed into recession or into a period of even slower growth than we've been seeing over the last little while. And, certainly, that's not good.

I know the area that I represent, another one of the early warning signs for a recession that we're seeing is an increased vacancy rate in Osborne Village. We're seeing that, you know, many businesses are moving as a result of, you know, the rent pressures that they face. And we also see that there's, you know, businesses on Osborne that are closing up shop, in fact. And so, when we see those sorts of businesses—you know, the restaurants, the bars, you know, boutique clothing shops, if you will—shutting down, that's certainly a very concerning sign about our provincial economy. It's a warning signal.

Now, I'll quote a line that I remember from a famous national politician. And his words were, quote, economic history teaches us, unquote, that

governments have to maintain spending during periods of economic slowdown to keep the economy moving. Now, do you know which national—renowned national politician that was who shared that bit of economic wisdom? Was it a Tommy Douglas, who's inspired so many people on our side, and who, you know, brought medicare, universal, single-payer health coverage to this country? I'm sure he shared those ethos, but it was not him who said that.

You know, was it somebody like Paul Martin, who served for many years as the Finance minister and as a prime minister for the Liberal Party of Canada? I'm sure he probably appreciated that governments have to spend during periods of economic slowdown. But no, it was not him.

Was it Elizabeth May or a member of the Green Party who shared those words? No, it wasn't even a, you know, a very progressive politician to the left like Elizabeth May. It was actually former Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Mr. Austerity himself, who recognized that governments have to spend money to keep the economy moving during periods of slow growth.

Now, certainly we don't want to see a situation like, you know, what is termed as the lost decade in Japan where they, you know, really experienced an extended period of economic contraction and of slow growth. And that's why we're so concerned about the prospect of these cuts to Manitoba. It's not just because we like getting up and saying cuts every day in the House. It's because we know that when the government makes cuts during a slow period of economic growth that that's going to have real impacts on Manitobans.

Potentially, what we're looking at under this government's, you know, term in office is, you know, dramatic increases to hydroelectricity rates, so people looking at hydro bills are likely going to increase over this government's time in office. We're potentially looking at impacts on the value of properties for property owners in this province, so potentially people looking at their net worth taking an impact because either their home, or perhaps other properties that they own, being negatively impacted by the economic policies of this government.

And, of course, we worry most about jobs, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, because jobs are one of the crucial components of ensuring that economic growth is carried out in a way that is equitable and that is fair. What I mean by that is the following:

When we talk about just growth, economic growth, on its own, we have no assurance that new wealth will actually be distributed fairly across the society, because it may be that a very small segment of the society, let's say 1 per cent of society, may retain all of those new earnings, may retain all of that wealth.

But if we ensure that economic growth is driven by job creation or works in concert with the job-creation plan and many new positions are added to the economy, then we can be assured that that economic growth will be distributed more fairly across this society, right? And so it is important for us to take a look at, you know, the job-growth plan that this, you know, provincial government has yet to propose, and it's important for us to ask the questions as to where is the jobs plan for this government.

Because we know that they're cutting jobs at Hydro. They're making cuts to education funding, which is forcing school divisions to eliminate positions. And we know that this is going to put people out of work in our province, and that's not right. The role of the provincial government right now, if we are, in fact, in a period of slow economic growth or in a downturn—the role for the provincial government should be to keep people working and to keep the economy moving.

And the way that you would accomplish that is by continuing to invest in the public education system so that, you know, of course, teachers can be hired and those positions can be maintained. But other, you know, people who work in the school, you know, system like, say, school resource officers, police officers who work with young people, continue to be employed, or so that, you know, adult crossing guards continue to be employed by school divisions, and you ensure that their investments are made so that these front-line, you know, delivery-deliverers of front-line services will continue to be employed, but also that the people—in this case, the example is the education system—the people who rely on these services, the students, are able to get the education and the care that they need.

\*(15:20)

When we see the health-care system under review, we can only begin to imagine what sort of impact will be had there, right. We know that there are a ton of people working in the health-care system, providing, you know, very good care to Manitobans. We know that Manitobans deserve those services. But we've got real concerns about, you know: one, the quality of care; two, the

economic impact of some of these proposed cuts; and, you know, finally, what the long-term vision is. I would give some credit to the Minister of Health for talking about long-term sustainability. But he merely talks about the issue; he doesn't actually lay out a comprehensive plan to achieve sustainability in the health-care system. So that's definitely something that we're going to be looking at here.

Now, we also have some concerns as to what may be happening in the post-secondary education sphere. In particular, on the capital side, it appears as though there's a lack of investment—lack of investments being made. We know right now that the federal government has earmarked billions and billions of dollars for capital projects across the provincial—across the country.

However, we also are wondering when some of this capital money will be flowing to Manitoba. We know that the current provincial government has not made much in the way of matching capital funds available to post-secondary institutions in the province. And, really, that's a mistake. It's a mistake for a few reasons. First and foremost because students in Manitoba deserve to have state-of-the-art facilities created for them to learn the skills they need to work in the jobs in the future. But, also, we know that, you know, the government is leaving money on the table, as it were. There is this federal stimulus, you know, capital program at—on offer, if you will. And Manitobans aren't getting their fair share of that money. That money is being disbursed in Manitoba at a dramatically lower rate than it is being disbursed to the other provinces, and the reason is because this provincial government is unwilling to make the matching capital contributions.

So, with those few words on the record, I would like to just say thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, for the time. And, of course, you know, welcome back to session. And, you know, miigwech.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows):** You know, it's nice to stand today and put a few words on the record. It's about the importance of the budget, something that we were hoping to see a little bit sooner, rather than later. But suppose we'll be making do with what we have now.

You know, a lot of people and businesses throughout Manitoba were anxiously awaiting this budget. A lot of decisions are being based off this budget, and so we're having to, I suppose, be patient and wait disappointedly for it.



It affects so many things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When I think about health care, first off—you know, first I actually want to clarify something that's been going on in this House during question period. You know, the ministers like to respond to the questions of both the opposition party and our Liberal caucus, saying that the federal politicians have been making cuts to the budget—the health-care budget. This is not true whatsoever. The health-care agreement—the health-care accord, it was a contract. And this contract, it expired in 2014. So, regardless, it wasn't cuts; it was a contract that expired. It's as if you have children, you gave them an allowance, and you said, until you're 12 years old, you're going to make this amount of money, and then, when you're 12, we will revisit it. It doesn't mean it's going to go up. It's a conversation that has to be had. That was the point of the contract. So, to put on record, there was no cuts to the health-care agreement. In fact, the federal government gave more money; they gave an additional 3 per cent.

So I hope to—I hope that everyone on the government side understands this, now, and they stop using that as a defence mechanism.

You know, we also need to start thinking about putting money towards preventative measures. A way we can do this is through youth justice committees. It's a hot topic in the news right now, how incarceration and people in correctional facilities—they're filled to capacity. They're overflowing. There's four or five people bunked in rooms. It's not healthy for people inside of these facilities. So we need to start thinking outside of the box.

You know, something that I'm a strong advocate for are the youth justice committees, and these—this will save money in the long run. You have these facilities set in place and, when a youth has a indiscretion and they need to work through something, this gives them the perfect opportunity to do so. And it's healthy. It allows them to meet with the community. It allows all the parties involved in the incident to feel a little bit safer. Those who may have a track record follow them around, it allows them to have a second chance. You know, it's a great community initiative. And it's ways—it is initiatives like this, if the government would invest, it would save a lot of money in the future.

You know, I think about seniors. Where—the only thing this government has done for seniors so far is say that they're going to implement

2,100 personal-care-home beds. And that's a lot of money. And I'm not necessarily against 2,100 personal-care-home beds, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's so much more that needs to be done. And, frankly, people in this House should be thinking about their futures, having to go into these homes. We need to invest in home care, in assisted living, in palliative care, in retirement homes, in supportive housing homes. Personal-care homes is not the only end place for everyone.

We need to be fair for all Manitobans and start thinking about these initiatives, rather than having seniors end up hospitalized. This is another huge effect that's taking place on the budget. Seniors do not need to end up in hospital beds overnight, and night ins and night outs. You know, it's hard on their respiratory systems. It deteriorates their bones. It is not healthy. They do not need to be there. And that's why this government needs to start thinking about investing funds in other avenues for senior care.

And what about these ambulance services? Mr. Deputy Speaker, during the election, I heard all the time, you know, maybe we'll vote Conservative because they're willing to cut these ambulance fees in half. You know, they finally did 5 per cent, and it just took effect—I believe it was last month or January 1st, so two months ago—and it was a \$25 reduction. That's nothing. Ambulance fees are \$525. The promise was 50 per cent, not 5 per cent. So, when they got elected, they decided, okay, well, how can we bend this a little bit. And so they decided to take it over the course of—was it four years or eights now—no matter the case, if they wanted to meet that 50 per cent quota, 5 per cent isn't cutting it, even with a long-term plan. This government needs to consider seniors. They need to consider people on low income.

You know, I can go down that—I can't go down the road of money being spent and money being taken from new immigrants. Everyone in this House knows how strong of an advocate I am for new immigrants coming to our country, and this new \$500 fee that is being charged towards accepted applicants for the Provincial Nominee Program, it is a cash grab—I'm sorry, Deputy Speaker, but that's what it is. This program ran successfully in the past and there was no \$500 fee. There's no justification for it. And when the minister talks about how it's going to help and smoothen the process—or smoothen the process and ease more applicants to be able to get through it quicker and have their explanations considered further, it makes no sense. How does

money help decipher whether an application should or should not be accepted? How does money—how can this money be justified when it wasn't used in the past and the process worked? It doesn't make sense to me.

And, you know, I just, I hope that this government starts to be a little more attentive to people, to Manitobans, to the other members in this House. There are great ways that this money can be used, and I'm very, very hopeful, and I want to say I'm optimistic, that they will consider it when they release the budget in April.

Thank you.

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Happy to stand in the Chamber and address Bill 8, Interim Supply bill. When you read it, it's of course not exactly riveting legislation, but it performs a very important task in the functioning of a government.

\* (15:30)

I'm glad my colleagues and I are taking time to raise some concerns and, indeed, there is an awful lot to be very concerned about when it comes to what is contained in the interim budget, especially since it is going to lead up to the full budget, which the government has finally, very late in the day, announced will take place on April the 11th of this year. And would appreciate the opportunity to—thank you very much, Mr. Page—appreciate the opportunity just to reflect on a few of the things that will be enshrined in that budget. And I'll pick up where the previous speaker left off, since it is very topical these days—the extra \$500 head tax being imposed on people who simply want to come to Manitoba as an immigrant. That is going to be this government's policy. It's in place now, and it is 180 degrees different from what was happening when we were in office and it's the complete polar opposite of what should be happening.

We are—unless a person is indigenous and their family dates back to time 'immorial', all of us are immigrants, Mr. Acting Speaker, and our province is richer and a more beautiful place for the diversity that immigration has brought to us.

There are, of course, also financial and economic advantages to immigration. The First People who have been here have not been the beneficiaries of all of the human rights that everyone else has benefited from, and yet they continue to welcome people here to Turtle Island. And all of us, whether we are a recent immigrant or a not-so-recent immigrant or

have been here for ages, we all need to be committed to making a significant difference in bridging the gap between the life outcomes of indigenous people and other vulnerable folks who can also be recent immigrants and refugees. And when this government, to my knowledge, has done very little in the way of announcements generally, very little in the way of announcements for indigenous people—and is bringing in a \$500-per-person head tax for any new immigrant, that is a radically different approach that this bill is going to be benefiting from. This extra money—or not extra money—this is the early money leading up to the budget—some of that money is going to be calculated based on the amount of head tax that is being paid by new immigrants.

An additional point of concern, of course, and I raised this today in my very brief member statement, and I'll expand on it a little bit now.

The government is talking out of both sides of its mouth when it comes to the state of the Province's finances. On the one hand, a top priority for this government, for this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and for all the Cabinet ministers, was a 20 per cent pay increase.

I mean, just think about that for a moment, Mr. Acting Speaker. How many people in your constituency will be receiving a 20 per cent pay increase this coming year? How many people are going to have that level of a pay increase enshrined in legislation to last for four years in a row? I could probably get—you know, Wolseley's very diverse. I'm pretty sure I could get unanimous agreement on every door that I go knock on, every single person living there, no matter how old they are, they would probably take a 20 per cent pay increase locked in over four years.

The slight problem with that, Mr. Acting Speaker, is hardly anyone's going to get that. I don't know how many—

**An Honourable Member:** Twelve and a half people.

**Mr. Altemeyer:** You know, 12 and a half people, as my honourable colleague just put it, is going to get that, and if we were to, you know somehow manage to perhaps access information from Stats Canada, and we could sort of see, you know, how—what percentage of Manitobans are actually going to get a 20 per cent pay increase, and that pay increase is going to have to be covered by the Interim Supply bill.

These ministers, this Premier (Mr. Pallister), they're going to be paid that extra amount. This Interim Supply bill is going to have to cover that extra amount, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I wonder, if we were to access Stats Canada data, we could maybe take a guess or find out how many people from one year to the next had their salaries increase by 20 per cent. If it was 130 people—you know, if it was 130 people in the whole province that would be one out of 10,000. If it ends up being only the front bench of this government, that's only one person out of every hundred thousand Manitoba residents who are going to get that kind of a pay increase.

And, you know, we point out that this Premier is representing the interests of only the 1 per cent. We may have to amend our language a little bit and point out that, you know, he's only representing the interests of the 0.0001 per cent when it comes to these types of decisions and priorities.

I also don't know how many folks are going to be able to get eight weeks of vacation in a single year. The Interim Supply bill will be paying the Premier when he is away for, you know, up to eight weeks, two months of paid work. I think yet again I might be going out on a limb here, Mr. Acting Speaker. I kind of think the residents of Wolseley might be unanimous in agreeing that eight weeks of paid vacation would be pretty good, especially if they didn't have email. You know, if they didn't have to do any work while they were on vacation in terms of answering emails, I think I could probably get a pretty large majority of Wolseley residents to agree that it's a pretty sweet deal, and it's something that the vast majority of individuals and families in Manitoba are quite simply outraged about, and they absolutely deserve to be outraged.

For the government, out of one side of its mouth to be saying that the No. 1 priority, the first hand out is the hand of this Premier and these Cabinet ministers to get a pay increase that is unheard of for practically every other Manitoban. And for the Premier to take it one step further and rub salt in wounds and say he's going to be away for up to eight weeks, get paid and not do much work while he's away, but Manitobans are going to have to stay here and work hard to be able to afford that extra salary increase, that is not sitting well with my constituents, I can assure you. It is not sitting well with anybody else in Manitoba outside the bubble of the Cabinet room in the front hall there of the Manitoba Legislature.

And the Premier's going to hear about it, and the Cabinet ministers are going to hear about it, and they deserve to hear about it, especially, Mr. Acting Speaker, when they want the Interim Supply bill to pass so that those salary increases can be paid. And out of one side of their mouth, that's their top priority—it's one of the few things this government has actually increased the funding for—and out of the other side of their mouth, they're saying cuts have to happen practically everywhere else. Health care's being cut. Education's being cut. Community Places grants were cut.

I mean, my goodness, Community Places—and I talked about this as well in my member's statement earlier today. Every single member of this Chamber, you go look in the historical records of Community Places, it's the program that survived multiple governments, multiple different political stripes. Filmon did it; we did it. You come all the way through, up to the current situation, and it's this government which cancels the funding for it, even though it benefited communities in every single corner of the province. Every single MLA, every single year would have community organizations—your schools, your child-care centres, your places of worship, your community clubs, whoever it may be—would be able to apply for funding and would get the grants, which would not cover the full cost. The community groups would have to do fundraising; part of that's a part of their contribution; could be covered off by in-kind work, in-kind donations, including hours worked by volunteers, in order to be able to access a Community Places grant. But every single MLA in this room would be able to go to their constituency and celebrate, celebrate with the community groups and honour the work that they had done to improve the community for everyone else who lived there. And this government took that away from 1.3 million Manitobans.

\* (15:40)

It was an absolutely dumb decision. It has hurt Manitoba already. We're already seeing the employment impacts of this government's policies, and my colleagues who've spoken to this bill previously have touched on this, and I commend and thank them for doing it, because not everyone realizes that everywhere that these projects take place, every time government is investing money into the future of the province, that means jobs are being created; that means unemployment is being reduced; that means training opportunities, on-the-job training opportunities, for mentorship is being

created. And, when you cancel a good project like Community Places, it's a slap in the face to everyone's volunteer spirit in Manitoba and to everyone who wants a reasonable opportunity to make a difference.

I've met with dozens of local agencies recently just in my own constituency. I've lost track of the number of them who have Community Places application grants ready to go. They filled out the form, they had their quotes, all the rest of it ready to go, and they've got no place to send it because paying the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the Cabinet ministers 20 per cent more money, that's more important than a daycare centre being able to repaint the walls or fix up the doors that aren't shutting properly the way that they might like, and a host of other things.

And that's just one program, and it's a relatively small program. A few million dollars a year, it would leverage many more times that size every single year, and—but that's just one stark contrast between the priorities of this Premier and his government and the real lives of Manitobans.

We can also look at the enormous cuts that have happened on the health-care front. Just before I get to that, another really important point that I think needs to be emphasized: Because this government is bringing in their budget so late—April 11th—that is causing an enormous amount of hardship for community organizations and others who, of course, operate on the fiscal year. And a lot of these community groups that I've spoken to are trying very, very hard to get some indication from this government what's going to happen to their funding. They do not know whether the government's going to continue their funding at the current level, whether it's going to be increased, whether it's going to be decreased, whether it's going to get cut altogether.

So what on earth is a community group supposed to do when their fiscal year runs out on March 31st? They have no additional sources of money from the government coming for the first part of April. They have no indication of what's going to happen to their budget when the government does bring it down, whether they are going to get the support or not. So how are they supposed to pay wages and keep the lights on and keep doing the good work that they're doing when the government's not doing their job of even giving them a straight answer of what their future is going to behold?

That is just an incompetent handling of the budget cycle, and that lies squarely at the feet of this government. I don't know how the Premier feels that that type of performance merits a 20 per cent pay increase for his Finance Minister or anybody else. If you aren't going to bring in a budget before the end of March when the fiscal year ends, you need to, at the very least, be communicating to the people who are asking you perfectly legitimate questions. You need to be answering those questions and giving people some indication so they can do their due diligence, so they can plan for the next stage of their organization's life and the work that they're trying to do.

The government wants to bring in the budget late; that is, of course, their prerogative, but they have a moral obligation to actually work with the people that they're supposed to be supporting so that they can do their side of the work as well, and this government just simply hasn't done it.

The government's Interim Supply bill is interesting because they have wasted money in some very interesting places. The Boston Consulting Report comes to mind. You know, this was a—this was a doozy. There's just no other word for it. We found out, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the government opposite had asked for this report on the future of energy use in Manitoba and taking a look at Manitoba Hydro, and we could not get anyone, the Premier, the higher paid Premier, at his 20 per cent premium, the 20 per cent more expensive Minister for Crown Services, could not get either one of them to admit in this Chamber how much money they had actually spent on that report, asking an American company what should the future of a Crown corporation in Manitoba be.

Now why does this sound familiar to New Democrats and indeed all Manitobans? Well, this is exactly the same pattern that the previous Conservative government did around health care, and the current Premier was a member of that government when they did this. They hired a high-priced American consultant, the Connie Curran report, come on up here and show us how to completely screw up our health-care system, and they got paid millions of dollars.

Well, we finally did get an answer through some very good work that my colleagues did at committee. The answer on how much this report from Boston Consulting on Manitoba's energy future didn't come from any of the supposedly accountable ministers. It

didn't come from the supposedly accountable, more higher priced Premier. It came from Hydro officials. We had a meeting with the Hydro officials in committee, and they had the integrity to give a straight answer, and it was \$4.3 million—\$4.3 million—to the Boston Consulting Group to tell Manitoba, of all places, what? Well, did we get 4.3 million dollars' worth of good advice? That—okay, let's see. Let's put that out there as a possibility. Maybe, just maybe, there is an American for-profit consulting firm that could give Manitoba over \$4 million of good advice on what to do with our energy future. So what did they provide to us? They provided absolutely no new information whatsoever; everything in their report was already publicly available.

Did they visit any of the northern communities? Did they visit any of the affected communities? No, they did not. And, lo and behold, what conclusion did they reach? They said—wait for it—Manitoba should use more fossil fuels in its future. More fossil fuels; yes, that's a great answer. Why are we not surprised? You know, stroke of genius.

I could sit, you know, in my living room, on my laptop—I will give the government a \$4.2-million report which says actually green energy and energy efficiency is the way to go, ship it off to them. I'll look forward to getting my cheque in the mail. I'll throw all the money into the Community Places Program, Mr. Acting Speaker, because that report was a complete political sham from the get-go.

The company quite clearly has no understanding of Manitoba's energy system, has no comprehension of what we can actually do for the world and for our neighbours with our clean energy exports. If only we had a government that wasn't stuck in a fossil-fuel future for this province.

And the kicker for many of us, on this side of the House, Mr. Acting Speaker, was the previous government had been critiqued on a few occasions about which contracts should get tendered and which ones should not. People can make their own opinions up on that, but you would think, if—when they were in opposition, they thought it was important to criticize on the tendering of contracts, well, they would probably try to demonstrate that they were going to live up to their own accusations when they were in government.

So we also asked the question, on multiple occasions, in this very room, on question period days, over and over again: Was this contract

tendered? And they refused to answer the question. Lo and behold, we found out later on, no, it was not, thanks to the good work that my colleagues did at committee.

So we have a government, just to recap once again, which feels that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) getting more money, and the Minister for Crowns getting more money, and the Finance Minister getting more money is a top priority, but providing 4-plus million dollars—over \$4 million—to a consulting company to provide bad advice, in an untendered contract, that that was a good use of money. And, meanwhile, Manitobans need to deal with multiple cuts that have either already taken place or have been announced and are about to take effect when the Interim Supply bill and the budget that follows hits them where it hurts the most.

So, quite clearly, we can see that it is not a lack of money that this government is struggling with; it is a lack of a moral compass when it comes to serving the true needs of Manitobans.

\* (15:50)

And let's just look at what has happened in, oh, education, just this year. Let's just take a quick peek here. For those who may not recall, our government's commitment to Manitobans was that, at a minimum, we would increase the funding that was going to the K-to-12 education system by at least the same percentage as what the economy had grown that same year. So, if the economy grew at 2 and a half or 3 per cent, let's say it was 3 per cent, we would increase funding for education at 3 per cent. That was a minimum. We met and exceeded that commitment every single year that we were in office.

Fast-forward to a few weeks ago, where this government brought in their first education announcement, and, lo and behold, funding for 20 out of 37 school divisions is actually going down. The property tax increases that are being contemplated are already significant. And this, again, takes us back to the Filmon era. One of the legacies of the Filmon Conservative government, which our high-priced Premier was a member of, is that the property taxes increased by 60 per cent, 60 per cent property income tax—or property tax increase on average in Manitoba.

Now, why was that? Was that because the school divisions suddenly went on one of these wild spending sprees that members opposite like to accuse pretty much everyone but themselves of doing? No,

no, and in that there wasn't any particular calamitous event that happened; instead, what happened, was—like, there wasn't any sort of single disaster, there weren't a whole bunch of schools that suddenly sank into the swamp and needed to be replaced—but, lo and behold, what the Filmon Conservatives did is they tried to balance the books on the backs of school divisions. And they cut education funding or they froze education funding year after year after year. And, lo and behold, the school divisions did the right thing and said, you know what, we need to actually be educating people, we need to be supporting teachers in the classroom, we need to be supporting children with special needs, we need to be doing all of the great work that a reasonable, modern society would expect its school system to accomplish. And so they did the right thing, and they raised taxes the only way that they can, and that was to crank up the property taxes.

This government is trying to claim that, you know, it's being fiscally responsible despite all the money they're throwing around into the things that they do care about. And, meanwhile, all they're doing is forcing the school divisions to step up to the plate and once again cover their mistake. And it is a huge mistake. If you do not invest in education, you are not investing in your future. And we can see from this government's actions how little they care about the future of this province.

The other area that we can take a quick look at, Mr. Acting Speaker, with the time that I have left, would be in health care. Already, this government has announced \$1 billion in cuts to health-care capital projects.

And my own constituents are very disappointed about this, because one of the ideas that we had put forward on the table was to have a new small QuickCare clinic established in the West End of Winnipeg. That was part of our campaign announcement. My colleague from Minto and my then-colleague from St. James. All our constituents and more would have benefited from this. We would have been able to see lots more people be able to stay out of the emergency rooms and be able to go to a QuickCare clinic and get the services that they needed in a faster and closer-to-home manner, which also probably would have cost the system a lot less money because the hospital and the emergency rooms, those are going to be the most expensive part of your health-care system. That project, of course, was not picked up by this government; that's not happening.

They've even gone so far as decide that they are cancelling the CancerCare Manitoba facility that we had committed to be a full partner on. Now, for a government to actually say to Manitobans that, on the one hand, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) needs to be paid more money, we need to give more money to a foreign private consulting firm—firm to give us bad advice, but there isn't money for your loved one to be able to get the best services possible at a CancerCare facility. That's a pretty stark contrast that Manitobans are not going to be forgetting any time soon.

The other one—I mean, there're so many cuts that have been announced here by this government already, but another one that certainly leaps out is their complete lack of attention to personal-care homes. Here we had, on the one hand, a government in waiting that was claiming they were going to be, you know, able to wave some magic wand and build a miraculous number of personal-care homes and meet the need that was there, and all they've done so far is cancel a project that was scheduled for Lac du Bonnet—no indication of how it is that they actually plan on doing what they had said they would do.

And I think this actually leads me to my concluding statements, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that this government, we have to remember, did not run on an election platform of cuts. When the Finance Minister stood up today during question period and said that he had received a mandate from the Manitoba people to do all of these hurtful things that his government is doing, he is fundamentally mistaken. This is a government which threw up advertisement after advertisement after advertisement about how they were going to protect public services, how there would not be layoffs, how there would not be cuts.

That is the mandate that they ran on. That is not the mandate that they are implementing, not even remotely close to it. It's—it was a classic bait-and-switch marketing campaign, Mr. Acting Speaker. And the tragedy is that Manitobans are the ones who are suffering the most already and who are going to continue suffering while this Premier and his Cabinet ministers continue to operate in secret, continue to put their own private, individual, personal interests and welfare first and continue to cut programs that have been working so very well, which are clearly needed and which Manitobans deserve to have.

And it remains to be seen whether the Manitoba people, whether the voting public will forgive them

for their transgressions which are mounting up every single day, more and more of them all the time, their lack of disclosure, their Premier's (Mr. Pallister) inability to answer even simple questions about why is he away so much, and when is he going to be away, and how can he claim that a 20 per cent pay increase is a wage freeze locked in for four years.

But Manitobans are going to remember, and we are going to be very happy to remind them of the mistakes that this government is making, the promises that they made during the election, which they have fundamentally shattered, and the revisionist history that they are attempting to foist on everyone from here on. That is our job in opposition. Our job is to dig out the truth and to provide it for the public to consider what should happen next a few years from now

So thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to the Interim Supply bill, and I'll now turn the floor over to my next hard-working colleague.

Thank you.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I rise today to speak on the interim appropriation bill, which, is my understanding—and forgive me, I'm relatively new and inexperienced with all this—is a bill that's required because the government hasn't figured out how to get their budget ready yet, that we need to do something in the interim to make sure the lights stay on and the bills get paid.

But, in the meantime, let's talk a little bit about—

**An Honourable Member:** No budget last March.

**Mr. Lindsey:** My colleague off on the other side is calling about a budget last March. I don't know; I wasn't here last March, so I'm not going to address those comments any further.

\* (16:00)

But I'll talk about what's missing. And I listened to my friend from Wolseley talk a little bit about things that are missing, that this government ran on a certain mandate and got elected on a certain mandate that they've long since abandoned and have decided to do exactly that, which, during the election, the NDP had suggested that they might do. That, based on past history of what we've seen from previous Conservative governments, that it was a question of running with scissors. And, lo and behold, here we are talking about the present PC government. They've got their scissors out, they're sharpening them up as we speak, and we get accused of fear

mongering, because we like to shed light on the fact of what they've done previously and what they might do again. And here we are.

We're already without a budget in place. We've already seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker—we've already seen—cuts. People in my own constituency, for example, have seen and felt cuts already when it comes to northern patient transfer. Now, this government has never made an official announcement about any cuts to northern patient transfer, and yet people of Cranberry Portage will tell you a much different story: that there has been cuts to what they had previously received, to that which they had been entitled to for many years, which this government has now said they're not entitled to anymore.

I guess open and transparent is a term that this government likes to use. Much like in discussions we had on previous bills, they use words that don't really mean what we used to think they meant. And, certainly, open and transparent, with the connotations from this government, don't mean what people take them to mean because they do things behind the curtain, behind the secret wall that we don't get to see.

So what else has already been changed with Manitoba? Northern patient transfer, which particularly affects people from the North—one would have thought that health care and the ability to access it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would have been a universal right guaranteed under the Charter. With the cuts that this government has already secretly put in place, that is not the case. Someone, for example, that suffers from a condition known as lymphedema, which I believe we just had the other day—the lymphedema day. Now, if you lived in Flin Flon and required treatment for this disease, you would discover that it's not available in Flin Flon. You would discover that, if the lymphedema had been caused by cancer—which, apparently, and I'm not a doctor, it many times is an outcome from cancer treatment—that travel to a southern location for treatment would, in fact, be covered under northern patient transfer. However, this government has decided that if the lymphedema that you're suffering from was caused by anything else other than that, well, you should just suffer or be well off enough to pay for your own transportation because there's still no treatment for it in Flin Flon.

So this government is making sure that health care is not a guaranteed right under the Charter for people that live in the North. Now, imagine if you

lived further north—somewhere that had less accessibility. What are they cutting out from that?

We see in a memo from the CEO of the Northern Health Region that the government, prior to releasing any budget, without releasing any secret reports that they've got, has decided that the Northern Health Region has to cut \$6 million from its budget. Now, my understanding from conversations I've had with the CEO is northern patient transfer was already well in excess of the budget, which tells me the budget wasn't nearly high enough, because a lot of people in the North, as has—have been pointed out by innumerable speakers before me, suffer from ill health due to the lack of clean water, the lack of actual things that the rest of us take for granted. So now one more thing that the rest of us take for granted they will not be able to take for granted, and that's access to health care.

It's my understanding part of the issue with the coverage is probably related to something called Jordan's Principle, whereby the federal government, the federal Liberal government, pays to fly First Nations people from the North to doctor appointments, health care, in the south. However, what they fail to do is pay for them to go home, which seems somewhat ludicrous to me, but apparently that is the case that's been explained to me by the CEO, which then, of course, leaves the northern patient transfer on the hook to make sure that those folks can actually get back home again. And, following along with my understanding of Jordan's Principle, that is as it should be, but then the federal government is supposed to reimburse the Province, or they should at least be able to come to some understanding about what that number is, but that doesn't take place.

So now, where they're being told that they won't cover the cost of any uninsured thing, which that would be one of those instances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they won't cover—so now what happens to people? They get flown to Winnipeg to see a doctor. How do they get home? I don't hear any bright lights on the side opposite beaking off now about what that should be, so I guess they're just supposed to be left on the streets of Winnipeg.

Just while we're talking about northern patient transfer, there's somewhat of a strange anomaly that also happens with anybody and everybody that accesses that service, which is designed to make health care not equally available to everyone in the province, but more equitably available. If you get on

the airplane in Flin Flon or Thompson, and are lucky enough to be able to afford the \$75 that northern patient transfer has negotiated with Calm Air to get the flight there and the flight back, which is a good deal, because normally it's \$1,500 to fly to Winnipeg and back. But if, for some reason, which happens more often than not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the plane doesn't fly back on the designated day, well, now you're left with a hotel bill that northern patient transfer doesn't cover, which is all right if you had one of those good union-paying jobs that this government is so fervently working to destroy, but if you didn't have any kind of coverage, now you're on the hook for \$100 hotel bill, plus some meals, that northern patient transfer won't cover.

The other thing is with this \$75-return-flight deal with northern patient transfer is, if something happens to that flight, you may not be guaranteed a seat on the next flight. So, once again, now you're on the hook to get yourself home.

So, while this government is talking about the need to cut, cut, cut the budget for northern patient transfer, in fact, once you start actually talking to people that need the service, that use the service, there is actually a need to increase the budget, not cut it.

\*(16:10)

But, yet, this government is going to cut it. They've directed the Northern Health Region to cut that budget, which will, in fact, be a cut to front-line services. Oh, wait a minute, I thought this government promised during the election that there would be no cuts to front-line services. So does it mean it's not a cut if they just cut the budget and somebody else makes the cut?

I think that perhaps that is just plain silly, which perhaps maybe that's what this government's mandate is, is we didn't do it, somebody else did it. We just took the money away from them; they're the ones that cut it.

While we're still talking about health care and no cuts to front-line services, one of the other interesting things I noted in the memo that I saw from the management of the Northern Health Region was that they recognize there's a significant shortage already of front-line health-care workers in the North. But now, if someone phones in sick for their shift, they won't be replaced because that will save money.

So could someone in the government explain how that will enhance health care in the North? Well,



okay, they never promised to enhance health care. Can they, you know, just explain how that's not going to be a cut to front-line health care? Can they explain how that's not going to be a cut to front-line health services, because when the health-care aide that normally comes and tends to someone in that hospital bed isn't there—guess what—somebody doesn't get the care that they need? Somebody doesn't get the care that they should be entitled to.

But this government in its ruthless objective of balancing the books is going to make sure that people in the North don't receive adequate health care, that they're going to cut that front-line service to people that so desperately need it.

So let's, well, you know, it's—*[interjection]*—one of the folks off on the side is beaking off about enthusiasm. It's really tough to get enthusiastic about something like this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the cuts that we see in the North in particular are not something to be enthused about, and I think it's somewhat of a shame that perhaps the members opposite think it is something that they should be enthused about.

So, you know, their—let's move on from health care. Let's talk about some of the grant programs, that they haven't officially been cut; they just haven't been awarded. People that are depending on those senior centres trying to do renovations to keep the doors open so that seniors have a place to go so that they can stay in their homes longer, thereby helping to reduce health care, that they can stay active, can stay connected, can stay a part of a vibrant community.

I've sat with people from the Snow Lake senior centre, for example, helped them fill out the application for a grant that may or may not ever come. It's not going to be a very healthy outcome for seniors in the North. *[interjection]* I see the minister opposite saying that that's a federal grant. And, you know, they actually applied for a provincial grant, but I wouldn't expect the minister to know that. So—but perhaps she can study up on it and find that out.

So, you know, there's different grants that people are waiting to hear the outcome of, and they're waiting and waiting and waiting. Things for communities that they were expecting to be able to announce, construction projects and putting bids out. The bid process is now held up because they don't know if they're going to get funding. Normally, the funding announcements were made long before now, either yea or nay, and, certainly, every group that

requested funding from a grant wasn't successful at it, but at least they knew the answer so they could move on. Now, they sit in limbo and wait while this government decides—or doesn't decide—who's going to benefit and who isn't. And, certainly, while we're talking about things in the North, I think we've seen already this government's lack of commitment to the North.

Churchill comes to mind. That 100 workers—10 per cent of their workforce—laid off, the provincial government seems to be somewhat silent on anything for those folks.

There's a rail line that runs from The Pas to Churchill, passing through so many communities that we talked about the other day in this House, that has been reduced from two days a week to one day a week, driving up food costs, making healthy food less available, which will, in the long term, drive health care costs up while this government is cutting spending on health care. But there's been no offer from the government to help out with anything on that rail line. There's been no offer to help out with any of those communities that are so dependent on that rail line. Just silence. They haven't stepped up.

Mining communities in the North are struggling. Flin Flon 777 mine is nearing the end of its productive life. Has the government done anything to help out with exploration? Not that I've heard. Have they entered into any discussions with mining companies, large or small, to try and find the next mine? Not that I've heard. Now, that's not to say that they haven't had conversations with mining companies; I'm sure they probably have. They just haven't heard any good news about the things that they're going to do to help out those communities.

Now, we've started having some meetings in those communities amongst the working groups and met with some of the leadership of those communities to try and map out what the future of, say, a city like Flin Flon might be, because the people are not willing to abandon the future, as this government seems so willing to abandon the future of people in the North.

So far what we've seen from them is, well, an ever-changing name of a plan. I think the latest version is—let me think, now, for a minute. Oh, Look North. Look North, that's what it is. The only thing we've really seen from that is they've got a—I suppose some would say a flashy website. And they've talked about tourism. Of course, if you're going to promote

tourism, you need to promote services that tourists expect, like, I don't know, high-speed Internet.

I heard from a community, South Indian Lake. It has two Internet service providers at present. One of them is abandoning ship and pulling out. The other one, that the federal Competition Bureau has said should step up their presence, is so expensive that the health centre, the school, the band office will soon not be able to afford their service.

\* (16:20)

Has the government made any suggestions other than jumping on board to make sure that Manitoba telephone—MTS—got sold to Bell, which—I guess that will make us more equal than the North because we'll probably all pay more for less with that thing, that banding together, that lessening of competition that this government was all in favour of. So I don't see that as being a benefit for any of us. I don't see that as being a benefit for tourists. I don't know exactly how they think that tourism will flourish when tourists want to be connected.

How about industry? Does modern industry rely on telecommunications, on the ability to have Internet, cellphones? I mean, I look around the House and, certainly, many members are conducting business on their cellphones every day of the week because they have service here.

If you, like I do sometimes, travel to the far-flung stretches of my particular riding, you can leave your cellphone at home because there is no service, so tourism won't flourish unless somebody does something to step up and try and make sure that cellphones work as well in the North as they apparently do in this House.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a shame that we don't see plans from this government for the North. We've seen some plans from this government to cut spending on things like seniors' homes. There was some articles from the Flin Flon Reminder that I introduced in the House, I believe it was—it was the last sitting—where, shortly after this government came to power they indicated to the local newspaper that Hemlock seniors' apartments was proceeding.

Then there was a much later article, again in the Reminder, where no, it's not proceeding, and we haven't seen anything from this government officially to say that yes, it's a go, that seniors housing in Flin Flon is critical. If we want those communities in the North to retain population, the government—the provincial government needs to

ensure that services are available for people. If we don't build senior centres that are—or seniors' housing that's sorely needed in a community like Flin Flon, in a community like Snow Lake, people will be forced to leave, further decimating the population of communities that are already in trouble with industry leaving.

It would be nice to be able to attract young people to those communities, and I know in my own community of Flin Flon, there are people there that have ideas and want to see their ideas flourish and grow. They can't do it with the absence of a government committed to the North, and, yet, that's what we see, and some of those people are still trying to proceed, and through their determination, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they will convince this government to proceed or, hopefully, in three years, they will have less of a challenge convincing the new NDP government, at that point in time, to proceed with those worthwhile projects that will make sure that the North stays vibrant and active.

So we talk in this House about who has succeeded under this government. Well, certainly, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the ministers saw their pay increase by somewhat more than the rate of inflation, because last time I looked, the rate of inflation wasn't anywhere close to 20 per cent.

So what about people on minimum wage? Has the government at any point in the last year since they've been in power said to those folks, who are often left to wonder where their next meal is coming from, that their rate will at least go up by the rate of inflation? No, not a word. The only word was: You get zero. No increase for you; it's all for us. Too bad for you. It's—that's cold-hearted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to think that the sense of entitlement is so bad that they should get 20 per cent while poor, single mothers; part-time workers; people trying to feed their families; people trying to send their kids to school have to settle for zero. That's so shameful.

It's certainly not just the North that's seen this government cut. I mean, some of their own members—Lac du Bonnet has seen a seniors home cut from their budget, schools that need to be built so desperately so that kids can get a decent education not being built—not being built—by this government. Their plan is exactly as we were so afraid during the election and tried to point out to people, but people didn't believe that this government would be so similar to the previous PC government. Filmon Fridays: I don't know what we'll call the forced days

off that this government is contemplating for workers—

**An Honourable Member:** More like the Sterling Lyon government.

**Mr. Lindsey:** Well, perhaps maybe it will be more like the Sterling Lyon government. That can be our certain hope that they will only be here for one term like the Sterling Lyon government was, and, certainly, as the citizens of this fine province of ours come to realize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government's heartless attack on the people that need the government to be there on their side the most, this probably will be a one-term government only.

You know, I could go on for so much longer about what's missing: health, seniors, the North, transportation, on and on. You know, I look at my own riding in Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, South Indian Lake. All those communities need so much, Mr. Deputy Speaker—so much—that they're not getting from this government, that this government has no plan—no plan—whatsoever, for the North. Tourists are not going to go and fill those high-paying jobs that are abandoning the North that this government is doing nothing about. And that's too bad.

So it—as my time comes to an end here, I thank you for the time to put a few words out there and—

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

**Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook):** This government continuously damages all the bridges I've been trying to build. I've been advocating for leadership to be invited to any table, even though this instills fear in me.

I'm asking politicians to come to the communities. That is very scary, especially when I think of when Edna Nabess was campaigning in my constituency. She had actually gone into several reserves claiming that I was not from Kewatinook and was only caught and was gently reprimanded by my aunt when—who was the chief at the time—reprimanded her and said, you know, please quit going on with this story, because she's my niece, and she is from St. Theresa Point First Nation. And so that kind of dialogue, you know, doesn't set a great—not a solid foundation for this government to continue on. I'm tired of the burning of the bridges.

\* (16:30)

I'm the only one I know in Kewatinook that has a family doctor. Our health record is dismal. These cuts are hurting us on so many levels. I'm sure every father in here was able to be present at the birth of their own children. This is not the case in Kewatinook. We cannot afford the plane rides. We used to be able to let the fathers come and join the women when they were giving birth by way of being the escort. And that only compounds the fact that you have to leave when you're eight months pregnant, come and live in the city for an entire month as you await for your child to come.

There are so many fronts that we need more support on. And we need suicide prevention. We need funding for those to be—so that we're not having so much costs on our health-care system. And I can go on and on about the failures of this current government. But I am really hopeful still, 150 years now hopeful, that issues that indigenous communities face will be finally addressed and possibly rectified.

And I just wanted to say I still hold my hand out in support. I am still trying to engage and to make our most vulnerable people believe in what this House represents and the laws that we can put forth today in hopes that we can bring everybody at least to a level on par with the rest of Canada. Thank you.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Excuse me. Just to let everyone know, for the House to know, that the honourable interim Leader of the Opposition has given Fort Garry-Riverview—the member from Fort Garry-Riverview unlimited time to speak. So this has been the notice. Okay.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Logan is one of the most diverse communities in Manitoba. Logan constituency is home to big and small industries, businesses, workplaces, institutions of learning, health-care facilities, arts and culture.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

It is a community populated by many residents who are multi-generational, talented, creative. Of late, it is also a community where there are residents who are newly arrived refugees or citizens who are marginalized or needing support because they have health challenges, physical disabilities or mental health issues.

Those are my constituents whom I'm very proud and thankful to represent, and for whom I wish to serve to the best of my ability in my capacity, while I can, as their elected member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, in the Logan constituency are several schools, health-care facilities, personal-care homes, daycare centres. It is also the home base for organizations such as Rossbrook House, United Way, Welcome Place, Siloam Mission and the Youth for Christ organization.

Speaking of Youth for Christ, I saw a for sale sign in front of their property the other day when I was passing by that place. Youth for Christ is an organization which received millions of funding from both the City of Winnipeg and the Harper government, despite strong reservations expressed by several members of the Aboriginal community. Youth for Christ presented a compelling business plan, and in its application for federal funding it stated that they are very intentional on addressing the growing needs of the Aboriginal youth.

Many community leaders have questioned the veracity of their Aboriginal youth programming. Time and time again, Madam Speaker, community programming should be arrived at through meaningful consultations with the communities themselves. This consultation process cannot be omitted, and a bottom-up implementation approach has always worked well with target communities.

Back to community organizations, Madam Speaker. In my constituency, many of these organizations offer the city, provincial and federal governments cost-effective ways of providing services to targeted communities. Talk of value-for-money operations, organizations funded by Neighbourhoods Alive! come to mind. Sadly, though, the Conservative government does not seem to connect the dots on these.

Did the Pallister government seriously evaluate these community programs and found them not working as originally intended to be before they paused funding for Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places?

Now we're debating the Interim Supply, which is Bill 8. We are confronted with the prospect that not only basic government expenditures will be taken care of by this bill—if we were debating the budget, however, we will be debating and considering provisions for the whole business of governing

provincially. We, as members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, have a critical task of taking this government to account, and making sure that this government is taking seriously and diligently their responsibilities to all Manitobans, and not just a small and privileged group.

And so, Madam Speaker, we bemoan the lack of urgency on the part of the Conservative government to provide Manitobans at the earliest opportunity the financial blueprint that will impact their livelihood and quality of life. Why is it taking them so long to present a budget? The House recessed on December 1st and resumed March 1st, a good three months' respite. Understandably, give or take a rest of one month to attend to personal and family affairs is understandable. And, after that, proceed—or, start the business of governing after a month's break. What happened during those two months? Or where were the leadership on those two months?

Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we are disappointed to see this government delay their budget unnecessarily and had to resort to Bill 8—or these measures on Bill 8. These unnecessary delays have real consequences for Manitobans. I have earlier referenced programs like Neighbourhoods Alive! and Community Places that rely on this funding, are now faced with more doubt and uncertainty as they wait for the budget.

\* (16:40)

What's more, Madam Speaker, because the government has chosen April 11th as budget day, this means there is at least an 11-day delay between the end of this fiscal year and budget release date. This will cause more difficulty and strain on organizations who will have to find new funds to cover government delay.

As a result of this government's delay, these organizations and programs will be left scrambling to pay their employees or even just keep the lights on. We want to see this government stop stalling and start governing with focus, commitment and transparency for all Manitobans. This means reversing massive cuts to our health-care system, cuts to CancerCare in Winnipeg, cuts to personal-care homes in Winnipeg and in Lac du Bonnet, cuts to community clinics in The Pas and Thompson, cuts to community clinics in St. Vital and St. Boniface.

With regards to the CancerCare building—or the additional CancerCare building, the CancerCare foundation board had done extensive fundraising

with the private sector, has already bought the land with their own funds and trusted the new government will appreciate the critical importance of the additional CancerCare facility in responding to the increased demands from Manitobans and their families, especially for those individuals, those Manitobans who have been diagnosed with the dreaded C disease.

Madam Speaker, this—there had been reports that were contracted, but this means—but the release of these reports have not been forthcoming. The government should release their fiscal performance review, so Manitobans can actually see it. They should release their KPMG health review so Manitobans can see what they paid for.

Manitobans have spent millions of dollars on the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) reviews, and he claims that he will base his budget on these reviews. But he won't show these reviews to Manitobans before the budget. That's because he's more concerned about himself than the needs of Manitobans.

What we've seen so far from the Premier is worrisome. Rather than making smart investments in health and education, rather than making sure life is affordable for families, rather than taking a balanced approach to the economy, the Premier is only focused on cuts: layoffs and deep cuts to important services like health care and education and severe, long-term consequences that will hurt Manitobans.

The Premier should stop going in the wrong direction and reverse his damaging obsession with cuts. The Premier, a few weeks ago, even hinted that Filmon Fridays may come back. I was working in the '90s when the Conservative government legislated reduced workweek. It was an imposed hardship for many like me who needed that one-day pay each week. It is a telling coincidence the now-Premier, who was then a Cabinet minister of the Conservative government when Filmon Fridays was imposed 24 years ago, are even thinking of bringing back this hardship on many Manitoba workers.

This afternoon, I ask the Premier if he would reverse his disparaging remarks on new immigrants or nominees under the nominee program, and I didn't hear that the Premier will apologize to these new Canadians.

I even heard statements that the Premier didn't say those disparaging remarks, but I have the transcript of Hansard wherein the Premier responded to a question which, the—and I quote: "Well, Madam

Speaker, we can make the program work better, and that's what these changes are about. The biggest challenge for nominees under the Provincial Nominee Program is that 64 per cent of them last year arrived in Manitoba without guaranteed employment and they have to find jobs after they land as permanent residents. And, as a consequence, the five-year average is higher for unemployment for these folks when they come here than it should be, higher than the average for the rest of the province, certainly. So our goal is to lower those unemployment rates and to better link, through improved outcomes—better link the folks who come here through the program to job opportunities. It doesn't do them a service to bring them from a desperate circumstance in another country, Madam Speaker, and put them on welfare in this province when, in fact, we have tremendous needs for new people in jobs in our province," unquote.

So there, Madam Speaker, the words of the Premier, and it cannot be erased, because it's recorded on Hansard for posterity.

Many, many new immigrants who have heard or read this transcript were so distressed, because they believe these words. These statistics provided by the Premier are not true. Many, many new immigrants who were nominee program applicants prior to becoming permanent residents have—up to 98 per cent of them in their first year of arrival in Manitoba have obtained employment.

If ever there were nominees in the past who have applied for social assistance, they're so small in—they were so small and so insignificant that they didn't even merit it being reported. Many, many new immigrants, through the nominee program—actually most of the principal applicants to the Provincial Nominee Program are highly skilled, well educated, fully trained in their—whatever skills or professions or education that they have obtained prior to coming to Manitoba. They are—they come to Manitoba job ready, and they have proficiency in either of the official languages, because they cannot be approved to the nominee program if they have not passed, with some degree of excellence, the international language tests that are required of them to obtain and get the marks for.

\*(16:50)

So it is distressing to find out that the Conservative government will levy a head tax to prospective new immigrants who will be nominated

through the nominee program even before they come to Manitoba. These nominated applicants will now pay a \$500 non-refundable fee in addition to the application fee of \$550 plus \$475 landing fee that the federal government will collect from these new immigrants. The \$500 fee is similar to the Chinese head tax, an exclusion tax of 1885 that discriminated Chinese immigrants. This is a form of discrimination against new immigrants.

Likewise, the additional \$500 non-refundable fee, along with the added requirement of obtaining a paid job offer from Manitoba employers, will potentially reduce the number of applicants to the program. The 5.8 population growth in Manitoba since 2011, a key part of our record population and economic growth, is attributable to immigration. This growth could be halted by the changes to the nominee program. The job-ready skills, education and settlement funds that provincial nominees bring to Manitoba are significant economic and social contributions that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) cannot ignore.

For a family of four who are applying to the nominee program, this family of four is required to bring with them at least \$16,000 as settlement fund. And they have to have a minimum of \$16,000 because they should have funds to, while they're—they should have these liquid funds while they're looking for a job or looking for an apartment or place to stay and also their daily expenses.

And I've known many, many nominee programs in the past and I personally even had to accompany them to banks or credit unions to deposit their settlement funds. There was one even who came with—and, of course, she had to declare it—came with several thousand dollars when they came over, and within a year she was able to buy a \$450 brand new house on Amber Trail.

Likewise, many, many of these nominee program and permanent—that became permanent residents, within their first three or some—five years in Canada, had brought their own homes. So they're not a burden to our province. In fact, they not only contributed to a rate—record population growth, but to the economic boom that we had experienced in the last few years.

Madam Speaker, the job-ready skills, education and settlement funds that the provincial nominees bring to Manitoba are significant. We demand the Premier maintain the family and community connection of the nominee program, drop the

\$500 fee and work with immigrant communities to make our immigration system even better. From the feedback received from these communities recently, they told us they were not consulted by this government before these changes to the nominee programs were proposed. They felt disrespected and showed no regard nor appreciation for the contributions these multicultural community members are ready to provide to all of Manitobans.

The emphasis in the proposed changes to the nominee program is: put priority on skills and job creation, innovative partnerships with the industry and education, innovative partnerships with industry and—excuse me, priority selection for skilled workers with existing employment, priority selection for business nominees in a cost-recovery model that reinvests the revenues generated by MPNP selection.

The proposed changes appear to be a conscious effort on the part of the Conservative government to reduce immigration number to the province by labelling the changes as—even when they label the changes as renewal. What has the Premier and his Conservative members have against new immigrants? There is the question of whether or not these changes will be for the best interest of the province, or are these new immigrants not welcome because they can add to the growing number of new Canadians that are supporting political parties other than the Conservative party?

These are some of the questions that I've heard posed by folks who are members of the Save MPNP Coalition. For—or—this is a coalition composed of several members from multicultural organizations. Also, they have members who are students from colleges and universities in the city, and they are actively mobilizing their peers and their communities to oppose the changes posed by the Conservative government, proposed for the Provincial Nominee Program.

In addition to the Provincial Nominee Program changes, there are also this government's cuts to education, which is a de facto cut, the smallest amount accorded to school since the 1990s. And this has parents, students and teachers very much worried. Manitoba teachers and students need more support, not cuts.

This government's cuts mean school boards are forced to make do with less and shift tax highs—hikes to property owners. School divisions already have proposals for these tax increases. We've heard

St. James-Assiniboia School Division is proposing a 5.6 per cent tax increase, or \$84 more for an average home. The Pembina Trails School Division is proposing 3.5 tax increase, or \$75 per average home. Louis Riel proposed 4.44 per cent tax increase or \$81 dollars more per average home. Seven Oaks School Division, 5.68 per cent increase, or \$106 more per average home; River East Transcona School Division, 3.5 increase, or \$56 per average home.

Now, with Winnipeg School Division, the biggest school division in the province, they are proposing a 1.3 per cent increase, or 40 per cent per average home, with \$5.1 million in budget cuts; or 3.9 increase or \$52 per average home, with a

\$1.2 million in budget cuts; or 4.5 increase or \$60 per average home, with \$1.3 million in program cuts.

It's time for this government to do—to start investing our—in our education system and stand with Manitoba students, families and teachers, shifting the burden onto school taxes—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have three minutes remaining.

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, March 8, 2017**

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